

Military Mails of the 1870-71 Franco-German War



Steven C. Walske, RDP



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Cover illustration: “Balloon Chase” by Louis Braun (1872)

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Preface

This book commemorates the 150th anniversary of the 1870-1871 Franco-German War and remembers some of the important French military postal historians who have gone before: Henri Bauër, Victor Chanaryn, Léon Dubus, Plastiras Foster, Louis François and Henri Kastler, among others. These great collectors and students categorized and collected examples of each type of military postmark from this war, but did not attempt to place those postmarks into an historical context. By contrast, the effort in this book is to correlate the military postmarks with the units that they served, and to trace the movement of the armies through letters mailed at military post offices, or bureaux. This means that many postmarks appear multiple times in this narrative, since they were used in different campaigns of the war.

The main focus of the book is on the mobile fieldpost services that accompanied the French and German armies in the field. Even so, some military mail that did not pass through those fieldpost bureaux is included to help the overall postal history context.

Military postal history studies the markings and rates on military mail, typically in the context of a particular war. The best references are official documents and contemporary reports. However, the official record is invariably incomplete, so the examination of surviving pieces of mail, or covers, from the period can fill in the gaps by showing patterns of postal use. The combination of surviving postal artifacts with postal documentation, historical events and geography can be used to accurately re-create the details of a mail delivery system. This is the approach employed in this book.

The 1870-71 war was a series of distinct campaigns. Six chapters in this book each describe one of these campaigns from both the French and German perspective, and list the orders of battle for the forces engaged in that campaign. In addition, the appendices form an important part of the book. In particular, Appendix A lists the fieldpost bureaux and illustrates their postmarks for each of the campaigns. Appendices B and C include censuses of mail from the sieges of Paris, Metz and Belfort. Appendix D includes listings of the French regiments engaged in the war and, along with the orders of battle at the end of each chapter, can be used to assist in the identification of military letters from this war. Finally, Chapters Four and Six, as well as Appendices E through G describe non-fieldpost military mail that is important to understanding the full scope of the war. The letter below provides an interesting example of how to use this book to analyze a fieldpost cover.



This letter bears a blue “25^E CORPS D’ARMÉE 2^E DIVISION” fieldpost marking, and has a February 1, 1871 Bourges arrival on the reverse. Appendix A confirms that the 25th Corps was part of the 2^e Armée de la Loire, which is described in Chapter Seven. It also explains that this marking was used in the armistice period, which is confirmed by the Bourges arrival mark. Chapter Seven traces the movements of the 2^e Armée de la Loire, and explains that the 2nd Division of the 25th Corps was located south of Vierzon at this time. Finally, the order of battle for the 25th Corps at the end of Chapter Seven shows that the Légion de la Garde Mobilisée du Cher (as indicated by the pencil endorsement on the front of the envelope) was part of the 2nd Brigade of the 2nd Division of the 25th Corps, and joined the army on January 23. Because Vierzon is very close to Bourges, it can also be surmised that this letter was written on January 31.



The author would like to recognize the following individuals who have assisted with this book, and who have generously provided valuable insights. If any names are omitted, please accept my apology for the omission.

The author thanks the Académie de Philatélie for its support of this book. In particular, Robert Abensur has greatly assisted in editing the book on behalf of the Académie. In addition, Malcolm Gilbert, Bertrand Sinais, John Barwis and Richard Frajola reviewed all of the chapters in this book, and were extremely helpful in correcting errors and improving the clarity of the text. In any event, all errors and omissions are the responsibility of the author alone.

Chapter One

Introduction to the Franco-German War

A History of Hostility

Prussian antagonism toward France dated from Napoléon Bonaparte's December 1805 victory over Austria at Austerlitz, which dissolved the Holy Roman Empire and left many German states under the effective control of Napoléon. Prussia, the leading German state, became alarmed over this growing French influence, and opened the 1806 War of the Fourth Coalition against France. Napoléon, however, achieved a shattering victory at Jena in October 1806, after which Prussia was forced to pay an indemnity, lose nearly half of its territory, and suffer a seven-year occupation by French troops. After Napoléon's October 1813 defeat at Leipzig, Prussia resolved to re-build its military strength, and began a lengthy process of restoring its territory and gaining influence over lesser German states. Napoléon's defeat also removed France as the primary power in Europe, and peace was maintained jointly by the four great political powers of Great Britain, Austria, France and Russia.

By the end of 1859, however, France's Second Empire was once again in military and political ascendancy. Its victories over Russia in the Crimean War of 1854-56, and over Austria in the 1859 Italian War had established its army as the leading force in Europe, and its economic vitality was a powerful engine for growth. The next decade, however, would see the Second Empire slide from that lofty perch. Napoléon III's 1862-67 military adventure in Mexico weakened the army's prestige and the country's finances, so funding was siphoned away from the military. In addition, internal dissent was eroding Napoléon III's authority, so he relinquished much political power to the Corps législatif.

Meanwhile, Prussia's Otto von Bismarck had a vision of a unified and powerful Germany. King Wilhelm I named him Minister President of Prussia in September 1862, and he began to take steps to realize his goal. In December 1863, Prussian and Austrian soldiers marched into the Danish-held duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, triggering a short war with Denmark that resulted in the annexation of Schleswig by Prussia, and Holstein by Austria. The first step toward a unified Germany had been taken.

In 1866, Prussian troops entered Holstein, triggering war with Austria. The June-July "Seven Weeks' War" was a complete defeat for Austria. Prussia's overwhelming victory alarmed all of the great powers, and forced a dramatic reassessment of Prussian military power. A year later, Bismarck formed the Prussian-dominated North German Confederation of 22 German states, which removed former rival Austria from any influence over German affairs. Prussia's military and commercial power was growing rapidly, and France began to view Prussia as its principal rival for leadership in Europe. Both sides believed that war was inevitable.

The Imperial Phase of the War

In July 1870, Bismarck cleverly amplified a minor diplomatic spat, thus provoking the unprepared Second Empire into mobilizing its armies on July 14 and declaring war five days later. In response, the North German Confederation armies mobilized on July 15. Within days, the south German states of Bavaria, Baden, Hesse and Württemberg also mobilized for Prussia.

Just three weeks later, three German armies pushed the French imperial armies into disorderly retreat from the frontier. Two months after that, four French army corps had surrendered along with Napoléon III at Sedan, five more were trapped in Metz, and the remaining two were besieged in Paris.

After the September 1 débâcle at Sedan, the Third Republic replaced the Second Empire as the governing body in France, but only five percent of the professional army remained in the field to protect it from the invading German armies. In the face of this crisis, the new republic, based in Paris and Tours, energetically organized new armies for the national defense.

Accordingly, the war can be divided into two very distinct phases. The first phase consisted of two campaigns involving the imperial armies in northeastern France. These two campaigns ended with two of the greatest disasters in French military history, and are described in Chapters Two and Three.

- *The Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine:* After retreating from the August 6 defeat at Forbach, the Armée de Metz was trapped in Metz on August 19, and finally surrendered on October 27.
- *The Campaign in the Ardennes:* After its August 6 defeat on the frontier, the Armée de Châlons regrouped at Châlons, but surrendered with Napoléon III at Sedan on September 1.

The Republican Phase of the War

Once the French imperial armies had been captured or neutralized in besieged cities, the key to ending the war became the capture of Paris. This second phase of the war began with two German armies advancing rapidly from Sedan to besiege Paris on September 19. Because the vulnerability of a besieging army is an attack from the rear or an interruption in its flow of supplies, newly-constituted French republican armies attempted to raise the siege of Paris in four different campaigns. Figure 1-1 shows the areas of those campaigns.

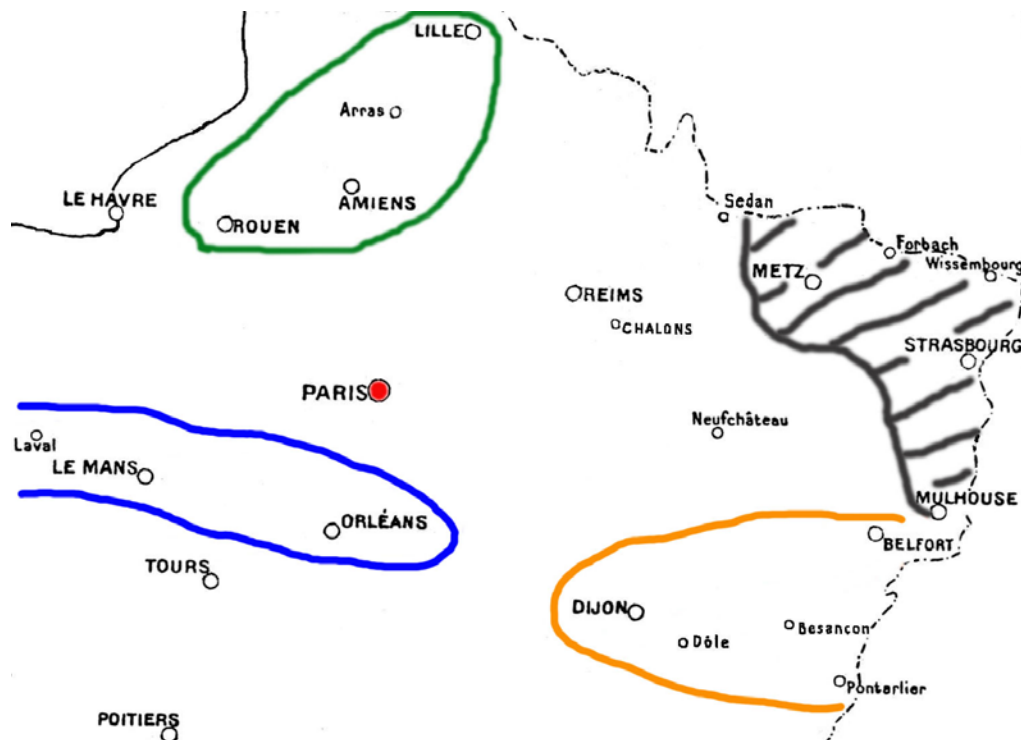


Figure 1-1. Theaters for the Paris Campaign (red dot), the Loire Campaign (in blue), the Northern Campaign (in green) and the Eastern Campaign (in orange). The lined area is the portion of Alsace-Lorraine that was annexed by Germany after the war.

A chapter in this book is devoted to each of these four campaigns.

- *The Campaign for Paris*: The Armée de Paris defended the city until its surrender on January 28.
- *The Campaign on the Loire*: The Armée de la Loire attempted to relieve Paris from the south.
- *The Campaign in the North*: The Armée du Nord attempted to relieve Paris from the north.
- *The Campaign in the East*: New French armies in the East attempted to relieve Paris by cutting the main German supply line between Strasbourg and Paris.

An Inevitable Outcome

The French republican armies scored a few surprising victories during the second phase of the war, but the remorseless German advance was too much for the poorly trained French soldiers. Paris surrendered on January 28, and a temporary armistice to February 26 was signed. Newly elected representatives in the French National Assembly approved a preliminary peace treaty on March 1, and most French armies were de-mobilized in early March. The final Treaty of Frankfurt was signed on May 10, 1871, but at a terrible cost to France. It ceded most of Alsace-Lorraine (the lined area in Figure 1-1) to Germany, and paid five billion francs in war reparations. German troops occupied parts of France until the reparations were paid, so the last German soldier did not leave French soil until September 16, 1873.

On January 18, 1871, Bismarck achieved his goal of German unification in a ceremony held symbolically at Versailles. The southern German states and the North German Confederation signed a constitution under the leadership of Kaiser Wilhelm I and Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. This established Germany as the main political power in Europe, supported by the most powerful army in the world. Bismarck's Second Reich would last until the end of the First World War.

The 1870-1871 Military Fieldposts

Communications are essential to conducting war and maintaining the morale of soldiers who are far away from home in a hostile environment. The primary focus of this book is on the mail-handling facilities (fieldposts) established to facilitate those communications.

The French and German armies had a long tradition of providing mobile fieldpost bureaus that moved with the armies in the field. Both fieldpost organizations were focused at the army division level. However, the integrated French Armée du Rhin fieldpost system mostly disappeared after the defeats suffered by the imperial armies, and gave way to ad hoc local fieldpost systems during the four campaigns of the second phase. It was not until the armistice period that an attempt was made to once again integrate the French fieldpost service across multiple sectors. By contrast, the German service remained intact, even as their armies spread out in the second phase of the war. Both sides extended free-frank privileges to military personnel, so the vast majority of the 1870-71 fieldpost mail is stampless.

This book traces conflict through the mobile fieldpost services, and provides a detailed study of the postal markings of the French and German fieldpost organizations. It relies on military correspondence of all kinds to add historical clarity to this short but complex war.



"Prussian Messenger" by E. Hinton (1873)

Chapter Two

Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine: July 14 to October 27

Introduction

The first phase of the war was a confrontation between the professional armies of France and Germany. This chapter describes the mobilization of the forces involved, and follows their fieldpost services through the opening campaign in northeastern France between the French Armée du Rhin and three German armies. The theater of operations in Alsace-Lorraine is shown in Figure 2-1.

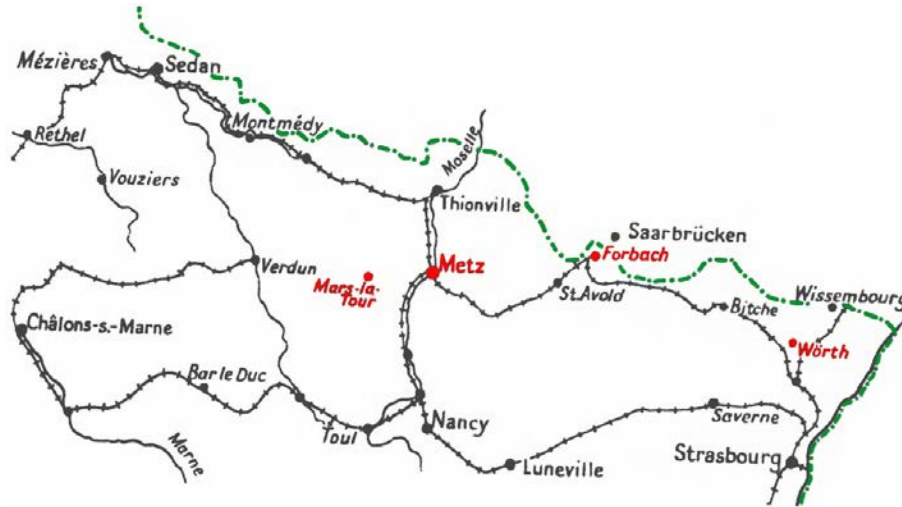


Figure 2-1. July-October 1870 Theater of operations in Alsace-Lorraine.
The green dotted line represents the French frontier.¹

The French Mobilization: July 14 to August 1, 1870

The French believed that they could mobilize more quickly than the German armies, and that they could have over 300,000 men on the Franco-German border between Strasbourg and Thionville by the first week in August.² Nearly 150,000 men moved quickly from their depots to front-line positions in Alsace-Lorraine, but the reservists, overseas regiments and supplies needed to fully deploy the army were delayed by poor logistics and the over-worked French railway system.

The French army was formed from annual conscriptions of 100,000 men (out of about 300,000 eligible) who had reached the age of 21. After attrition and allocations to the navy, only about 70,000 were added to the army each year.³ Due to budgetary limitations, only 20,000 of the annual conscription (the first contingent) went into the active army, where they served for five years. After their active service, they went into the reserve for another four years. The remaining 50,000 of the annual conscription (the second contingent) served for five months in the active army, and the balance of their nine-year obligation in the reserve. Each year's class was drawn at age twenty, and then called to regimental depots the following year.⁴ In July 1870, the classes of 1864-1868 (called to service in 1865-1869) were in the ranks, and the class of 1869 had been identified but not yet called. Including the Garde Impériale, the active army was about 130,000 men, while the second contingent was about 250,000. Soldiers who had finished their five years' service added another 270,000 men to the reserve. Thus, 650,000 men were available upon mobilization, although many reservists and soldiers on leave could not quickly reach the front.

As explained in detail in Appendix D, regimental depots were the focal points for the mobilization of reservists, volunteers and men returning from leave. French active duty companies were sent directly from depots to assembly areas near the German frontier. Reservists were routed from their homes through the regimental depots to the front line.⁵ The wartime structure of the infantry was as follows:

- One infantry battalion (670 men) was made up of six companies
- One infantry regiment (2,000 men) was made up of three battalions
- One infantry brigade (4,000 men) was made up of two regiments
- One infantry division (8,000 men) was made up of two brigades
- One corps (28-35,000 men) was made up of three or four infantry divisions
(Each corps also typically included a cavalry division of about 3,500 men)

Battalions were made up of eight companies in peacetime, but only six companies in wartime. The two extra companies per battalion were left in the regimental depot to make up a “depot”⁶ battalion of four companies, plus a depot reserve of two companies.⁷ These depot battalions and companies, consisting mostly of less trained soldiers from the younger classes and the second contingent, initially stayed behind to collect additional reserves and replacements, but played a large role in the later stages of the war.

As shown in the order of battle at the end of this chapter, France had the 1st through 7th army corps and the elite Garde Impériale at the start of the war. These were organized into 26 infantry divisions and ten divisions of cavalry.⁸ In addition to that, the Garde Nationale Mobile (“Garde Mobile”) was a second-line reserve consisting of men aged 21 to 25 who had avoided conscription into the regular army. Military leaders had hoped to build this second reserve to about 600,000 men, but it had been greatly neglected in the years before the war. The Garde Mobile was mobilized on July 17, but a limited number of officers restricted the initial mobilization to only about 150,000 men.⁹ Due to severe shortages of equipment, the Garde Mobile did not play a significant role until later in the war.

The French Military Fieldpost Service

The French Second Empire had a strong tradition of military fieldpost services. The functions of cash payments and postal services were combined in the roles of officers known as “payeurs” or “payeurs-adjoints.” For the Franco-German War, as in the 1854 Crimean War and the 1859 Franco-Austrian war, payeurs were assigned to the general headquarters, corps headquarters and division headquarters. Upon the outbreak of war, the Ministry of Finance was responsible for assigning payeurs who were mobilized alongside the army. Each payeur was equipped with the facilities and materials necessary to fulfill his duties for the army in the field.¹⁰ Their wagons accompanied the moving army along with other support services. A good description of this service was reported in the December 5, 1870 Paris *Figaro*.¹¹

The service of the treasury and the posts for the army of Paris has been organized since several days; all of the agents are named payeurs and committed to the corps to which they are attached...The material of a treasurer-payeur consists of a wagon, conducted by soldiers of the support services, in which are contained the cash box and the registers necessary for the service. The wagon is always accompanied by 15 men and 2 policemen...when the army is on the march, the wagon follows immediately behind the quartermaster. In camp, it is placed in the center, near the headquarters. It is under the tent that the various functions of the service are conducted. The wagon is several feet away, under guard, and the letter boxes hooked on the front and rear of the wagon collect all of the letters, written hastily in the middle of all the tumult and noise, and which contain all of the hopes and joys of many tearful mothers...

2 – Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

The July 14 mobilization order triggered the formation of the Armée du Rhin fieldpost organization.¹² The organization and materials were patterned after the 1854 Armée d'Orient¹³ and the 1859 Armée d'Italie. Figure 2-2 shows a June 1859 example of this style of fieldpost postmarks from the "Armée d'Italie Bureau E," which was assigned to the 1st Division of the 2nd Corps. During the 1859 war, the payeurs were also equipped with lozenge-of-dots cancellers reading "AA (bureau letter)," with the third letter identifying the particular bureau: in this case, "AAE."¹⁴



Figure 2-2. June 16, 1859 letter from Bureau E of the Armée d'Italie

The Armée du Rhin postmarks were very similar to the Armée d'Italie postmarks of eleven years earlier, except for a different army description. Unlike the 1859 war, however, French soldiers in the 1870-71 war were entitled to a postal free frank. A July 24, 1870 French law¹⁵ established the free frank.¹⁶

Postal agents should circulate any letters without tax that originate in France or Algeria and are addressed to soldiers and sailors of all grades who are part of an army corps in the field and to any functionary attached to such army corps, whether they are located in France or overseas...the designation of grade or type of administrator and the army corps in the address should suffice for the exemption of postal charges.

As to correspondences from army units in the field, a free frank will be evidenced by a postal marking from the originating military bureau. Letters not posted in military bureaus will not receive an exemption and will be subject to the normal postage...It is understood that only simple letters weighing less than ten grams are eligible for the military free frank, and that all others (registered letters, newspapers, printed material, , etc.) will be subject to postal rates in effect.

The August 1870 postal *Bulletin Mensuel* No. 26 further clarified the law.¹⁷

Since the Treasury and Posts services for the armies are not yet completely organized, and military bureaus are not functioning everywhere that there are army detachments...it has been decided that for any location where a military bureau has not been established, until further orders, regular post offices are authorized to receive letters from soldiers or functionaries attached to army corps in the field, with the only condition that such letters be delivered by the military postmaster of such corps. Postmasters will allow a military free frank on such letters, after having struck them with a "P.P." marking in red.

...the Commission applied the benefit of this law to *gardes nationaux mobiles* who have been called to duty...The administration has been asked whether the July 24 Law applies to soldiers in Cochinchine, Sénégal, Algeria, etc., and to all sailors at sea under French flag...The Minister of Finances, to whom this question was directed, responded that the Law applies only to correspondence addressed to or received by soldiers or sailors who are actually engaged in the war.

2 – Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

All military personnel actively engaged in the conflict were eligible for the free frank, so virtually all surviving military letters are unfranked. As a consequence, it appears that cancelling devices were not supplied to all Armée du Rhin fieldpost bureaus. Registered letters and mail sent to foreign destinations were not eligible for the free frank., so only a few letters with frankings (such as Figure 2-16) show “A.R.(bureau letter)” military cancels.

The initial 48 Armée du Rhin fieldpost bureaus and their associated military units are shown in Appendix A, along with illustrations of fieldpost markings. Each divisional payeur was issued a dated postmark with a “B^{AU} (letter)” designation at the bottom. The correlation between these bureau letters and the actual unit to which they were assigned can be established by examining fieldpost letters that identify the writer’s unit. Figure 2-3 shows an example from Bureau Z, which was assigned to the 2nd Division of the 6th Corps.

**Figure 2-3. August 11, 1870
letter from Bureau Z of the
6th Corps’ 2nd Division**



This letter was datelined at Châlons camp on August 10 and postmarked the next day at the Armée du Rhin Bureau Z. The writer identified his unit as the “20^e de ligne,” which was a part of the 2nd Division of the 6th Corps. This confirms the correlation between Bureau Z and the 2nd Division.

The French fieldpost service mobilized alongside the army, so the earliest known Armée du Rhin postal markings are dated July 30. Figure 2-4 shows an example from the 2nd Corps.



**Figure 2-4. July 30, 1870
letter from the 2nd Corps'
headquarters bureau**

2 – Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

This letter was endorsed “2^{ème} Corps (armée du Rhin)” and postmarked “ARMÉE DU RHIN Q^R G^L 2^E CORPS” at the 2nd Corps’ headquarters bureau on July 30. It arrived that day in Lunéville, where it was improperly taxed 30 centimes (20 centimes domestic rate plus a 50% unpaid letter surcharge). Apparently, that post office was not aware of the July 24 law granting a free frank to soldiers in the field. The 2nd Corps was organizing near the German border at St. Avold at this time.

The Garde Impériale used a different type of fieldpost postmark, which it had used previously during the 1859 war in Italy. Figure 2-5 shows a letter posted at the 2nd Division bureau.

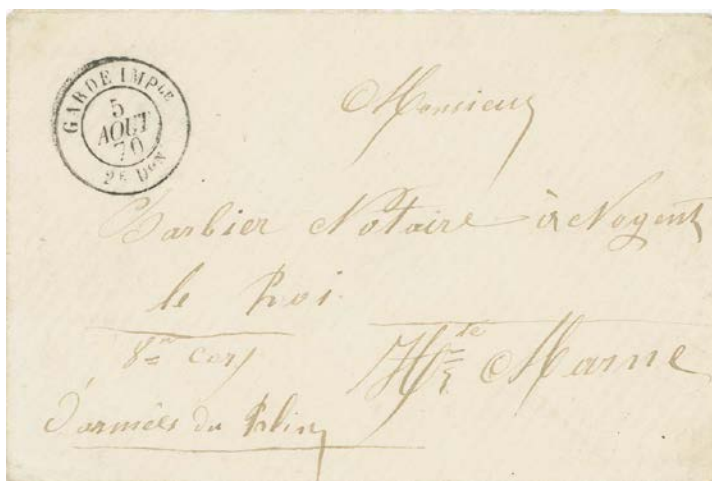


Figure 2-5. August 5, 1870 letter from the fieldpost bureau of the Garde Impériale’s 2nd Division

Mailed on August 5 at the bureau for the Garde Impériale’s 2nd Division, this letter was postmarked “GARDE IMP^{LE} 2^E D^{ON}” and rated for a military free frank. It arrived in Nogent on August 8. Figure 2-6 shows an attempted answer to this letter.

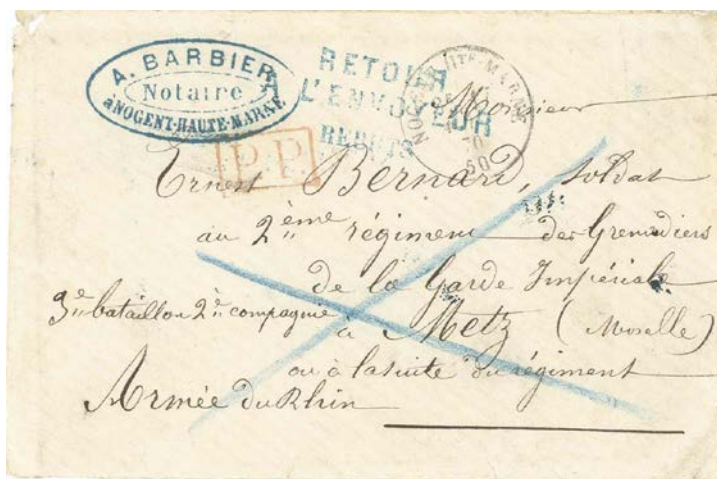


Figure 2-6. August 17, 1870 letter addressed to the Garde Impériale’s 2nd Division

This apparent reply to Figure 2-5 was postmarked on August 17 at Nogent-Haute-Marne and addressed to a soldier in the 2nd Grenadier Regiment of the Garde Impériale’s 2nd Division at Metz. The address qualified the letter for a military free frank, as evidenced by the red “P.P.” marking. Unfortunately, this letter did not reach Metz before the August 19 start of the siege, so it was held until well after the war ended. It was returned to Paris, where the addressee could not be found, so a “Le Destinaire N’Ayant Pu Être Trouvé” marking was applied on the reverse. The blue “Retour L’Envoyeur Rebut” (return to sender) post office marking was applied to the front, and the letter was received back in Nogent on July

13, 1871. The Armée du Rhin also created a special handstamp for undeliverable mail. Figure 2-7 shows an example on the reverse of a letter.

Figure 2-7. August 6, 1870 letter rejected as undeliverable by the Armée du Rhin



Addressed to Captain de Talles at the headquarters of the Armée du Rhin, this letter was sent outside of the mails to Metz. De Talles was not there, so it was forwarded back to the War Ministry at Paris, and postmarked on August 6. After a month's delay, it was re-posted at the Gros-Caillou Paris post office on September 7 and forwarded a second time to the regimental depot at rue de l'Université. The captain was not found there either, so the letter was sent to the Armée du Rhin dead letter office, where it received the blue "REBUTS DE L'ARMÉE/DU RHIN/INCONNU" marking. It was held throughout the siege and finally released from the dead letter office to the Parisian post on July 18, 1871.

Napoléon III left Paris to take command of the Armée du Rhin at Metz on July 28. His personal fieldpost bureau was activated upon his arrival there. This "Bureau Spécial de l'Empereur" fieldpost had previously accompanied Napoléon III during the 1859 Austrian war. Figure 2-8 shows a particularly clear May 1859 example of the postmark.¹⁸



Figure 2-8. May 13, 1859 Bureau Spécial de l'Empereur postmark

Figure 2-9 shows the only known letter from this special fieldpost bureau during the Franco-German war. It was datelined "Metz, le 10 Août 1870" and postmarked that day at the Bureau Spécial de l'Empereur. It passed through Paris on August 11, and arrived in southern France on the following day. As the German armies were closing their pincers around Metz, Napoléon III left for Châlons on August 16 to organize the army there, so his fieldpost bureau moved as well. This bureau ended operations after only thirty-five days of existence when Napoléon III surrendered at Sedan on September 1.

**Figure 2-9. August 10, 1870
letter from the Bureau
Spécial de l'Empereur**



By July 31, the strength of the Armée du Rhin on the frontier stood at only 238,000 men,¹⁹ because overseas regiments, many soldiers on leave and many reservists had not yet reached the front lines. The center of the French concentration was at Metz.²⁰

Unit	Commander	Location
Imperial Headquarters	Le Boeuf	Metz
Garde Impériale	Bourbaki	Metz
1 st Corps	Mac-Mahon	Strasbourg
2 nd Corps	Frossard	Near the frontier at St. Avold
3 rd Corps	Bazaine	Between Metz and St. Avold
4 th Corps	de Ladmirault	North of Metz at Thionville
5 th Corps	de Failly	Near the frontier at Bitche
6 th Corps	Canrobert	Châlons-s-Marne, covering Paris
7 th Corps	Douay	Belfort, guarding the southern flank.

The German Mobilization: July 15 to August 1, 1870

King Wilhelm I of Prussia ordered the mobilization of the North German Confederation armies on July 15. Adhering to treaty obligations, Baden mobilized on July 16, while Bavaria and Württemberg began on July 17.²¹ The North German armies were filled by an annual conscription of 100,000 men who served for three years in the 300,000-man army, and then four years in the reserve.²² They finished their service with five years in the Landwehr, so the German armies had 1.2 million trained men available. The mobilization followed a carefully planned concentration. By August 1, over one million men had been called to arms, and about 350,000 were at the French frontier. This began a pattern of German numerical superiority that would persist throughout the war. The infantry's organizational structure was as follows:²³

- One battalion (1,000 men) was made up of four companies
- One regiment (3,000 men) was made up of three battalions
- One brigade (6,000 men) was made up of two regiments
- One division (12,000 men) was made up of two brigades
- One corps (29,000 infantry) was made up of two divisions, a Chasseurs battalion and fusilier regiment (each corps also had 700 men in two dedicated cavalry regiments)

The mobilized forces were initially divided into four armies, the first three of which were designated for offensive action.²⁴

- The I Armee (General von Steinmetz) initially had about 70,000 men in the VII Corps, VIII Corps and 3rd Cavalry Division on the right wing at Trier. The I Corps and 1st Cavalry Division were added later.
- The II Armee (Prince Frederick-Charles) initially had about 130,000 men in the III Corps, IV Corps, X Corps, Garde Corps, 5th Cavalry Division, and 6th Cavalry Division in the center at Homburg. An additional 65,000 men in the IX and XII (Saxon) Corps were in reserve at Mayence under the orders of the II Army. The II Corps also joined this army later.
- The III Armee (Crown Prince Frederick William) initially had about 130,000 men in the V Corps, XI Corps, I Bavarian Corps, II Bavarian Corps, Württemberg Division, Baden Division and 4th Cavalry Division on the left wing at Rastatt. The VI Corps and the 2nd Cavalry Division later joined this army.
- The Interior Army (General von Falkenstein) had 130,000 men in the still forming I Corps, II Corps, VI Corps, 17th Infantry Division, and the 17th Cavalry Brigade. In addition, the reserve consisted of 70,000 men in twelve infantry regiments on fortress duty, and the Garde Landwehr, 1st Landwehr, 2nd Landwehr and 3rd Landwehr Divisions. A 4th Reserve Division would later be formed from landwehr troops in Baden.

The total mobilized force in these four armies was about 650,000 men. During August, the first three armies were built up to a total of 38 infantry divisions, or about 500,000 men. Their order of battle as of August 12 (after the arrivals of the I Corps, II Corps and VI Corps) is shown at the end of this chapter.

With the destruction of the French armies as the principal objective, the German armies were massed for an advance into France along the northeast frontier, from Saarbrücken to Wissembourg. By August 4, the I Army was poised to attack through Saarbrücken, the II Army was preparing to advance east of the I Army, and the III Army was concentrated around Wissembourg.

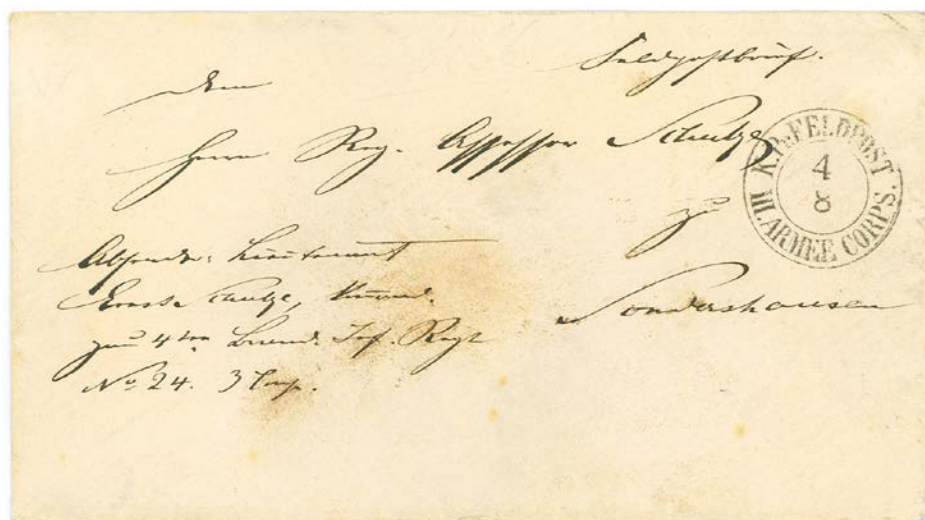
The German Military Fieldpost Service

The German army also had a strong tradition of fieldpost services, and it was organized very much like its French counterpart. Mobile fieldpost bureaus were established at the divisional, corps and army levels. German forces were also granted a postal free frank, so the vast majority of the surviving fieldpost mail is unfranked. The initial 102 German mobile fieldpost bureaus and their associated military units are listed in Appendix A, along with illustrative examples of the fieldpost postmarks.

The German army used a system of fixed-location fieldpost relay bureaus to connect the mobile fieldpost with the German postal system. The “feldpost relais” bureau postmarks do not appear on mail from the mobile fieldpost bureaus, except during the occupation period. They are described in Appendix E.

Prussian fieldpost postmarks all contain the prefix “K:PR:” (King of Prussia). Non-Prussian units in the North German Confederation, such as the Saxon XII Corps, the Hessian 25th Division and the Mecklenburg Corps, omitted the “K:PR:” designation, but followed the general form of the Prussian postmarks. The allied southern states used very different postmarks. The Baden Division’s two-ring postmark reads “Gr. Bad.” (Grand Duke of Baden). The two-ring Württemberg Division postmark reads “Kön. Württ.” (King of Württemberg), while the Bavarian postmarks read “K. Bayer.” (King of Bavaria) in a tombstone format. These postmarks were all prepared specifically for the 1870-71 war. However, they were used concurrently with an older-style postmark by some Prussian fieldpost bureaus. The older variety, used previously in the 1866 Austro-Prussian War, shows the unit number in Roman numerals. Figure 2-10 shows an example.

Figure 2-10. August 4, 1870 letter from the III Corps' fieldpost bureau



This letter, endorsed from the 24th Infantry Regiment in the 6th Division of the III Corps, was postmarked on August 4 at the III Corps' headquarters bureau, which was then located east of Saarbrücken, Prussia. The letter arrived in Thuringia on August 7.

The German fieldpost service mobilized alongside the army, so the earliest known German fieldpost postmarks are dated July 29, 1870 as seen in Figure 2-11.

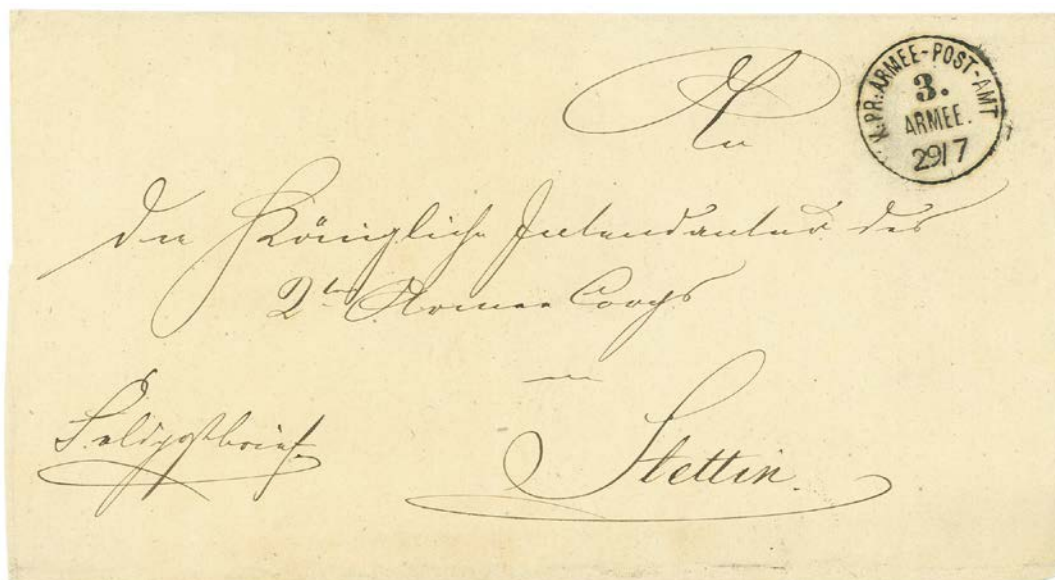


Figure 2-11. July 29, 1870 letter from the III Army

This letter was postmarked on July 29 at the III Army's headquarters bureau in Landau, Bavaria and was sent free of any postal charges.

Combat Begins

The French 2nd Corps was the first to advance, moving through Forbach to attack and capture Saarbrücken, Prussia on August 2. This weak movement was the only French incursion into German territory during the war. Figure 2-12 shows a letter written at Saarbrücken by a soldier in the 2nd Corps.



Figure 2-12. August 5, 1870 letter from Bureau F of the 2nd Corps' 1st Division

Postmarked at the 1st Division's Bureau F on August 5, this letter was datelined "Salbrug (Saarbrücken) 5 Août 1870" by a corporal in the 76th Regiment. The 2nd Corps retreated from Saarbrücken to Forbach later that day.

The German armies began their advance into France on August 4. First, the I Bavarian Corps, V Corps and XI Corps of the III Army crossed the border at Wissembourg and pushed back France's 2nd Division of the 1st Corps.²⁵ Then, on August 6, all three German armies attacked two strong French positions near the frontier. The German III Corps, VII Corps and VIII Corps attacked the 2nd Corps at Forbach and drove them back towards Metz.²⁶ On the same day, the V Corps, XI Corps, I Bavarian Corps, II Bavarian Corps and the Württemberg Division attacked the French 1st Corps and the 1st Division of the 7th Corps at Wörth and drove them back toward the southwest.²⁷

After the battle at Wörth, the German armies began a pincer movement centered on Metz. Figure 2-13 shows a postcard from a soldier in the II Bavarian Corps written shortly after the battle.



Figure 2-13. August 12, 1870 letter from Bureau V of the II Bavarian Corps

This Bavarian fieldpost card was datelined near Lemberg (west of Wörth) on August 10 and postmarked at the 3rd Division's "K.BAYER FELDPOST V" bureau on August 12. The writer, a lieutenant in the 5th

Chevauleger Cavalry Regiment of the Bavarian 4th Division, wrote that, “Last night we went around the fortress of Bitche and are now united as 3rd Army under the Crown Prince of Prussia. Strasbourg is to be paid no attention and a concentric attack against Metz is to be made but Prince Frederick Charles asked to get that assignment primarily for the first army. The Bavarian first and second army corps moved past us the whole day in the direction of Saarguemines (note: westward on the route to Metz), we are again the rear of the whole army column, hence will be in the left wing during deployment.” As the 3rd Division fieldpost bureau moved past him, the sender left his card with them. It arrived in Westheim on August 17.

The dual defeats on August 6 effectively split the Armée du Rhin into two unconnected parts. On August 9, the 2nd Corps, 3rd Corps and 4th Corps were ordered to join the Garde Impériale at Metz under the orders of Maréchal Bazaine. The 6th Corps at Châlons-s-Marne was also ordered to join the concentration at Metz. The 1st Corps, 5th Corps and 7th Corps, under the supervision of Maréchal Mac-Mahon, were prevented by the rapid German advance from reaching Metz, so they travelled by rail back to the military camp near Châlons, from whence they could be deployed to protect Paris, or move to assist Bazaine.²⁸ While at Châlons, they were joined by the newly-formed 12th and 13th Corps.

Figure 2-14 shows a map of the bifurcation of the Armée du Rhin by the advance of the German II Army. The German movements are shown as red lines, while the French retreat is shown in blue lines. The movements of the French 6th and 7th Corps are not shown, since each was based outside of the frontier area.

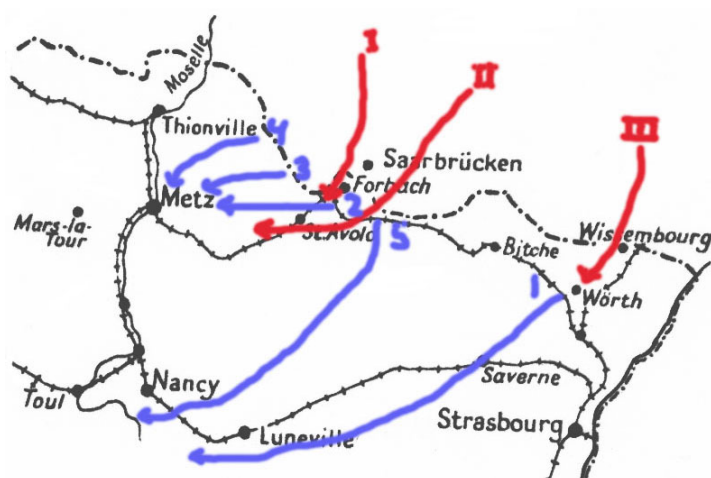


Figure 2-14. Bifurcation of the Armée du Rhin on August 7, 1870

In the confusion of the disorganized French retreat from the frontier, some of the fieldpost bureaus apparently lost their fieldpost materials. No 5th Corps fieldpost markings are known after August 4, suggesting that their fieldpost materials were lost during the confusion of the retreat. Consequently, 5th Corps fieldpost letters²⁹ are among the rarest of the war, since that fieldpost was effectively in operation for only a week.

Figure 2-15 shows the latest known 5th Corps letter. Datelined “Saarguemines 4 Août 1870,” this letter was postmarked “ARMÉE DU RHIN Q^R G^L 5^E CORPS” on August 4 at the 5th Corps’ headquarters bureau, which was located southeast of Forbach. It was granted a military free frank and arrived in central France on August 6.



Figure 2-15. August 4, 1870
letter from the Headquarters
Bureau of the 5th Corps

The August 1870 Battles Around Metz

The separation of the Armée du Rhin into the Armée de Metz (under Bazaine) and the Armée de Châlons (under Mac-Mahon) resulted in two separate campaigns. Bazaine, with 180,000 men in five corps at Metz, prepared to face the German I and II Armies, while the rest of the German forces pursued Mac-Mahon's five corps into the Ardennes.

Bazaine's army faced its first test when, on August 14, the German I Corps, VII Corps and IX Corps attacked the 3rd Corps, 4th Corps and the Garde Impériale's 1st division east of Metz at Borny. The French were driven back into Metz.³⁰ Just before that, the extraordinary letter in Figure 2-16 was written.



Figure 2-16. August 13, 1870
letter from Bureau AK of the
Cavalry Reserve's 3rd Division

Postmarked on August 13, 1870 at Bureau AK, which was assigned to the 3rd Division of the Cavalry Reserve,³¹ this registered letter³² was franked 60 centimes (20 centimes for the registration and 40 centimes for the double-weight letter rate) in stamps of the 1863-70 issue. Remarkably, they were cancelled with an "A.R.A.K" lozenge of dots, showing that fieldpost cancels were supplied for this bureau. This is one of a small number of letters showing the "A.R." cancels on letters originating from outside of Paris.³³ It was processed through the Armée du Rhin Central Bureau in Metz on August 14, and reached Paris four days later.

After the August 14 defeat at Borny, the Armée de Metz attempted to escape to the west. A major engagement west of Metz took place on August 16 around Mars-la-Tour/Vionville, when the German III

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Corps and X Corps, supported by two cavalry divisions, blundered into the entire Armée de Metz. The French repulsed the German attack, but still fell back on Metz.³⁴



“Combat d’Infanterie sur une route, 1870 –
Soldats du 24^e d’infanterie de la brigade Micheler” by Paul Grolleron
(Musée de l’Armée, Paris)

Figure 2-17 shows a letter written just after the battle.

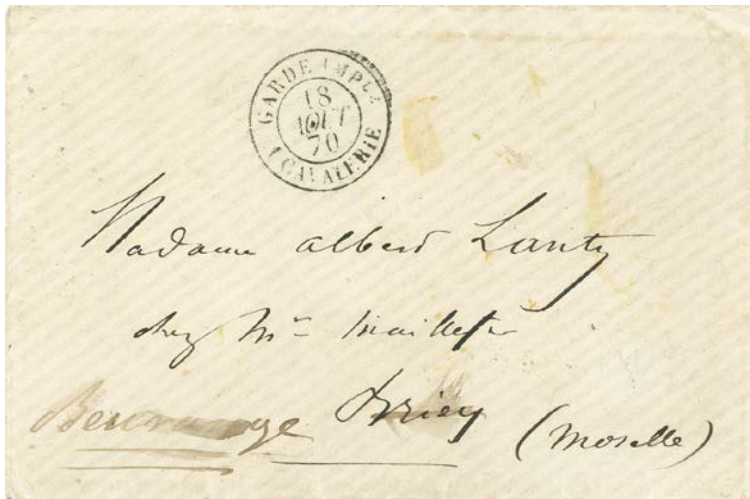


Figure 2-17. August 18,
1870 letter from the
Cavalry Division of the
Garde Impériale

This letter was datelined on August 17 near Châtel St. Germain (west of Metz). It was postmarked the following day at the “Garde Impériale 1 Cavalerie” bureau. The writer reported that, “We battled firmly yesterday near Gravelotte (note: between Mars-la-Tour and Metz); but finally, thanks to God, we came out well and the Prussians were forced to battle in retreat...tomorrow we will undoubtedly return to Metz.” This letter was trapped in the siege of Metz and finally delivered on June 6, 1871.

Figure 2-18 shows a letter from a French soldier who was wounded and captured on August 16.

Figure 2-18. August 21, 1870 letter from a 2nd Corps soldier captured at Vionville



This letter was datelined August 21, 1870 on the Vionville battlefield. It is from a French soldier in the 2nd Corps who wrote, "With no transportation, I could not be evacuated to Metz. We are about 200 to 300 wounded with the Prussians." He franked his letter with an 1863 Issue 20 centimes stamp and gave it to his III Corps captors, who postmarked it "3. ARMEE-CPS" on August 22. It was routed via Prussia and Belgium, and reached its destination outside of Paris on August 30. The Germans had granted free frank privileges to French prisoners-of-war on August 7, so the franking was unnecessary. German fieldpost cancels on French stamps are rare.

On August 18, the armies met again west of Metz at the battle of Gravelotte/St Privat, which pitted eight German corps against all five corps of the Armée de Metz. In the largest battle of the war, the French held on the left, but collapsed on the right.³⁵ De Neuville's 1881 painting captures the ferocity of the fighting.



**"Cimetière de St Privat, le 18 août 1870" by Alphonse de Neuville (1881)
(Musée d'Orsay, Paris)**

The Siege of Metz

After the August 18 battle, Bazaine's army retreated into Metz, and the siege of that city began on August 19. On the same day, the German armies were re-organized. The Garde Corps, IV Corps and XII Corps, along with the 5th, 6th and 12th Cavalry Divisions, were detached from the II Army to create the 90,000-man Maas Armee (Army of the Meuse), which was also known as the IV Army. It was placed under the command of the Crown Prince of Saxony. The I and II Armies, reinforced by the 3rd Landwehr Division, stayed to besiege Metz, while the III and IV Armies pursued Mac-Mahon's Armée de Châlons into the Ardennes.³⁶ Their campaign is described in Chapter Three.

The besiegers settled in for the two-month siege. Figure 2-19 shows an unusual letter to the United States from the VII Corps of the I Army. The letter informs a father of his son's death from wounds received during the August 14 battle at Borny. It was datelined at Montoy (east of Metz) on October 18 and postmarked the next day at the 13th Infantry Division's fieldpost bureau. It was then carried in a closed mail bag from Prussia via England, and left Queenstown on October 26 aboard the Cunarder *Batavia*. The November 8 New York postmark shows postage due of 22¢ in depreciated currency (or 20¢ in coin).



Figure 2-19. October 19, 1870 letter from the 13th Division's fieldpost bureau east of Metz

Although virtually all German fieldpost mail was sent free of postage, the few letters sent to foreign destinations were subject to postage. Figure 2-20 shows prepayment of the nine kreutzer rate to England.



Figure 2-20. September 3, 1870 letter from the 25th Division's fieldpost bureau outside of besieged Metz

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Franked by North German Confederation two kreutzer and seven kreutzer stamps of the 1869 Issue, this letter was postmarked at the Hessian 25th Division (IX Corps) fieldpost bureau outside of Metz on September 3. The postmark excludes the typical Prussian “K:PR:” prefix. Instead, it reads “Feldpost d.Grossh:Hessischen,” or “Fieldpost of the Hessian Grand Duke.” The letter arrived in Leeds on September 8.

The large German army maintained a very tight siege of Metz, so only a few line-crossers were able successfully cross the siege line, as described in Chapter Four. As an alternative, military communications under flag-of-truce between the two armies occasionally offered opportunities for the exchange of non-official mail. Figure 2-21 shows a letter from Metz that was exchanged under a military flag-of-truce.



Figure 2-21. Letter from besieged Metz posted on September 30, 1870 at the II Army's fieldpost bureau

This short note was datelined on September 26 at Longeville-sous-Metz by Lieutenant-Colonel de Narp, commander of the 1st Division's artillery in the 4th Corps. After the flag-of-truce exchange, the Germans added the blue cachet of the II Army commander and rated the letter free of postage per the manuscript note at upper left. It was postmarked at the II Army's fieldpost bureau on September 30 and sent via Prussia and Belgium to Douai on October 3. The French also rated it for a military free frank per the red 'P.P.' mark.

The Armée de Metz made a final attempt to break out of the siege on August 31. The French 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 6th Corps attacked the German I Corps and the 3rd Landwehr Division east of Metz at Noisseville. After initial gains, the French fell back into Metz on September 1.³⁷

The Armée du Rhin fieldpost bureaus continued to operate in Metz throughout the siege. Although it became clear that fieldpost letters were not getting through the Metz siege lines,³⁸ the fieldpost bureaus continued to receive letters for the outside until very late in the siege. Letters addressed outside of Metz were held until the end of the siege on October 27, and delivered after the war in April-June 1871.

Figure 2-22 shows an example posted in mid-October. This letter was postmarked on October 16, only eleven days before the surrender of the French army. This letter was written by Colonel Robillot of the 11th Dragoons Cavalry Regiment in the 4th Corps at Metz. He was evidently unsure about whether officers were entitled to a free frank, so he franked the letter with a 20 centimes stamp of the 1863 Issue and posted it on October 16 at the central fieldpost bureau.³⁹ Their “ARMÉE DU RHIN B^{AU} CENTRAL” postmark was used to cancel the stamp, suggesting that they did not have an “A.R.B.C” cancelling device.

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The letter was finally delivered in northern France on April 27, 1871, seven months after the end of the siege.

Figure 2-22. October 16, 1870 letter from the Bureau Central in besieged Metz



Figure 2-23 shows a letter sent within besieged Metz in October.



Figure 2-23. October 10, 1870 letter from Metz to the Grand Headquarters Bureau

This letter (unfolded to show the reverse) was posted with a military free frank in Metz on October 10 and addressed to an aide to Général Bourbaki, commander of the Garde Impériale. Upon arrival at the supreme headquarters on the next day, it was postmarked “ARMÉE DU RHIN G^D Q^{ER} G^L.” This is the only known postmark from the supreme headquarters fieldpost bureau.

The Armée de Metz surrendered during the evening of October 27. Two days later, 170,000 soldiers of the French army marched out of Metz and into captivity.⁴⁰ It was a major disaster for France, and ended the campaign in Alsace-Lorraine except for some isolated sieges of fortified places.⁴¹

The Civilian Occupation Postal Service

During the siege of Metz, the Germans established a civilian postal service to replace the non-functioning French postal system in occupied France. On August 19, the new director of the German postal system in France, Joseph Rosshirt, established his headquarters in Nancy (south of Metz). His office was given access to the fieldpost bureau of the German Governor-General of Lorraine at Nancy, who used the “K:PR:FELDPOST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 8. ARMEE-CPS” postmark.

One of Rosshirt’s first actions was to print a new issue of occupation postage stamps, known as the Alsace-Lorraine Issue. He used a simple design with no country designation, but did include the French word “Postes” and values denominated in French centimes. The first five values were placed on sale to the public starting on September 10.⁴² The earliest known use of these stamps is shown in Figure 2-24.



Figure 2-24. September 6, 1870 letter postmarked at the Governor-General’s fieldpost bureau at Nancy

This letter was censored on September 5 with a “To be sent via the fieldpost administration of Posts” note. It was transferred to Rosshirt’s office, where a blue “Administration der Posten” label was applied, and it was franked by not-yet-issued⁴³ ten centimes and 20 centimes stamps for the 30 centimes rate to Baden. They were cancelled on September 6 by the “8. Armee-Cps Avantgarde” fieldpost datestamp.

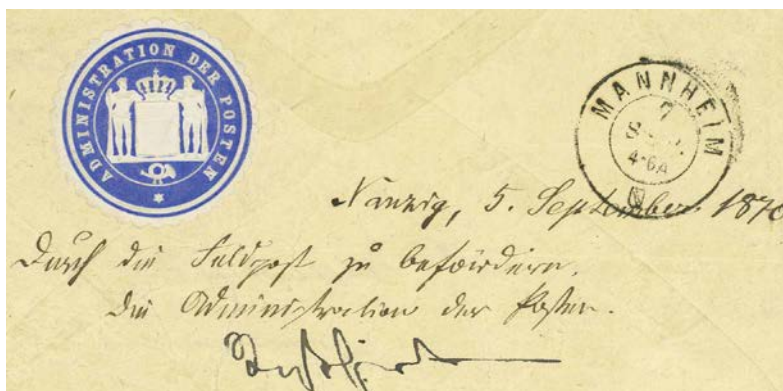


Figure 2-25. Reverse of the September 6, 1870 letter in Figure 2-24

The Orders of Battle Referenced in this Chapter

Armée du Rhin August 5 Order of Battle⁴⁴

Commander: Maréchal Bazaine

Garde Impériale (Général Bourbaki)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Deligny)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Brincourt)

Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Dufaure du Bessol)

1^{er} Régiment de Voltigeurs (Colonel Dumont)

2^e Régiment de Voltigeurs (Colonel Peychaud)

2^e Brigade (Général Garnier)

3^e Régiment de Voltigeurs (Colonel Lian)

4^e Régiment de Voltigeurs (Colonel Ponsard)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Picard)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Jeanningros)

Régiment de Zouaves (Colonel Giraud)

1^{er} Régiment de Grenadiers (Colonel Théologue)

2^e Brigade (Général Le Poitevin de la Croix-Vaubois)

2^e Régiment de Grenadiers (Colonel Lecoine)

3^e Régiment de Grenadiers (Colonel Cousin)

Division de Cavalerie (Général Desvaux)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Halna du Fretay)

Régiment des Guides (Colonel de Percin-Northumberland)

Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel de Montarby)

2^e Brigade (Général de France)

Régiment des Lanciers (Colonel de Latheulade)

Régiment de Dragons (Colonel Sautereau-Dupart)

3^e Brigade (Général du Preuil)

Régiment des Cuirassiers (Colonel Dupressoir)

Régiment de Carabiniers (Colonel Petit)

1^{er} Corps (Maréchal Mac-Mahon)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Ducrot)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Wolff)

13^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant de Bonneville)

18^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Bréger)

96^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Franchessin)

2^e Brigade (Général de Postis du Houlbec)

45^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Bertrand)

1^{er} Régiment de Zouaves (Colonel Carteret-Trecourt)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Pellé – replaced Général Abel Douay, killed on August 4)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Pelletier de Montmarie)

16^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant d'Hughes)

50^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Ardoin)

74^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Theuvez)

2^e Brigade (Général Gandil – replaced the promoted Général Pellé)

78^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Carrey de Bellemare)

1^{er} Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens (Colonel de Morand)

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général L'Hérillier)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Carteret-Trécourt)

8^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Poyet)

36^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Krien)

2^e Régiment de Zouaves (Colonel Détrie)

Armée du Rhin August 5 Order of Battle (continued)

1^{er} Corps (continued)

- 2^e Brigade (Général Lefebvre)
 - 48^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Rogier)
 - 2^e Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens (Colonel Suzzoni)
- 4^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Lartigue)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Fraboulet de Kerléadec)
 - 1^{er} Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Bureau)
 - 56^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Ména)
 - 3^e Régiment de Zouaves (Colonel Bocher)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Lacretelle)
 - 87^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Blot) – regiment was left to garrison Strasbourg
 - 3^e Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens (Colonel Gandil)
- Division de Cavalerie (Général Duhesme)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général de Septeuil)
 - 3^e Régiment de Hussards (Colonel d'Espeuilles)
 - 11^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel d'Astugue)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général de Nansouty)
 - 2^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel Poissoniers)
 - 6^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel Tripart)
 - 3^e Brigade (Général Michel)
 - 8^e Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel Guiot de la Rochère)
 - 9^e Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel Waternau)

2^e Corps (Général Frossard)

- 1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Vergé)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Letellier-Valazé)
 - 3^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Thoina)
 - 32^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Merle)
 - 55^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Waldner de Freudenstein)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Jolivet)
 - 76^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Brice)
 - 77^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Février)
- 2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Bataille)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Pouget)
 - 12^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Jeanne-Beaulieu)
 - 8^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Haca)
 - 23^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Roland)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Fauvert-Bastoul)
 - 66^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Ameller)
 - 67^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Mangin)
- 3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Laveaucoupet)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Doens)
 - 10^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Schenk)
 - 2^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de St. Hillier)
 - 63^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Zentz)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Micheler)
 - 24^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel d'Arguesse)
 - 40^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Vittot)
- Division de Cavalerie (Général Lichtlin)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général de Valabrègue)
 - 4^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel du Ferron)
 - 5^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel de Séréville)

Armée du Rhin August 5 Order of Battle (continued)

2^e Corps (continued)

- 2^e Brigade (Général Bachelier)
 - 7^e Régiment de Dragons (Colonel de Gressot)
 - 12^e Régiment de Dragons (Colonel d'Avocourt)

3^e Corps (Général Decaen – killed on August 14 and replaced by Maréchal Le Boeuf)

- 1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général de Montaudon)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Aymard)
 - 18^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Rigault)
 - 51^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Delebecque)
 - 62^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Dauphin)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Clinchant)
 - 81^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Colavier d'Albici)
 - 95^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Davoust d'Auerstaedt)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Castagny)

- 1^{re} Brigade (Général Nayral)
 - 15^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Lafouge)
 - 19^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Launay)
 - 41^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Saussier)
- 2^e Brigade (Général Duplessis)
 - 69^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Le Tourneur)
 - 90^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Courcy)

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Metman)

- 1^{re} Brigade (Général de Potier)
 - 7^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Rigaud)
 - 7^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Cotteret)
 - 29^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Lalanne)
- 2^e Brigade (Général Arnaudeau)
 - 59^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de la Largère)
 - 71^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Ferussac)

4^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Aymard)

- 1^{re} Brigade (Général de Brauer)
 - 11^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant de Paillot)
 - 44^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Fournier)
 - 60^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Boissie)
- 2^e Brigade (Général Sanglé-Ferrière)
 - 80^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Janin)
 - 85^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Planchut)

Division de Cavalerie (Général de Clérembault)

- 1^{re} Brigade (Général de Bruchard)
 - 2^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel Pelletier)
 - 3^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel Sanson de Sansal)
- 2^e Brigade (Général Gayault de Maubranes)
 - 2^e Régiment de Dragons (Colonel du Paty de Clam)
 - 4^e Régiment de Dragons (Colonel Cornat)
- 3^e Brigade (Général Bégougne de Juniac)
 - 5^e Régiment de Dragons (Colonel Lachène)
 - 8^e Régiment de Dragons (Colonel Boyer de Fonscolombe)

Armée du Rhin August 5 Order of Battle (continued)

4^e Corps (Général de Ladmirault)

- 1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Courtot de Cisse)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Brayer)
 - 20^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant de Labarrière)
 - 1^{er} Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Frémont)
 - 6^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Labarthe)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général de Golberg)
 - 57^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Giraud)
 - 73^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Supervielle)
- 2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Grenier)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Véron)
 - 5^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Carré)
 - 13^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Lion)
 - 43^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Viville)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Pradier)
 - 64^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Léger)
 - 98^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Lechesne)
- 3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Lorencez)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général de Pajol)
 - 2^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Le Tanneur)
 - 15^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Fraboulet de Kerléadec)
 - 33^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Bounnetou)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Berger)
 - 54^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Caillot)
 - 65^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Sée)
- Division de Cavalerie (Général Legrand)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général de Montaigu)
 - 2^e Régiment de Hussards (Colonel Carrelet)
 - 7^e Régiment de Hussards (Colonel Chausée)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général de Gondrecourt)
 - 3^e Régiment de Dragons (Colonel Bilhau)
 - 11^e Régiment de Dragons (Colonel Huyn de Vernéville)

5^e Corps (Général de Failly)

- 1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Goze)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Saurin)
 - 4^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Foncegrives)
 - 11^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Behagle)
 - 46^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Pichon)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Nicolas)
 - 61^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel du Moulin)
 - 86^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Berthe)
- 2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général L'Abadie d'Aydein)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Lapasset) – attached to 2^e Corps at Metz on August 7
 - 14^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Parlier)
 - 84^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Benoit)
 - 97^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Copmartin)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général de Maussion)
 - 49^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Kampf)
 - 88^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Courty)

Armée du Rhin August 5 Order of Battle (continued)

5^e Corps (continued)

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Guyot de Lespart)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Abatucci)

19^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant de Marqué)

17^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Weissemburger)

27^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Barolet)

2^e Brigade (Général de Fontanges de Couzan)

30^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Wirbel)

68^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Paturel)

Division de Cavalerie (Général Brahaut)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Pierre de Bernis)

5^e Régiment de Hussards (Colonel Flogny)

12^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel de Tucé)

2^e Brigade (Général de la Mortière)

3^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel Thorel)

5^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel de Boërio)

6^e Corps (Maréchal Certain-Canrobert)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Tixier)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Péchot)

9^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Mathelin)

4^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Vincendon)

10^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Ardant du Picq)

2^e Brigade (Général Leroy de Dais)

12^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Lebrun)

100^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Grémion)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Bisson)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Noël)

9^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Roux)

14^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Louvent) – unable to join 6^e Corps, so joined 12^e Corps

2^e Brigade (Général Maurice)

20^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de la Guigneraye) – unable to join 6^e Corps, so joined 12^e Corps

31^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Sautereau) – unable to join 6^e Corps, so joined 12^e Corps

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Lafont de Villers)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Becquet de Sonnay)

75^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Amadieu)

91^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Daguerre)

2^e Brigade (Général Colin)

93^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Gauzin)

94^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Geslin)

4^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Levassor-Sorval)

1^{re} Brigade (Général de Marguenat)

25^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Gibon)

26^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Hanrion)

2^e Brigade (Général de Chanaleilles)

28^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Lamothe)

70^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Henrion-Bertier)

Armée du Rhin August 5 Order of Battle (concluded)

7^e Corps (Général Félix Douay)

- 1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Conseil-Dumesnil)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Nicolai)
 - 17^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Merchier)
 - 3^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Champion)
 - 21^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Morand)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Maire)
 - 47^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Gramont)
 - 99^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Chagrin de St. Hilaire)
- 2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Liébert)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Guiomar)
 - 6^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant de Beaufort)
 - 5^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Boyer)
 - 37^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Formy de la Blanchetée)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général de la Bastide)
 - 53^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Japy)
 - 89^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Munier)
- 3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Dumont)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Bordas)
 - 52^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Aveline)
 - 72^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Bartel)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Bittard des Portes)
 - 82^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Guys)
 - 83^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Séatelli)
- Division de Cavalerie (Général Aimel)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Cambriel)
 - 4^e Régiment de Hussards (Colonel de Lavigerie)
 - 4^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel Féline)
 - 8^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel de Dampierre)

Réserve de Cavalerie

- 1^{re} Division de Cavalerie (Général du Barail)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Margueritte) – escorted Napoléon to Châlons on August 16
 - 1^{er} Régiment de Chasseurs d'Afrique (Colonel Cliquot)
 - 3^e Régiment de Chasseurs d'Afrique (Colonel de Galliffet)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général de Lajaille)
 - 2^e Régiment de Chasseurs d'Afrique (Colonel de la Martinière)
 - 4^e Régiment de Chasseurs d'Afrique (Colonel de Quélen)
- 2^e Division de Cavalerie (Général Bonnemaïn)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Girard)
 - 1^{er} Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel de Vandoeuvre)
 - 4^e Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel Billet)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général de Brauer)
 - 2^e Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel Rosetti)
 - 3^e Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel Lafutsun de Lacarre)
- 3^e Division de Cavalerie (Général de Forton)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Murat)
 - 1^{er} Régiment de Dragons (Colonel de Forceville)
 - 9^e Régiment de Dragons (Colonel Reboul)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général de Gramont Lesparre)
 - 7^e Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel Nitot)
 - 10^e Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel Juncker)

German Armies August 12 Order of Battle⁴⁵

Commander: König Wilhelm I (Chief of Staff: General von Moltke)

I Armee (General von Steinmetz)

I Armee-Korps (General von Manteuffel) – joined I Armee on August 12

1. Infanterie Division (General von Benthheim)
 1. Infanterie Brigade (General von Gavi)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 1 (Nr. 1 Ostpreussen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 41 (Nr. 5 Ostpreussen Regiment)
 2. Infanterie Brigade (General von Falkenstein)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 3 (Nr. 2 Ostpreussen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 43 (Nr. 6. Ostpreussen Regiment)
- Ostpreussen Jäger Bataillon Nr. 1
- Lithauen Dragoner Regiment Nr. 1
2. Infanterie Division (General von Hartmann)
 3. Infanterie Brigade (General von Memerty)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 4 (Nr. 3 Ostpreussen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 44 (Nr. 7. Ostpreussen Regiment)
 4. Infanterie Brigade (General von Zglinitzki)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 5 (Nr. 4 Ostpreussen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 45 (Nr. 8 Ostpreussen Regiment)
- Ostpreussen Dragoner Regiment Nr. 10

VII Armee-Korps (General von Zastrow)

13. Infanterie Division (General von Glümer)
 25. Infanterie Brigade (General von Osten)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 13 (Nr. 1 Westfalia Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 73 (Hannover Füsilier Regiment)
 26. Infanterie Brigade (General von der Goltz)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 15 (Nr. 2 Westfalia Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 55 (Nr. 6 Westfalia Regiment)
- Westfalia Jäger Bataillon Nr. 7
- Husar Regiment Nr. 8
14. Infanterie Division (General von Kameke)
 27. Infanterie Brigade (General von Francois)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 39 (Niederhausen Füsilier Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 74 (Nr. 1. Hannover Regiment)
 28. Infanterie Brigade (General von Woyna)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 53 (Nr. 5 Westfalia Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 77 (Nr. 2 Hannover Regiment)
- Kombiniert Infanterie Brigade
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 60 (Nr. 7 Brandenburg Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 72 (Nr. 4 Thüringen Regiment)
- Hannover Husar Regiment Nr. 15

VIII Armee-Korps (General von Goeben)

15. Infanterie Division (General von Weltziehn)
 29. Infanterie Brigade (General von Wedell)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 33 (Ostpreussen Füsilier Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 65 (Nr. 5 Rheintal Regiment)
 30. Infanterie Brigade (General von Strubberg)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 28 (Nr. 2 Rheintal Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 68 (Nr. 6 Rheintal Regiment)
- Rheintal Jäger Bataillon Nr. 8
- Koenigs-Husar Regiment Nr. 7

German Armies August 12 Order of Battle (continued)

I Armee (continued)

- 16. Infanterie Division (General von Barnekow)
 - 31. Infanterie Brigade (General von Gneisenau)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 29 (Nr. 3 Rheintal Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 69 (Nr. 7 Rheintal Regiment)
 - 32. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Rex)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 40 (Hohenzollern Füsilier Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 78 (Nr. 8 Rheintal Regiment)
- Rheintal Husar Regiment Nr. 9
- Kombiniert Kavallerie Brigade (General von Dohna)
 - 1. Reserve Dragonen Regiment
 - 3. Reserve Husar Regiment
- 1. Kavallerie Division** (General von Hartmann) – joined I Armee on August 12
 - 1. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Lüderitz)
 - Kürassier Königen Regiment Nr. 2
 - Pommern Ulanen Regiment Nr. 4
 - Pommern Ulanen Regiment Nr. 9
 - 2. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Baumgarth)
 - Ostpreussen Kürassier Regiment Nr. 3
 - Ostpreussen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 8
 - Litthauen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 12
- 3. Kavallerie Division** (General von der Groeben)
 - 6. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Mirus)
 - Rheintal Kürassier Regiment Nr. 8
 - Rheintal Ulanen Regiment Nr. 7
 - 7. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Dohna)
 - Westfalia Ulanen Regiment Nr. 5
 - Hannover Ulanen Regiment Nr. 14
- Kombiniert Kavallerie Brigade (General von Dohna)
 - 1. Reserve Dragonen Regiment
 - 3. Reserve Husar Regiment

II Armee (General Prinz Friederich von Preussen)

II Armee-Korps (General von Fransecky) – joined II Armee on August 11

- 3. Infanterie Division (General von Hartmann)
 - 5. Infanterie Brigade (General von Koblinsky)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 2 (Nr. 1 Pommern Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 42 (Nr. 5 Pommern Regiment)
 - 6. Infanterie Brigade (General von Decken)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 14 (Nr. 3 Pommern Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 54 (Nr. 7. Pommern Regiment)
- Pommern Jäger Bataillon Nr. 2
- Neumärk Dragoner Regiment Nr. 3
- 4. Infanterie Division (General Hann von Weyhern)
 - 7. Infanterie Brigade (General von Trossel)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 9 (Nr. 2 Pommern Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 49 (Nr. 6 Pommern Regiment)
 - 8. Infanterie Brigade (General von Kettler)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 21 (Nr. 4 Pommern Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 61 (Nr. 8. Pommern Regiment)
- Pommern Dragoner Regiment Nr. 11

German Armies August 12 Order of Battle (continued)

II Armee (continued)

III Armee-Korps (General von Alvensleben II)

- 5. Infanterie Division (General von Stülpnagel)
 - 9. Infanterie Brigade (General von Doering)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 8 (Nr. 1 Brandenburg Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 48 (Nr. 5 Brandenburg Regiment)
 - 10. Infanterie Brigade (General von Schwerin)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 12 (Nr. 2 Brandenburg Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 52 (Nr. 6. Brandenburg Regiment)
- Brandenburg Jäger Bataillon Nr. 3
- Brandenburg Ulanen Regiment Nr. 3
- 6. Infanterie Division (General Hann von Büddenbrock)
 - 11. Infanterie Brigade (General von Rothmaler)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 20 (Nr. 3 Brandenburg Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 35 (Brandenburg Füsilier Regiment)
 - 12. Infanterie Brigade (General von Bismarck)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 24 (Nr. 4 Brandenburg Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 64 (Nr. 8 Brandenburg Regiment)
- Brandenburg Kürassier Regiment Nr. 6

IV Armee-Korps (General von Alvensleben I) – detached to IV Army on August 19

- 7. Infanterie Division (General von Schwartzhoff)
 - 13. Infanterie Brigade (General von Borries)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 26 (Nr. 1 Magdeburg Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 66 (Nr. 3 Magdeburg Regiment)
 - 14. Infanterie Brigade (General von Zychlinski)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 27 (Nr. 2 Magdeburg Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 93 (Anhalt)
- Magdeburg Jäger Bataillon Nr. 4
- Magdeburg Dragoner Regiment Nr. 7
- 8. Infanterie Division (General von Schöler)
 - 15. Infanterie Brigade (General von Kessler)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 31 (Nr. 1 Thüringen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 71 (Nr. 3 Thüringen Regiment)
 - 16. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Scheffler)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 96 (Nr. 7 Thüringen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 86 (Holstein Füsilier Regiment)
- Thüringen Husar Regiment Nr. 12

IX Armee-Korps (General von Manstein)

- 18. Infanterie Division (General von Wrangel)
 - 35. Infanterie Brigade (General von Blumenthal)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 36 (Magdeburg Füsilier Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 84 (Schleswig)
 - 36. Infanterie Brigade (General von Below)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 11 (Nr. 2 Schleswig Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 85 (Holstein)
- Jäger Bataillon Nr. 9
- Husar Regiment Nr. 16
- 25. (Hessen) Infanterie Division (Prinz Ludwig von Hessen)
 - 49. Infanterie Brigade (General von Wittich)
 - Hessen Infanterie Regiment Nr. 1
 - Hessen Infanterie Regiment Nr. 2
 - 1. Hessen Jäger Bataillon

German Armies August 12 Order of Battle (continued)

II Armee (continued)

- 50. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Lynker)
 - Hessen Infanterie Regiment Nr. 3
 - Hessen Infanterie Regiment Nr. 4
 - 2. Hessen Jäger Bataillon
- Hessen Kavallerie Brigade (General von Schlottheim)
 - Hessen Kavallerie Regiments Nr. 1 & Nr. 2

X Armee-Korps (General von Voigts-Rhetz)

- 19. Infanterie Division (General von Schwartzkoppen)
 - 37. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel Lehmann)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 78 (Colonel von Lyncker)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 91 (Colonel von Hagen)
 - 38. Infanterie Brigade (General von Wedell)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 16 (Colonel von Dorsche)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 57 (Colonel von Cranach)
- Hannover Dragoner Regiment Nr. 9 (Lt. Colonel von Hardenberg)
- 20. Infanterie Division (General von Kraatz-Koschlau)
 - 39. Infanterie Brigade (General von Woyna)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 56 (Nr. 7 Westfalia Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 79 (Nr. 3. Hannover Regiment)
 - 40. Infanterie Brigade (General von Diringshofen)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 17 (Nr. 4 Westfalia Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 92 (Braunschweig)
- Hannover Jäger Bataillon Nr. 10 & Hannover Dragoner Regiment Nr. 16

XII Armee-Korps (Kronprinz von Sachsen) – detached to IV Army on August 19

- 23. Infanterie Division (General Prinz Georg von Sachsen)
 - 45. Infanterie Brigade (General von Craushaar)
 - 1. Lieb.-Grenadier Regiment Nr. 100 (Nr. 1 Sachsen Regiment)
 - 2. Grenadier Regiment Nr. 101 (Nr. 2 Sachsen Regiment)
 - Füsilier Regiment Nr. 108
 - 46. Infanterie Brigade (General von Montbé)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 102 (Nr. 3 Sachsen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 103 (Nr. 4 Sachsen Regiment)
- 1. Reiter-Regiment Kronprinz
- 24. Infanterie Division (General Nehrhoff von Holderberg)
 - 47. Infanterie Brigade (General von Leonhardi)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 104 (Nr. 5 Sachsen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 105 (Nr. 6 Sachsen Regiment)
 - Jäger Bataillon Kronprinz Nr. 12
 - 48. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Schultz)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 106 (Nr. 7 Sachsen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 107 (Nr. 8 Sachsen Regiment)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 13
- 2. Reiter-Regiment
- 12. Kavallerie (Sachsen) Division (General Graf zur Lippe)
 - 23. Kavallerie Brigade (General Krug von Nidda)
 - Garde-Reiter Regiment Nr. 5
 - 1. Sachsen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 17
 - 24. Kavallerie Brigade (General Senfft von Pilsach)
 - 3. Reiter-Regiment
 - 2. Sachsen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 18

German Armies August 12 Order of Battle (continued)

II Armee (continued)

Garde-Korps (General Prinz August von Württemberg) – detached to IV Army on August 19

1. Garde-Infanterie Division (General von Pape)
 1. Garde-Infanterie Brigade (General von Kessel)
 1. Garde-Regiment zu Fuss
 2. Garde-Regiment zu Fuss
 2. Garde-Infanterie Brigade (General von Meden)
 3. Garde-Regiment zu Fuss
 4. Garde-Regiment zu Fuss

Garde-Füsilier Regiment
Garde-Jäger Bataillon

 1. Garde-Ulanen Regiment
2. Garde-Infanterie Division (General von Budritzki)
 3. Garde-Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Knappstaedt)
 1. Garde-Grenadier-Regiment
 3. Garde-Grenadier-Regiment
 4. Garde-Infanterie Brigade (General von Berger)
 2. Garde-Grenadier-Regiment
 4. Garde-Grenadier-Regiment

Garde-Füsilier Regiment
Garde-Schützen Bataillon

 3. Garde-Ulanen Regiment
- Garde-Kavallerie Division (General von der Goltz)
 1. Garde-Kavallerie Brigade (General von Brandenburg I)

Garde-du-Corps Regiment
Garde-Kürassier Regiment
 2. Garde-Kavallerie Brigade (General Prinz Albert von Preussen)

Garde-Husar Regiment

 2. Garde-Ulanen Regiment
 3. Garde-Kavallerie Brigade (General von Brandenburg II)
 1. Garde-Dragoner Regiment
 2. Garde-Dragoner Regiment

3. Landwehr-Division (General Schuler von Senden) – joined II Armee at Metz on August 18

5. Landwehr Brigade (General von Ruville)

Kombiniert Ostpreussen Landwehr Regiment Nr. 6-18
Kombiniert Schleswig Landwehr Regiment Nr. 18-46
 6. Landwehr Brigade (General von Gilsa)

Kombiniert Posen Landwehr Regiment Nr. 19-59
Kombiniert Posen Landwehr Regiment Nr. 19-59
- Reserve Dragoner Regiment Nr. 1

5. Kavallerie Division (General von Rheinbaben) – detached to IV Army on August 19

11. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Barby)

Westfalia Kürassier Regiment Nr. 4

 1. Hannover Ulanen Regiment Nr. 13

Oldenburg Dragoner Regiment Nr. 19
12. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Bredow)

Magdeburg Kürassier Regiment Nr. 7

Altmark. Ulanen Regiment Nr. 16

Schleswig-Holstein Dragoner Regiment Nr. 13

German Armies August 12 Order of Battle (continued)

II Armee (continued)

- 13. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Redern)
 - Magdeburg Husar Regiment Nr. 10
 - 2. Westfalia Husar Regiment Nr. 11
 - Braunschweig Husar Regiment Nr. 17

6. Kavallerie Division (Gen. Herzog von Mecklenburg-Schwerin) – detached to IV Army on August 19

- 14. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Grüter)
 - Brandenburg Kürassier Regiment Nr. 6
 - Brandenburg Ulanen Regiment Nr. 3
 - Schleswig-Holstein Ulanen Regiment Nr. 15
- 15. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Rauch)
 - Brandenburg Husar Regiment Nr. 3
 - Schleswig-Holstein Husar Regiment Nr. 16

III Armee (General Kronprinz von Preussen)

V Armee-Korps (General von Kirchbach)

- 9. Infanterie Division (General von Sandrart)
 - 17. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Bothmer)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 58 (Nr. 3 Posen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 59 (Nr. 4 Posen Regiment)
 - 18. Infanterie Brigade (General von Voigts-Rhetz)
 - Königs-Grenadier Regiment Nr. 7 (Westpreussen)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 47 (Nr. 2 Niederschleswig Regiment)
- 10. Infanterie Division (General von Schmidt)
 - 19. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Henning)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 6 (Nr. 1 Westpreussen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 46 (Nr. 1 Niederschleswig Regiment)
 - 20. Infanterie Brigade (General Walther von Montbarry)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 37 (Westpreussen Füsilier Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 50 (Nr. 3 Niederschleswig Regiment)
- Kurmärken Dragoner Regiment Nr. 14

VI Armee-Korps (General von Tümping) – joined III Armee on August 10

- 11. Infanterie Division (General von Gordon)
 - 21. Infanterie Brigade (General von Malachowsky)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 10 (Nr. 1 Schleswig Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 18 (Nr. 1 Posen Regiment)
 - 22. Infanterie Brigade (General von Eckartsberg)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 38 (Schleswig Füsilier Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 51 (Nr. 4 Niederschleswig Regiment)
- 12. Infanterie Division (General von Hoffmann)
 - 23. Infanterie Brigade (General von Gundel)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 22 (Nr. 1 Oberschleswig Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 62 (Nr. 3 Oberschleswig Regiment)
 - 24. Infanterie Brigade (General von Fabeck)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 23 (Nr. 2 Oberschleswig Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 63 (Nr. 4 Oberschleswig Regiment)
- Schleswig Dragoner Regiment Nr. 15

XI Armee-Korps (General von Bose)

- 21. Infanterie Division (General von Schlachtmayer)
 - 41. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Koblinski)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 87 (Nr. 1 Nassau Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 80 (Hessen Füsilier Regiment)

German Armies August 12 Order of Battle (continued)

III Armee (continued)

XI Armee-Korps (continued)

- 42. Infanterie Brigade (General von Thiele)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 82 (Nr. 2 Hessen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 88 (Nr. 2 Nassau Regiment)
- Hessen Jäger Bataillon Nr. 11
- Hessen Husar Regiment Nr. 14
- 22. Infanterie Division (General von Kraatz-Koschlau)
 - 43. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Kontzki)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 32 (Nr. 2 Thuringen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 95 (Nr. 6 Thuringen Regiment)
 - 44. Infanterie Brigade (General von Schkopp)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 83 (Nr. 3 Hessen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 94 (Nr. 5 Thuringen Regiment)
- Hessen Husar Regiment Nr. 13

I Bayern Armee-Korps (General von der Tann-Rathsamhausen)

- 1. Bayern Infanterie Division (General von Stephan)
 - 1. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General Dietl)
 - Korps Infanterie Regiment
 - 1 Infanterie Regiment
 - 4 Infanterie Regiment (1 battalion)
 - 2. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General von Orff)
 - 2 Infanterie Regiment
 - 11 Infanterie Regiment (2 battalions)
 - 8 Infanterie Regiment (1 battalion)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 4
- 2. Bayern Infanterie Division (General von Pappenheim)
 - 3. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General von Schumacher)
 - 3 Infanterie Regiment
 - 12 Infanterie Regiment
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 1
 - 4. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General von der Tann)
 - 10 Infanterie Regiment
 - 13 Infanterie Regiment (2 battalions)
 - 8 Infanterie Regiment (1 battalion)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 7
- Kürassier Kavallerie Brigade (General von Tauch)
 - Kürassier Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 1
 - Kürassier Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 2

II Bayern Armee-Korps (General von Hartmann)

- 3. Bayern Infanterie Division (General Ritter von Walther)
 - 5. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General Schleich)
 - 6 Infanterie Regiment
 - 7 Infanterie Regiment (2 battalions)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 8
 - 6. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Wissell)
 - 14 Infanterie Regiment (2 battalions)
 - 15 Infanterie Regiment
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 3
- Chevaleger Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 1

German Armies August 12 Order of Battle (continued)

III Armee (continued)

II Bayern Armee-Korps (continued)

- 4. Bayern Infanterie Division (General von Bothmer)
 - 7. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General von Thiereck)
 - 5 Infanterie Regiment (2 battalions)
 - 9 Infanterie Regiment
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 6
 - 8. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General Maillinger)
 - Bataillons der 1, 5, 7, 11 & 14 Infanterie Regiments
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 5
- Chevaleger Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 2
- Ulanen Kavallerie Brigade (General von Mulzer)
 - Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 1
 - Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 2
 - Chevaleger Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 5

Württemberg Division (General von Obernitz)

- 1. Infanterie Brigade (General von Reitzenstein)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 1
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 7
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 2
- 2. Infanterie Brigade (General von Starkloff)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 2
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 5
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 3
- 2. Infanterie Brigade (General von Hugel)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 3
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 8
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 1
- Kavallerie Brigade (General von Scheler)
 - Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 1
 - Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 3
 - Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 4

Badische Feld-Division (General von Beyer) – detached August 7 to Strasbourg siege

- 1. Infanterie Brigade (General von Jarrys)
 - Lieb. Grenadier Regiment Nr. 1
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 2
- 2. Infanterie Brigade (General von Degenfeld)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 3
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 4
- 3. Infanterie Brigade (General Keller)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 5
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 6
- Kavallerie Brigade (General von Roche-Starkenfels)
 - Lieb. Dragoner Regiment
 - Dragoner Regiment Nr. 2
 - Dragoner Regiment Nr. 3

2. Kavallerie Division (General von Stolberg) – joined III Armee on August 8

- 3. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Colomb)
 - Lieb.-Kürassier Regiment Nr. 1
 - Schleswig Ulanen Regiment Nr. 2

German Armies August 12 Order of Battle (concluded)

III Armee (continued)

2. Kavallerie Division (continued)

4. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Barnekow)

Lieb.-Husar Regiment Nr. 1

Pommern Husar Regiment Nr. 5

5. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Baumbach)

Schleswig Husar Regiment Nr. 4

Schleswig Husar Regiment Nr. 6

4. Kavallerie Division (General Prinz Albrecht von Preussen)

8. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Hontheim)

Westpreussen Kürassier Regiment Nr. 5

Posen. Ulanen Regiment Nr. 10

9. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Bernhardt)

Westpreussen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 1

Thüringen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 6

10. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Krosick)

Lieb.-Husar Regiment Nr. 2

Rheintal Dragoner Regiment Nr. 5



“Bataille de Forbach (Épisode de la gare de Styring 6 août 1870)”
by Alphonse de Neuville (1885)

Endnotes

- ¹ Modified from a map in Howard, Michael, *The Franco-Prussian War*, (Methuen: London, 1981), end pages.
- ² Rustow, Wilhelm, *The War for the Rhine Frontier 1870*, Volume I, (Blackwood & Sons: London, 1871), page 179.
- ³ Lehautcourt, Pierre, *Histoire de la Guerre de 1870-1871, Les Deux Adversaires*, (Berger-Levrault: Paris, 1902), Vol. II, pages 56-58.
- ⁴ Vinoy, Joseph, *L'Armée Française en 1873*, (Henri Plon: Paris, 1873), pages 11-18 and Pièces Justificatives No. I.
- ⁵ Thus a reservist in northern France might have to travel to his regimental depot in Algeria to be equipped and then sent back through France to the front line on the northeast border. These movements greatly hindered the mobilization.
- ⁶ These depot battalions were also called “fourth battalions,” as described in Appendix D.
- ⁷ Rousset, Léonce, *Histoire Générale de la Guerre Franco-Allemande*, (Librairie Illustrée: Paris, 1911), Volume I, page 22.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, Volume I, Pièces Justificatives, pages II-IV.
- ⁹ The July 22, 1870 *Journal officiel* reported that, as of July 1, officers were available for the mobilization of only 150,000-180,000 gardes mobiles. Lehautcourt, *Op. Cit.*, page 60.
- ¹⁰ Frémont, Paul, *Les Payeurs d'Armées*, (Plon-Nourrit & Cie: Paris, 1906), pages 432-36.
- ¹¹ *Le Figaro* of Monday, December 5, 1870: 17^e Année, 3^e Série, Numéro 339, page 2.
- ¹² Army of the Rhine – so-named under the presumption that the war would be fought on German soil. This was also the illustrious name of a successful French army in 1791-94.
- ¹³ “Armée d'Orient” was the name of the French army that fought in the Crimean War.
- ¹⁴ AA is an abbreviation for “Armée des Alpes,” which was the earlier name of the “Armée d'Italie.” While the names in the postmarks were changed from “Alpes” to “Italie,” the cancellers were not.
- ¹⁵ Chauvet Michèle and Brun, Jean-François, *Introduction à l'Histoire Postale de 1848 à 1878*, (Brun: Paris, 2007), page 718.
- ¹⁶ Published on page 198 of the postal *Bulletin Mensuel* No. 25 of July 1870.
- ¹⁷ Chauvet and Brun, *Op. Cit.*, page 718.
- ¹⁸ This is the earliest known postmark from the “Bureau Spécial de l'Empereur” and is a complete envelope addressed to Paris.
- ¹⁹ Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 78.
- ²⁰ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, pages 42-44.
- ²¹ Lehautcourt, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 241.
- ²² Per the Law of November 9, 1867. Cited in Pflugk-Harttung, Julius von, *The Franco-German War, 1870-71*, (Swan, Sonnenschein & Co.: London, 1900), page 50.
- ²³ Lecomte, Ferdinand, *Relation Historique et Critique de la Guerre Franco-Allemande en 1870-1871*, (Tanera: Paris, 1872), page 150.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, page 210.
- ²⁵ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 67.
- ²⁶ Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 92.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, page 111.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, pages 125-26.
- ²⁹ 5th Corps Headquarters and Bureaus T, U, V and W.
- ³⁰ Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 142.
- ³¹ This division had been based at Nancy when the August 6 disasters took place, and was ordered to join the army at Metz.
- ³² Registered mail required prepayment of postage and was not eligible for a military free frank.
- ³³ As described in Chapters Three and Five, the 13th Corps of the Armée du Rhin retreated to Paris, and continued to use its fieldpost markings from September to December 1870. Because balloon mail required prepayment, “A.R.A.L”, “A.R.A.M”, “A.R.A.N” and “A.R. 13e C” field post cancels were used to cancel stamps on many military balloon letters.
- ³⁴ Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 153.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, page 168.
- ³⁶ Moltke, Helmuth von, *The Franco-German War of 1870-71*, (Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.: London, 1891), Volume I, pages 85-88.
- ³⁷ Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 263.
- ³⁸ As described in Chapter Four, letters were getting out of Metz by unmanned balloons, but that service was not connected to the army's fieldpost service.
- ³⁹ He could have alternatively used Bureau S, which was assigned to the 4^e Corps Cavalry Division.
- ⁴⁰ Lutz, Louis, *Les Papillons de Metz*, Bulletin de la Société des Amis du Musée Postale, No. 22, 1968, page 51.
- ⁴¹ The besieged cities that developed services for mail across siege lines are covered in Chapter Four.
- ⁴² Bournique, Jean-Pierre, *Occupation de la France et Annexion de l'Alsace-Lorraine par l'Allemagne 1870-1872*, (SPAL, 1996), page 8.
- ⁴³ The “Alsace-Lorraine” stamps arrived in Nancy on August 22 or 23, but some officials used them earlier, such as Rosshirt on a postcard with a 10 centimes stamp cancelled on September 6, 1870. *Ibid.*, page 8.
- ⁴⁴ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, Pièces Justificatives, pages II-IV.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Volume I, Pièces Justificatives, pages IV-VII.

Chapter Three

Campaign in the Ardennes: August 9 to September 1

Introduction

As described in Chapter Two, the August 6 French defeats at Forbach and Wörth split the Armée du Rhin into two unconnected parts. The larger part fell back on Metz and was besieged there from August 19 to October 27. The smaller part retreated to the military camp near Châlons-s-Marne and was accordingly named the Armée de Châlons. This army initially comprised the 1st, 5th and 7th Corps from the Armée du Rhin, but was filled out to five corps by the additions of the newly-formed 12th and 13th Corps.

This chapter describes the formation of the Armée de Châlons and its pursuit by the III and IV German armies into the Ardennes. The movements of the fieldpost services that accompanied the armies are traced by letters written by French and German soldiers during the campaign. Figure 3-1 shows the theater of operations for the Ardennes campaign.

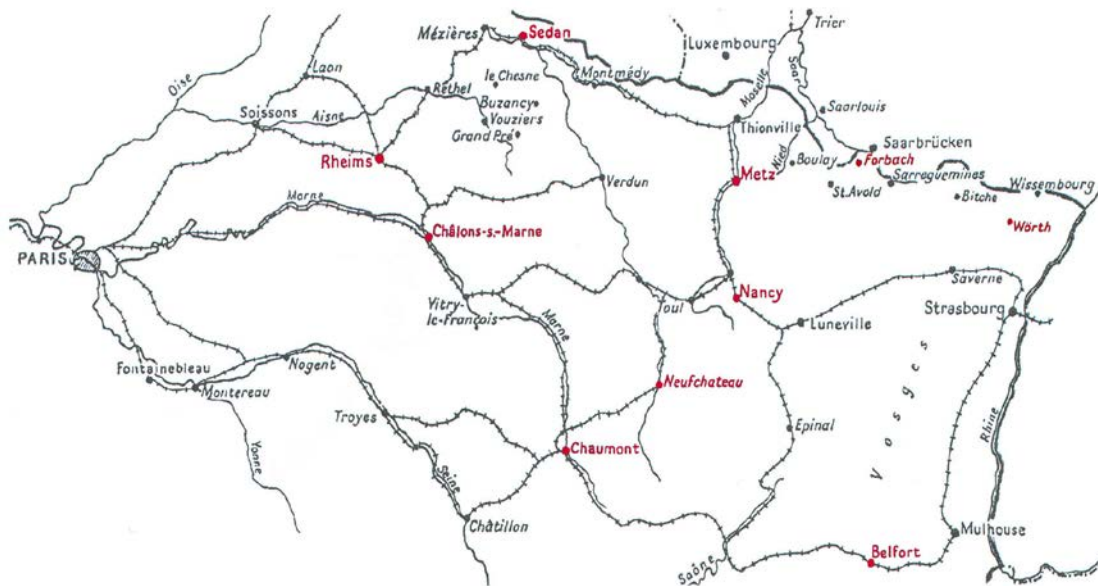


Figure 3-1. Theater of Operations for the Ardennes Campaign¹

The Formation of the Armée de Châlons

August 7 found elements of the French army retreating from two resounding defeats on the frontier. The 1st Corps and the 1st Division of the 7th Corps fell back in disarray from their battle at Wörth. Their only option for retreat was southwest toward Nancy, since the advancing German II Army was already blocking any approach toward Metz. The 5th Corps, which had not been engaged on August 6, found itself between advancing German columns from both battles, and also fell back from Saarguemines toward Nancy. Finally, three divisions of the 7th Corps were at Belfort, and were also unable to reach Metz.

The French high command struggled to find a way to reunite their forces in the face of the significantly larger German armies. They determined that the three separated corps should fall back to the camp near Châlons-s-Marne to regroup and then advance to rejoin the Armée du Rhin west of Metz. On August 9, the 1st Corps, 5th Corps and 7th Corps were all placed under the orders of Maréchal MacMahon, former

3 – Campaign in the Ardennes

commander of the 1st Corps, to coordinate their handling. Their order of battle is shown at the end of this chapter.

The French fieldpost services fell back with the three corps, and continued using the Armée du Rhin postal materials that had been supplied at the beginning of the war. The 19 fieldpost bureaus assigned to the Armée de Châlons are listed in Appendix A.

It was a harrowing trip from the frontier for the three French corps. The 1st Corps, the 1st Division of the 7th Corps and two reserve cavalry divisions retreated south of Nancy and, from August 14 to August 17, entrained from Neufchâteau for the Châlons camp. They were finally reunited at the camp on August 19.² Figure 3-2 shows a 1st Corps letter postmarked while at Neufchâteau.

Figure 3-2. August 17, 1870 letter from Bureau E of the 1st Corps' Cavalry Division



This letter was posted with a military free frank on August 17 at the Cavalry Division's Bureau E, and arrived in Paris two days later. The 1st Corps cavalry was just setting out from Neufchâteau on its march to Châlons. Figure 3-3 shows a 1st Corps letter written at the Châlons camp.



Figure 3-3. August 20, 1870 letter from Bureau B of the 1st Corps' 2nd Division

This letter was endorsed for a free frank by Général Pellé, commander of the 2nd Division of the 1st Corps, and postmarked at Bureau B on August 20. The 1st Corps was the only Armée du Rhin unit to use red postmarks, so they are not often seen. This letter was addressed to nearby Châlons-s-Marne.



“Infantry at the Châlons Camp” by Alexandre Bellangé (Musée de l’Armée)

The units at Châlons camp³ moved to Reims on August 21, so arriving troops were routed to Reims after that date. Among those was the 5th Corps, which had also retreated south of Nancy, but entrained from Chaumont starting on August 17. They finally reached the army at Reims on August 22.⁴ It appears that their fieldpost materials were lost during the retreat, since no mail processed by the 5th Corps fieldpost bureaus after August 4 is known.⁵

The 7th Corps stayed at Belfort until it was ordered to Châlons camp on August 16. Its forces were transported by rail via Chaumont and Paris, and reached the Armée de Châlons at Reims on August 22. Figure 3-4 shows a letter mailed while they were in transit.



Figure 3-4. August 18, 1870 letter from the 7th Corps' headquarters bureau

This letter was posted with a free frank at the 7th Corps' headquarters bureau on August 18, while they were waiting for rail transport south of Belfort. It bears a “Septième Corps” private handstamp, and reached Arametz in southern France on August 21.

The Formation of the French 12th and 13th Corps

Other than the Garde Impériale, the French army corps were numbered from one to seven. When the next corps was formed in August, however, it was denominated the 12th Corps. This was because planned forces in Paris, Lyon, Toulouse and Algeria had been designated as the 8th through 11th “Territorial Corps,” as part of an August 7 French effort to field a new army of 150,000 men.⁶ Those four corps were never formed, so no fieldpost service was established for them. However, some 8th Corps manuscript endorsements are known. Figure 3-5 shows an example from besieged Paris.

Figure 3-5. October 12, 1870
letter from Paris endorsed
“8^e Corps d’Armée”



This letter was written by a naval marine at the Nogent fort on October 12, and prepaid 20 centimes domestic postage. It was confided to Count Émile de Kératry, who was leaving Paris as a passenger in the manned balloon *Godefroy Cavaignac*. That balloon left Paris on the morning of October 14 and landed on the same day in occupied territory west of Toul. Kératry escaped south to Chaumont to continue on his diplomatic mission to Spain.⁷ He mailed this letter enroute at the port of Marignane on October 17.

The 12th Corps was formed at Châlons on August 18.⁸ Most of its strength was drawn from pre-war units, which included seven line infantry regiments and four regiments of naval marines. It was filled out by two “march” infantry regiments, each composed of three depot battalions drawn from line infantry regiment mobilization depots,⁹ as shown in the order of battle at the end of this chapter. The 12th Corps was thrown into action before its fieldpost postal materials could be supplied, so no 12th Corps fieldpost markings are known. Had it survived, it would have used bureaux AL, AM, AN and AO. Instead, those bureaux were assigned to the 13th Corps upon its return to Paris after the debacle at Sedan.

The 13th Corps, formed at Paris on August 26, was much more heterogeneous than the 12th Corps, since it included only the 35th and 42nd line infantry regiments from the pre-war army.¹⁰ These two regiments were called to Paris from occupation duty in Rome on August 3. They had been there since October 28, 1867 as part of an expeditionary force protecting the Papal States from an attack by General Giuseppe Garibaldi. Garibaldi was stopped at the November 3, 1867 battle of Mentana, so most of the expedition returned to France during the following month. The 35th and 42nd Regiments stayed in Rome to protect Pope Pius IX, and four payeur officers stayed with them.¹¹

Figure 3-6 shows two of the fieldpost markings used in Rome on a letter sent nine days after the start of the Franco-German War. Franked by 20 centimes, this letter was postmarked “CORPS EXPÉD^{RE} D’ITALIE ROME” on July 28, and the stamp was cancelled “CER.” It arrived in Marseille on July 30.

Figure 3-6. July 28, 1870 letter from the Corps Expéditionnaire de Rome



When the Rome garrison was called to active duty in France on August 3, it became eligible for the July 24 military free frank.¹² Free-franked letters are known from the two-week period ending on August 18, when the last troops returned to France. Figure 3-7 shows a free-franked letter postmarked on the last day of the fieldpost's operations in Italy.



Figure 3-7. August 18, 1870 letter from the Corps Expéditionnaire de Rome

Dated "Civita Vecchia le 15 août 1870," this letter was postmarked three days later. The black "CORPS EXPÉD^{RE} 2 ROME 2" postmark is different than the one in Figure 3-6 since it was applied by a different payeur.¹³ The writer reported that, "we are alone at Civita Va. with the administration. Your regiment has left along with all the others. We embark tomorrow 16 August on the transport *Mayenne*...in four days we will be at Toulouse. You sent me two stamps that I am returning since I have no need of them...Roussau au 3e Régiment de train." His letter arrived in central France on August 21.

The 35th and 42nd line infantry regiments were joined in the 13th Corps by ten recently-formed march infantry regiments, as shown in the order of battle at the end of this chapter. The new march infantry regiments had barely half of the normal number of officers in a line regiment,¹⁴ which weakened their combat readiness and performance, so high command was reluctant to use the new formations. Nonetheless, the 13th Corps marched to support the Armée de Châlons in the Ardennes before its fieldpost service could be established. It was able to escape the surrender at Sedan and return to Paris, where its fieldpost service joined it on September 17. That service is described in Chapter Five.

When fully constituted, the Armée de Châlons consisted of 16 infantry divisions and seven cavalry divisions. The table below shows the distribution of forces in the five corps.¹⁵

Armée de Chalons Numerical Strength

French Military Unit	Infantry	Cavalry	Total
1 st Corps Ducrot)	26,000	2,500	28,500
5 th Corps (de Failly)	18,000	1,500	19,500
7 th Corps (Douay)	25,000	2,400	27,400
12 th Corps (Lebrun)	36,000	4,200	40,200
13 th Corps (Vinoy)	31,000	0	31,000
Cavalry Reserve	0	4,100	4,100
Total	136,000	14,700	150,700

Deducting the infantry in the still-forming 13th Corps, 120,000 French soldiers in the Armée de Châlons were about to face nearly twice that number of battle-hardened Germans.

The Detachment of the German III and IV Armies

After the German armies trapped Maréchal Bazaine's five corps in Metz on August 19, the high command re-organized their forces to accomplish the dual objectives of besieging Metz and pursuing the Armée de Châlons. Accordingly, The IV Corps, XII Corps and Garde Corps, along with the 5th and 6th Cavalry Divisions, were detached from the II Army to create the Maas Armee (Army of the Meuse), which was also known as the IV Army. This detachment ("Armee-Abteilung") was placed under the orders of the Crown Prince of Saxony, as shown in the order of battle at the end of this chapter. On August 23, the 140,000-man III Army and the 90,000-man IV Army were released from Nancy and Metz to pursue the Armée de Châlons.¹⁶ Figure 3-8 shows the routes taken by the III Army (in blue) and the IV Army (in purple) in their movements to the Ardennes and Sedan.

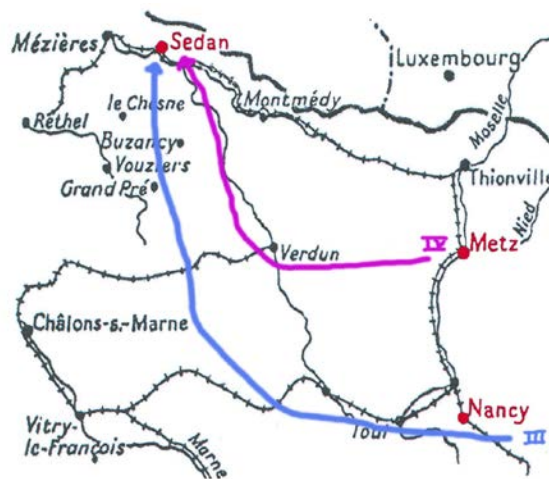


Figure 3-8. Map of the Movements of the German Armies into the Ardennes¹⁷

The fieldpost bureaus for the III and IV Armies continued using the postal materials that had been supplied at the beginning of the war. The later formation of the IV Army, however, required the creation of a new army headquarters bureau for the Crown Prince of Saxony.¹⁸ The 77 fieldpost bureaus of the III and IV German armies during the Ardennes campaign are listed in Appendix A.

Hard on the heels of the escaping French 1st Corps and 5th Corps, the III Army reached Nancy (south of Metz) on August 14. Figure 3-9 shows an unusual letter sent from Nancy four days later.

Figure 3-9. August 18, 1870 letter mailed at the III Army headquarters



Datelined at Nancy on August 18, this letter from a French civilian was censored per a note on the reverse and postmarked that day at the III Army's fieldpost bureau. The 20 centimes franking was accepted, so the letter was sent via Prussia and Belgium without any postage due. It entered northern France via Erquelines on August 27 and passed through Mulhouse (in eastern France) before reaching St. Loup on September 1.

The III Army was still positioned near Nancy when the August 23 order to pursue the Armée de Châlons was received. Figure 3-10 shows an intra-unit V Corps letter from that period.



Figure 3-10. August 22, 1870 letter from the 9th Division

This letter was posted on August 22 at the 9th Division's fieldpost bureau near Nancy. It was addressed to the nearby V Corps headquarters, where it arrived on the same day. The V Corps postmarked it upon arrival, using their old-style postmark ("K.PR.FELDPOST-AMT 5^e ARMEE CORPS").

The Armée de Châlons Moves from Reims to Sedan

Political considerations forced MacMahon to advance to the relief of Bazaine at Metz, rather than fall back to a strong defensive position around Paris. In addition, a dispatch from Bazaine was received on August 22 that stated, “I still plan to move northwards and fight my way out via Montmédy on the Ste. Ménéhould-Châlons road, if it is not too strongly occupied; if it is, I shall go on through Sedan and Mézières to reach Châlons.”¹⁹ That clinched the decision. On August 23, the Armée de Châlons left Reims to lift the siege of Bazaine’s army in Metz. MacMahon’s plan was to march northeast via Vouziers and Montmédy to link up with Bazaine or perhaps to trap the German II Army between the two French armies.

The 13th Corps did not participate fully in this part of the campaign, since it was not completely formed until August 26.²⁰ However, the 1st Division of the 13th Corps was transported to Reims on August 25 to protect the army’s line of communications. The 3rd Division of the 13th Corps was also moved by rail to Mézières on August 29-30.

The Armée de Châlons made good progress on the first day of the march, and reached the line of the Aisne River between Rethel and Vouziers on August 24. They arrived with insufficient supplies, however, so MacMahon ordered a northward adjustment in the line of march to stay closer to the railroad line of supply between Reims and Mézières.²¹ Figure 3-11 shows a detailed map of the region between Reims and Sedan. The cross-hatched lines are railroads, and the dotted lines are roads.

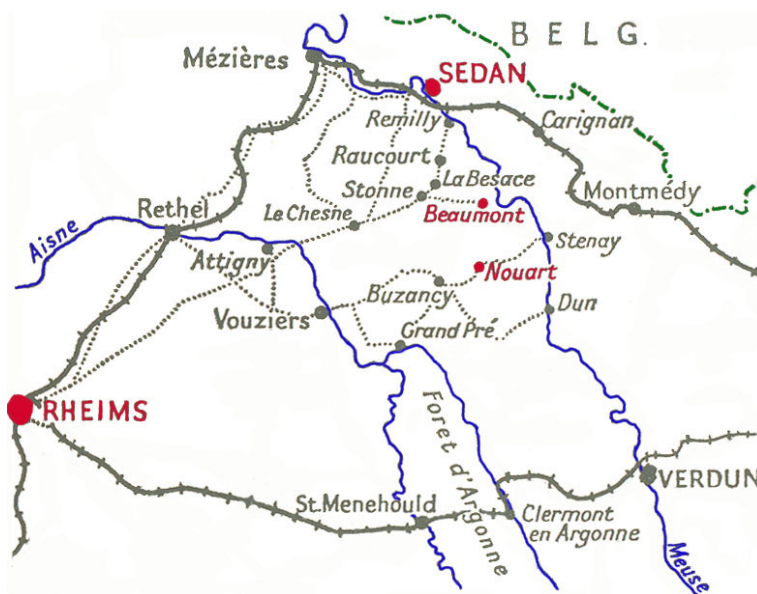


Figure 3-11. Map of the Region between Reims and Sedan²²

Unfortunately, this swing to the north delayed the army’s progress toward Montmédy, and gave the German III and IV Armies crucial time to close in on the Armée de Châlons.

Figure 3-12 shows a letter written while the 7th Corps was still at Vouziers. This letter was posted on August 25 at the 3rd Division’s Bureau AF, and arrived in Saintes on August 30. The 7th Corps was holding its position on the southern flank at Vouziers. Unknown to them, on that same day, elements of the IV Army reached the line between Clermont-en-Argonne and Verdun to their southeast.²³

**Figure 3-12. August 25, 1870
letter from Bureau AF of
the 7th Corps' 3rd Division**



By August 25, the German high command had deduced the movement toward Montmédy by the Armée de Châlons, so von Moltke ordered the III and IV armies to swing north to intercept the French. Figure 3-8 shows this dramatic pivot. Unaware of the proximity of the IV Army, the Armée de Châlons resumed its eastward movement on August 26, and reached positions between Rethel, Le Chesne and Buzancy.²⁴ During that day, the Saxon (XII Corps) cavalry made contact with the right flank of the 7th Corps at Grand Pré, and caused another damaging delay.

As mentioned above, the French 12th Corps fieldpost service never received its postal materials, so surviving letters bear only manuscript endorsements. The 12th Corps was only in existence for the two weeks between August 18 and September 1, so only a few letters with such manuscript endorsements are known. An August 26 letter from Rethel is shown in Figure 3-13.



**Figure 3-13. August 26, 1870
letter endorsed '12 corps'
and posted at Rethel**

This letter was datelined at Rethel on August 26, 1870 and endorsed "12 corps d'armée 4^e de chasseurs."²⁵ A military postmaster took it to the civilian post office at Rethel, where it was marked "P.P." to indicate a military free frank in accordance with the July-August free frank laws.²⁶ It arrived in Castelnau d'Estrétefonds (southwestern France) on August 28.

On August 27, the XII Corps captured the Meuse River crossings at Stenay and Dun, blocking MacMahon's direct access to Montmédy. The next day, the French 5th Corps and 7th Corps advanced from Buzancy toward the river crossing at Stenay, while the 1st Corps and 12th Corps moved from Le Chesne to

La Besace.²⁷ The IV Army was close behind them between Buzancy and Dun.²⁸ Figure 3-14 shows a card sent at this time from the IV Corps.



Figure 3-14. August 28, 1870 letter from the IV Corps

This fieldpost card was postmarked on August 28 at the IV Corps' headquarters bureau and datelined on that day at Fromeréville-les-Vallons.²⁹ There is an endorsement at lower left to the 4th Field Artillery Regiment.

During its movement toward the German-held river crossing at Stenay, the 5th Corps ran into XII Corps infantry at Nouart on August 29. After a sharp skirmish, the French withdrew north to Beaumont under the cover of darkness. August 29 is also the latest known date for letters processed by the Armée de Châlons fieldpost service. Figure 3-15 shows a 1st Corps letter posted on that day.



Figure 3-15. August 29, 1870 letter from Bureau A of the 1st Corps' 1st Division

This letter was posted on August 29 at the 1st Division's Bureau A, which was south of Sedan at La Besace. It was sent by Général de Postis du Houlbec, commander of the 1st Division's 2nd Brigade, who unnecessarily prepaid 20 centimes postage. The fieldpost bureau did not cancel the stamp, suggesting that

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they were not equipped with “A.R.A” cancelling devices. Instead, the stamp was cancelled in transit on the civilian Irun-Bordeaux railway.³⁰ It arrived in southern France on September 2.

On the morning of August 30, the German Garde Corps, IV Corps and I Bavarian Corps surprised the French 5th Corps in bivouac at Beaumont. The 5th Corps was routed, and retreated north.³¹ MacMahon, unsettled by the size of the enemy force to his immediate southeast, ordered the entire Armée de Châlons to retreat north to Sedan.

On August 31, MacMahon arranged his army in defensive positions around the ancient fortress of Sedan, which is only fourteen kilometers southwest of the Belgian frontier. Douay’s 7th Corps was placed to the north-northwest of Sedan with its left flank on the Meuse River. The 1st Corps was placed to Douay’s right, northeast of Sedan and 12th Corps filled the east-southeast quadrant between Sedan and Bazeilles, with its right flank on the Meuse. The south-southwest quadrant was protected by the fortress and the river. The shattered 5th Corps (under its new commander, General de Wimpffen) was placed in reserve³² and the 3rd Division of the 13th Corps had just reached Mézières, to the west of Sedan.³³

The French units dug in and waited for the approaching German III and IV armies. Figure 3-16 shows a letter from the VI Corps (III Army) closing on Sedan from the south.



Figure 3-16.
August 31, 1870
card from the
VI Corps

This postcard was datelined at Vouziers on August 31 from a soldier in the 6th Field Artillery Regiment. It was posted that day at the VI Corps’ support division bureau, and arrived in Berlin on September 7.

The September 1 French Disaster at Sedan

The I Bavarian Corps opened the battle at 4am on September 1 by attacking the 12th Corps at Bazeilles. A vicious house-to-house battle ensued, as seen in Alphonse de Neuville’s famous painting of that battle.



“Les Dernières Cartouches” by Alphonse de Neuville (1873)

The III Army was ordered to cross the Meuse River west of Sedan to cut off any line of retreat to Mézières, so the V Corps and the XI Corps crossed at Donchéry at 4am, and then attacked the French 7th Corps from the west. Later in the day, the XII Corps (IV Army) began the German attack from the east, and the Garde Corps swung around to the north to cut off any escape routes to Belgium. They linked up with the V Corps around noon, closing the encirclement around the Armée de Châlons, with only the 13th Corps outside of the net. At 5pm, Napoleon III surrendered with 110,000 French soldiers in four corps. It was one of the greatest military disasters in French history.

There were nearly 14,000 French wounded on the battlefield, tended by many ambulances. Figure 3-17 shows a letter sent a day after the battle from an international ambulance.



**Figure 3-17. September 2, 1870
letter posted at the Bavarian
4th Division's fieldpost bureau**

The letter-writer wrote “Our ambulance is established near Raucourt (Sedan). The misery that we see is cruel...we had to set up the ambulance under enemy artillery fire...A.F. Dufer, surgical aide, 10 French International Ambulance (Dutch).” He mailed his letter at fieldpost bureau VI of the II Bavarian Corps’ 4th Division on September 2. It arrived in Brussels on September 9.

The German high command wasted little time setting its armies in motion toward Paris. On September 3, von Moltke ordered the IV Army and the V, VI and II Bavarian Corps of the III Army to begin the

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movement toward Reims and Laon.³⁴ The Württemberg Division was left behind to protect the lines of supply and communications until the newly-formed XIII Corps could replace it in September.³⁵ Figure 3-18 shows a letter from a prisoner posted at the Württemberg Division's fieldpost bureau.



Figure 3-18. September 2, 1870 letter posted at the Württemberg Division's headquarters bureau

Written by a captured 7th Corps soldier³⁶ on the day after the battle, this letter was postmarked “KÖN. WÜRTT. FELDP. STAMT” on September 2 at the Württemberg Division's headquarters bureau. Upon its October 7 arrival at Langres, it was rated for 50 centimes due.³⁷

The XI Corps, I Bavarian Corps and the 4th Cavalry Division of the III Army were detailed to stay at Sedan as guards until the French prisoners-of-war could be transferred to camps in Germany, starting on September 6. Figure 3-19 shows a letter from a 7th Corps soldier posted at his captors' fieldpost bureau.



Figure 3-19. September 7, 1870 letter posted at the XI Corps' headquarters bureau

This letter was endorsed “armée du Rhin 7^e Corps” and censored on September 5 (per a note on the reverse). It was then postmarked on September 7 at the XI Corps' headquarters bureau and rated for a free frank in transit at Lyon per the red “P.P.” It arrived at La Grasse in southern France on October 5.

Officers of the Armée de Châlons were given the option of going into captivity with their men, or going free by giving their word not to fight again in the war. Only 550 officers gave such a parole.³⁸ One who did not was Général Douay, commander of the 7th Corps, as seen in Figure 3-20 (unfolded to show the reverse).

Figure 3-20. November 24, 1870 letter sent from Paris to prisoner-of-war Général Douay



This letter was posted in besieged Paris³⁹ on November 24, 1870 and addressed to Douay, a prisoner in Mannheim, Baden. It was franked for the 30 centimes rate to Baden and carried out of Paris by the manned balloon *Ville d'Orléans* on November 24. That balloon was blown off course to Norway, so this letter arrived in Mannheim on December 18. Douay was not there, so the letter was forwarded six times until he was finally located at Bonn. The reverse bears POW camp markings from Coblenz and Cassel.

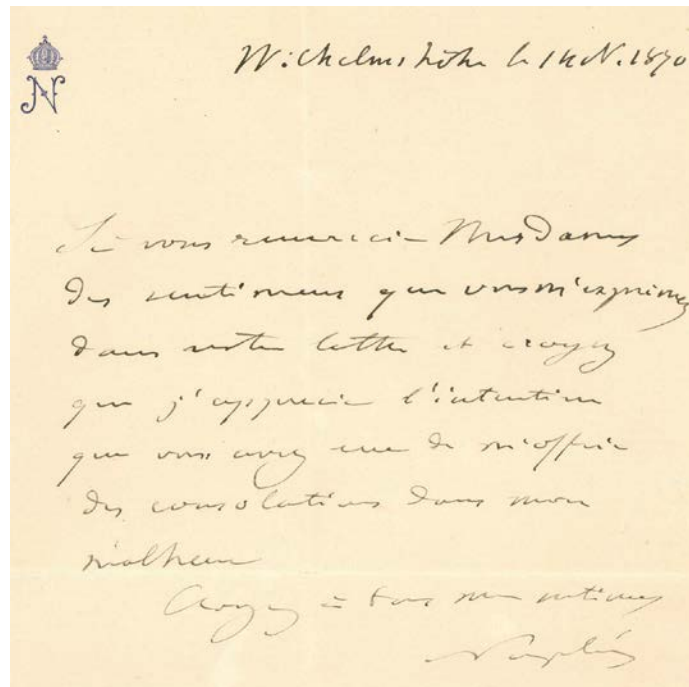
The most notable prisoner at Sedan was Emperor Napoléon III. He was taken to captivity at Wilhelmshöhe castle for the duration of the war. Figure 3-21 shows a letter written by him in captivity.



Figure 3-21. November 14, 1870 letter from prisoner-of-war Napoléon III

This note of thanks to two ladies in England was written on November 14 by Napoléon III while at Wilhelmshöhe. He franked it with 2½ groschen for the postage to England and mailed it in nearby Cassel. His letter arrived on November 17, and is reproduced in Figure 3-22.

Figure 3-22. November 14, 1870 letter text from prisoner-of-war Napoléon III



The German Reserve Army Moves to Reims

As described in Appendix F, the German forces that had been held on the Baltic Coast to protect against a French amphibious landing were sent to reinforce the II Army at Metz when it became clear that there was no threat of invasion. The newly-formed XIII Corps, consisting of the 17th Division and the 2nd Landwehr Division, reached Metz on September 6 and was ordered to assist in the siege of Toul⁴⁰ and then to move to Reims to protect German supply and communications lines. The Grand Duke Frederick Francis II of Mecklenburg-Schwerin was named commander of the XIII Corps on October 28, and was replaced as Governor-General at Reims by General Rosenberg-Gruszcynski.⁴¹ Prior to that, the Grand Duke had his own fieldpost bureau, as shown in Figure 3-23.



Figure 3-23. September 30, 1870 letter from the Mecklenburg Corps

This letter was postmarked “FELD-POST AMT D.CORPS D.GROSSHERZOGS V.MECKLENB” (Fieldpost of the Corps of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg) on September 30 at Reims. The blue private cachet at lower left is from the 11th Brandenburg Regiment in the 17th Division. This postmark is among

the rarest of all German fieldpost markings, since it was replaced in October by the more typical XIII Corps fieldpost marking, as shown in Figure 3-24.



Figure 3-24. October 20, 1870 postcard from the 13th Corps' fieldpost bureau

Dated at Reims on October 20, this fieldpost card was posted on the same day at the XIII Corps headquarters bureau. Shortly after this, the XIII Corps headquarters was transferred to Paris for siege duties. The 17th Corps had left earlier for Paris, arriving there on October 10. After its departure, the 2nd Landwehr Division remained at Reims under the orders of the Governor-General at Reims. Figure 3-25 shows a fieldpost card from the 2nd Landwehr Division at Reims.



Figure 3-25. December 14, 1870 postcard from the 2nd Landwehr Division

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Dateline at Reims on December 14, this fieldpost card was postmarked “FELD-POST-EXPED 2. LANDWEHR DIVISION” and sent to Berlin on December 17.

As the III and IV Armies moved from Sedan toward Paris, Moltke continued to be concerned about guarding his supply and communications lines, so the Württemberg Division left its 4th Regiment at Saverne to guard a vulnerable railway tunnel. Figure 3-26 shows an unusual letter posted at that fieldpost bureau.



Figure 3-26. October 2, 1870 letter from the Württemberg Division's 4th Regiment

Dateline at Zornhoff (near Saverne) on October 1, this letter was franked by a pair of 20 centimes stamps⁴² of the Alsace-Lorraine occupation issue for the postage to Italy. It was postmarked “K.W. FELDPOST IV. INF. REG.” on October 2 and sent to Palermo where it arrived on October 9. Military fieldpost mail to foreign countries is very unusual.



“Le Général Margueritte Mortellement Blessé à Floing (Bataille de Sedan)
Le 1^{er} Septembre 1870” by James Alexander Walker (c. 1880)

The Orders of Battle Referenced in this Chapter

Armée de Châlons August 26 Order of Battle⁴³

Commander: Maréchal de MacMahon

1^{er} Corps (Général Ducrot)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Wolff)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Moréno)

13^e Bataillon de Chasseurs (Commandant Potier)

18^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Bréger)

96^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Bluem)

2^e Brigade (Général de Postis du Houlbec)

45^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Germain)

1^{er} Régiment de Zouaves (Colonel Barrachin)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Pellé)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Pelletier de Montmarie)

16^e Bataillon de Chasseurs (Commandant d'Hughes)

50^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Ardoin)

74^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Theuvez)

2^e Brigade (Général Gandil)

78^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Pellenc)

1^{er} Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens (Colonel de Morandy)

1^{er} Régiment de Marche (Colonel Lecomte) - depot battalions from 1^{er}, 6^e and 7^e line regiments

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général L'Hérillier)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Carteret-Trécourt)

8^e Bataillon de Chasseurs (Commandant Viénot)

36^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Beaudoin)

2^e Régiment de Zouaves (Colonel Détrie)

2^e Brigade (Général Lefebvre)

48^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Rogier)

2^e Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens (Commandant Canale)

Bataillon des Francs-Tireurs de Paris (Commandant Robin)

4^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Lartigue)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Fraboulet de Kerléadec)

1^{er} Bataillon de Chasseurs (Commandant Briatte)

56^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Billot)

3^e Régiment de Zouaves (Colonel Bocher)

2^e Brigade (Général Carrey de Bellemare)

3^e Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens (Colonel Barrué)

2^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel de Lenchey) - depot battalions from 8^e, 24^e and 33^e line regts

3^e Bataillon du 3^e Grenadiers de la Garde (Colonel de Souancé)

Division de Cavalerie (Général Duhesme)

1^{re} Brigade (Général de Septeuil)

3^e Régiment de Hussards (Colonel d'Espeuilles) – escaped from Sedan

11^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel d'Astugue) – escaped from Sedan

2^e Brigade (Général de Nansouty)

2^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel de Landreville) – escaped from Sedan

6^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel Tripart) – escaped from Sedan

10^e Régiment de Dragons (Colonel Perrot)

3^e Brigade (Général Michel)

8^e Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel Guiot de la Rochère)

Armée de Châlons August 26 Order of Battle (continued)

5^e Corps (Général de Faily)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Goze)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Saurin)

4^e Bataillon de Chasseurs (Commandant Foncegrives)

11^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Behagle)

46^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Pichon)

2^e Brigade (Général Nicolas)

61^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel du Moulin)

86^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Berthe)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Gén. L'Abadie d'Aydein) – the 1st Brigade was attached to the 2nd Corps at Metz

14^e Bataillon de Chasseurs (Commandant Planck) – five companies only

2^e Brigade (Général de Maussion)

49^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Kampf)

88^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Courty)

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Guyot de Lespart)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Abatucci)

19^e Bataillon de Chasseurs (Commandant de Marqué)

17^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Weisseburger)

27^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Barolet)

2^e Brigade (Général de Fontanges de Couzan)

30^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Wirbel)

68^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Paturel)

Division de Cavalerie (Général Brahaut)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Pierre de Bernis)

5^e Régiment de Hussards (Colonel Flogny)

12^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel de Tucé) – escaped from Sedan

2^e Brigade (Général de la Mortière)

3^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel Thorel)

5^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel de Boerio) – escaped from Sedan

7^e Corps (Général Félix Douay)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Conseil-Dumesnil)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Nicolai)

17^e Bataillon de Chasseurs (Commandant Merchier)

3^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Champion)

21^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Morand)

2^e Brigade (Général Maire)

47^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Gramont)

99^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Chagrin de St. Hilaire)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Liébert)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Guiomar)

6^e Bataillon de Chasseurs (Commandant de Beaufort)

5^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Boyer)

37^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Formy de la Blanchetée)

2^e Brigade (Général de la Bastide)

53^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Japy)

89^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Munier)

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Dumont)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Bordas)

52^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Aveline)

72^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Bartel)

Armée de Châlons August 26 Order of Battle (continued)

7^e Corps (continued)

- 2^e Brigade (Général Bittard des Portes)
 - 82^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Guys)
 - 83^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Séatelli)
- Division de Cavalerie (Général Aimel)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Cambriel)
 - 4^e Régiment de Hussards (Colonel de Lavigerie)
 - 4^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel Féline)
 - 8^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel de Dampierre)

12^e Corps (Général Lebrun)

- 1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Grandchamp)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Cambriels) - recalled from the Spanish frontier
 - 22^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel de Mauroy)
 - 34^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Hervé)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général de Villeneuve)
 - 58^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Dulyon de Rochefort) - recalled from the Spanish frontier
 - 79^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Bressolles) - recalled from Corsica
- 2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Lacretelle)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Marquisan)
 - 3^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Bernier) - depot battalions from 40^e, 62^e and 64^e line regiments
 - 4^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Chauchard) - depot battalions from 65^e, 91^e and 94^e line regts
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Louvent) – unable to join 6^e Corps, so incorporated into the 12^e Corps
 - 14^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Doussot)
 - 20^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de la Guigneraye)
 - 31^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Sautereau)
- 3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Vassoigne) – recalled August 7 from the fleet at Cherbourg
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Reboul)
 - 1^{er} Régiment de Marche d'Infanterie de Marine (Colonel Brière de l'Isle)
 - 4^e Régiment de Marche d'Infanterie de Marine (Colonel d'Arbaud)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Martin de Pallières)
 - 2^e Régiment de Marche d'Infanterie de Marine (Colonel Alleyron)
 - 3^e Régiment de Marche d'Infanterie de Marine (Colonel Lecamus)
- Division de Cavalerie (Général Lichtlin)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général de Vendoeuvre)
 - 7^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel Thornton)
 - 8^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel Jamin du Fresnay)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Yvelin de Béville) – part of the 6th Corps Cavalry which was unable to reach Metz
 - 5^e Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel Dubessey de Contenson)
 - 6^e Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel Martin)

Réserve de Cavalerie

- 1^{re} Division de Cavalerie (Général Margueritte)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général N.)
 - 1^{er} Régiment de Chasseurs d'Afrique (Colonel Cliquot)
 - 3^e Régiment de Chasseurs d'Afrique (Colonel de Galliffet)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général de Tillard) – part of the 6th Corps Cavalry which was unable to reach Metz
 - 6^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel Bonvoust)
 - 1^{er} Régiment de Hussards (Colonel de Beauffremont)

Armée de Châlons August 26 Order of Battle (concluded)

Réserve de Cavalerie (continued)

2^e Division de Cavalerie (Général Bonnemain)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Girard)

1^{er} Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel de Vandoeuvre)

4^e Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel Courtois)

2^e Brigade (Général de Brauer)

2^e Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel Boré-Verrier)

3^e Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel Despetit de Lasalle)

Division de Cavalerie du 6^e Corps (Général de Salignac-Fénelon) – unable to join the 6^e Corps at Metz

2^e Brigade (Général Savarese)

1^{er} Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel Oudinot de Reggio)

7^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel Périer)

13^e Corps (Général Vinoy) – formed August 26

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général d'Exéa)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Mattat)

5^e Régiment de Marche (Colonel Hanrion) - depot battalions from 2^e, 9^e and 11^e line regiments

6^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel du Guiny) - depot battalions from 12^e, 15^e and 19^e line regts

2^e Brigade (Général Daudel)

7^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Tarayre) - depot battalions from 20^e, 23^e and 25^e line regiments

8^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Drouet) - depot battalions from 29^e, 41^e and 43^e line regiments

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Maud'huy)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Guérin)

9^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Col. Miguel de Riu) - depot battalions from 51^e, 54^e and 59^e line regts

10^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel de Molans) - depot battalions from 69^e, 70^e and 71^e line regts

2^e Brigade (Général Blaise)

11^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Col. Née-Devaux) - depot battalions from 75^e, 81^e and 86^e line regts

12^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Col. de Labaume) - depot battalions from 90^e, 93^e and 95^e line regts

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Blanchard)

1^{re} Brigade (Général de Susbielle)

13^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Morin) - depot battalions from 28^e, 32^e and 49^e line regiments

14^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Vanche) - depot battalions from 55^e, 67^e and 100^e line regts

2^e Brigade (Général Guilhem)

35^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de la Mariouse) – recalled from Rome

42^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Avril de Lenclos) – recalled from Rome

Cavalry Division (Reyau) - never joined the 13^e Corps and was incorporated into the 15^e Corps



“Napoléon III and Bismarck on the morning after the battle of Sedan”
by Wilhelm Camphausen (1878)

German III Army August 19 Order of Battle⁴⁴

Commandantur: General Kronprinz von Preussen

V Armee-Korps (General von Kirchbach)

- 9. Infanterie Division (General von Sandrart)
 - 17. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Bothmer)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 58 (Nr. 3 Posen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 59 (Nr. 4 Posen Regiment)
 - 18. Infanterie Brigade (General von Voigts-Rhetz)
 - Königs-Grenadier Regiment Nr. 7 (Westpreussen)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 47 (Nr. 2 Niederschleswig Regiment)
- 10. Infanterie Division (General von Schmidt)
 - 19. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Henning)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 6 (Nr. 1 Westpreussen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 46 (Nr. 1 Niederschleswig Regiment)
 - 20. Infanterie Brigade (General Walther von Montbarry)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 37 (Westpreussen Füsilier Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 50 (Nr. 3 Niederschleswig Regiment)
 - Kurmärken Dragoner Regiment Nr. 14

VI Armee-Korps (General von Tümppling)

- 11. Infanterie Division (General von Gordon)
 - 21. Infanterie Brigade (General von Malachowsky)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 10 (Nr. 1 Schleswig Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 18 (Nr. 1 Posen Regiment)
 - 22. Infanterie Brigade (General von Eckartsberg)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 38 (Schleswig Füsilier Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 51 (Nr. 4 Niederschleswig Regiment)
- 12. Infanterie Division (General von Hoffmann)
 - 23. Infanterie Brigade (General von Gundel)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 22 (Nr. 1 Oberschleswig Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 62 (Nr. 3 Oberschleswig Regiment)
 - 24. Infanterie Brigade (General von Fabeck)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 23 (Nr. 2 Oberschleswig Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 63 (Nr. 4 Oberschleswig Regiment)
 - Schleswig Dragoner Regiment Nr. 15

XI Armee-Korps (General von Bose)

- 21. Infanterie Division (General von Schlachtmayer)
 - 41. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Koblinski)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 87 (Nr. 1 Nassau Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 80 (Hessen Füsilier Regiment)
 - 42. Infanterie Brigade (General von Thiele)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 82 (Nr. 2 Hessen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 88 (Nr. 2 Nassau Regiment)
 - Hessen Jäger Bataillon Nr. 11, Hessen Husar Regiment Nr. 14
- 22. Infanterie Division (General von Kraatz-Koschlau)
 - 43. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Kontzki)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 32 (Nr. 2 Thuringen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 95 (Nr. 6 Thuringen Regiment)
 - 44. Infanterie Brigade (General von Schkopp)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 83 (Nr. 3 Hessen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 94 (Nr. 5 Thuringen Regiment)
 - Hessen Husar Regiment Nr. 13

German III Army August 19 Order of Battle (continued)

I Bayern Armee-Korps (General von der Tann-Rathsamausen)

1. Bayern Infanterie Division (General von Stephan)
 1. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General Dietl)
 - Korps Infanterie Regiment
 - 1 Infanterie Regiment
 - 4 Infanterie Regiment (1 battalion)
 2. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General von Orff)
 - 2 Infanterie Regiment
 - 11 Infanterie Regiment (2 battalions)
 - 8 Infanterie Regiment (1 battalion)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 4
2. Bayern Infanterie Division (General von Pappenheim)
 3. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General von Schumacher)
 - 3 Infanterie Regiment
 - 12 Infanterie Regiment
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 1
 4. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General von der Tann)
 - 10 Infanterie Regiment
 - 13 Infanterie Regiment (2 battalions)
 - 8 Infanterie Regiment (1 battalion)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 7
- Kürassier Kavallerie Brigade (General von Tauch)
 - Kürassier Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 1
 - Kürassier Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 2

II Bayern Armee-Korps (General von Hartmann)

3. Bayern Infanterie Division (General Ritter von Walther)
 5. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General Schleich)
 - 6 Infanterie Regiment
 - 7 Infanterie Regiment (2 battalions)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 8
 6. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Wissell)
 - 14 Infanterie Regiment (2 battalions)
 - 15 Infanterie Regiment
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 3
 - Chevauleger Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 1
4. Bayern Infanterie Division (General von Bothmer)
 7. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General von Thiereck)
 - 5 Infanterie Regiment (2 battalions)
 - 9 Infanterie Regiment
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 6
 8. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General Maillinger)
 - Bataillons der 1, 5, 7, 11 & 14 Infanterie Regiments
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 5
 - Chevauleger Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 2
- Ulanen Kavallerie Brigade (General von Mulzer)
 - Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 1
 - Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 2
 - Chevauleger Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 5

German III Army August 19 Order of Battle (concluded)

Württemberg Division (General von Obernitz)

1. Infanterie Brigade (General von Reitzenstein)

Infanterie Regiment Nr. 1

Infanterie Regiment Nr. 7

Jäger Bataillon Nr. 2

2. Infanterie Brigade (General von Starkloff)

Infanterie Regiment Nr. 2

Infanterie Regiment Nr. 5

Jäger Bataillon Nr. 3

2. Infanterie Brigade (General von Hugel)

Infanterie Regiment Nr. 3

Infanterie Regiment Nr. 8

Jäger Bataillon Nr. 1

Kavallerie Brigade (General von Scheler)

Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 1

Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 3

Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 4

2. Kavallerie Division (General von Stolberg) – joined III Armee on August 8

3. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Colomb)

Lieb.-Kürassier Regiment Nr. 1

Schleswig Ulanen Regiment Nr. 2

4. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Barnekow)

Lieb.-Husar Regiment Nr. 1

Pommern Husar Regiment Nr. 5

5. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Baumbach)

Schleswig Husar Regiment Nr. 4

4. Kavallerie Division (General Prinz Albrecht von Preussen)

8. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Hontheim)

Westpreussen Kürassier Regiment Nr. 5

Posen. Ulanen Regiment Nr. 10

9. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Bernhardt)

Westpreussen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 1

Thüringen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 6

10. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Krosick)

Lieb.-Husar Regiment Nr. 2

Rheintal Dragoner Regiment Nr. 5



“Battle of Sedan (1870)” by A. Kellerman

German IV Army August 19 Order of Battle

Commandantur: General Prinz Albert von Sachsen

Garde-Korps (General Prinz August von Württemberg)

1. Garde-Infanterie Division (General von Pape)
 1. Garde-Infanterie Brigade (General von Kessel)
 1. Garde-Regiment zu Fuss
 2. Garde-Regiment zu Fuss
 2. Garde-Infanterie Brigade (General von Meden)
 3. Garde-Regiment zu Fuss
 4. Garde-Regiment zu Fuss
 2. Garde-Infanterie Division (General von Budrizki)
 3. Garde-Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Knappstaedt)
 1. Garde-Grenadier-Regiment
 3. Garde-Grenadier-Regiment
 4. Garde-Infanterie Brigade (General von Berger)
 2. Garde-Grenadier-Regiment
 4. Garde-Grenadier-Regiment
- Garde-Füsilier Regiment
Garde-Jäger Bataillon, Garde-Ulanen Regiment

Garde-Kavallerie Division (General von der Goltz)

1. Garde-Kavallerie Brigade (General von Brandenburg I)

Garde-du-Corps Regiment
Garde-Kürassier Regiment
2. Garde-Kavallerie Brigade (General Prinz Albert von Preussen)

Garde-Husar Regiment
2. Garde-Ulanen Regiment
3. Garde-Kavallerie Brigade (General von Brandenburg II)
 1. Garde-Dragoner Regiment
 2. Garde-Dragoner Regiment

IV Armee-Korps (General von Alvesleben I)

7. Infanterie Division (General von Schwartzhoff)
 13. Infanterie Brigade (General von Borries)

Infanterie Regiment Nr. 26 (Nr. 1 Magdeburg Regiment)
Infanterie Regiment Nr. 66 (Nr. 3 Magdeburg Regiment)
 14. Infanterie Brigade (General von Zychlinski)

Infanterie Regiment Nr. 27 (Nr. 2 Magdeburg Regiment)
Infanterie Regiment Nr. 93 (Anhalt)
 8. Infanterie Division (General von Schöler)

Magdeburg Jäger Bataillon Nr. 4, Magdeburg Dragoner Regiment Nr. 7

 15. Infanterie Brigade (General von Kessler)

Infanterie Regiment Nr. 31 (Nr. 1 Thüringen Regiment)
Infanterie Regiment Nr. 71 (Nr. 3 Thüringen Regiment)
 16. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Scheffler)

Infanterie Regiment Nr. 96 (Nr. 7 Thüringen Regiment)
Infanterie Regiment Nr. 86 (Holstein Füsilier Regiment)
- Thüringen Husar Regiment Nr. 12

German IV Army August 19 Order of Battle (continued)

XII Armee-Korps (Kronprinz von Sachsen)

- 23. Infanterie Division (General Prinz Georg von Sachsen)
 - 45. Infanterie Brigade (General von Craushaar)
 - 1. Lieb.-Grenadier Regiment Nr. 100 (Nr. 1 Sachsen Regiment)
 - 2. Grenadier Regiment Nr. 101 (Nr. 2 Sachsen Regiment)
 - Füsilier Regiment Nr. 108
 - 46. Infanterie Brigade (General von Montbé)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 102 (Nr. 3 Sachsen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 103 (Nr. 4 Sachsen Regiment)
 - 1. Reiter-Regiment Kronprinz
- 24. Infanterie Division (General Nehrhoff von Holderberg)
 - 47. Infanterie Brigade (General von Leonhardi)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 104 (Nr. 5 Sachsen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 105 (Nr. 6 Sachsen Regiment)
 - Jäger Bataillon Kronprinz Nr. 12
 - 48. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Schultz)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 106 (Nr. 7 Sachsen Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 107 (Nr. 8 Sachsen Regiment)
 - 2. Reiter-Regiment
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 13
- 12. Kavallerie (Sachsen) Division (General Graf zur Lippe)
 - 23. Kavallerie Brigade (General Krug von Nidda)
 - Garde-Reiter Regiment Nr. 5
 - 1. Sachsen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 17
 - 24. Kavallerie Brigade (General Senfft von Pilsach)
 - 3. Reiter-Regiment
 - 2. Sachsen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 18



Figure 3-27.
September 8,
1870 postcard
from the XII
Cavalry Div.

Datelined at Sedan on September 6, this fieldpost card was postmarked “FELD-POST-EXP.D.AVANTGARDE 12. ARMEE-CPS” on September 8. It was unnecessarily prepaid one groschen⁴⁵ for the postage to Plauen, Saxony, where it arrived on September 17.

German IV Army August 19 Order of Battle (concluded)

- 5. Kavallerie Division** (General von Rheinbaben)
 - 11. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Barby)
 - Westfalia Kürassier Regiment Nr. 4
 - 1. Hannover Ulanen Regiment Nr. 13
 - Oldenburg Dragoner Regiment Nr. 19
 - 12. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Bredow)
 - Magdeburg Kürassier Regiment Nr. 7
 - Altmärk. Ulanen Regiment Nr. 16
 - Schleswig-Holstein Dragoner Regiment Nr. 13
 - 13. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Redern)
 - Magdeburg Husar Regiment Nr. 10
 - 2. Westfalia Husar Regiment Nr. 11
 - Braunschweig Husar Regiment Nr. 17
- 6. Kavallerie Division** (General Herzog Wilhelm von Mecklenburg-Schwerin)
 - 14. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Grüter)
 - Brandenburg Kürassier Regiment Nr. 6
 - Brandenburg Ulanen Regiment Nr. 3
 - Schleswig-Holstein Ulanen Regiment Nr. 15
 - 15. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Rauch)
 - Brandenburg Husar Regiment Nr. 3
 - Schleswig-Holstein Husar Regiment Nr. 16

German Reserve Army Order of Battle in September 1870

Commandantur: Grossherzog von Mecklenburg-Schwerin

- 17. Infanterie Division** (General von Schimmelfmann)
 - 33. Infanterie Brigade (General von Kottwitz)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 75 (Nr. 1 Hanseat. Regiment)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 76 (Nr. 2 Hanseat. Regiment)
 - 34. Infanterie (Mecklenburg) Brigade (Colonel von Manteuffel)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 89 (Mecklenburg-Schwerin)
 - Füsilier Regiment Nr. 90 (Mecklenburg-Schwerin)
 - Mecklenburg Jäger Bataillon Nr. 14
 - 17. Kavallerie (Mecklenburg) Brigade (Colonel von Rauch)
 - 1. Mecklenburg Dragoner Regiment Nr. 17
 - 2. Mecklenburg Dragoner Regiment Nr. 18
 - 2. Brandenburg Ulanen Regiment Nr. 11
- 2. Landwehr-Division** (General von Selchow)
 - 3. Landwehr Brigade (Colonel von Arnoldi)
 - 1. Kombiniert Brandenburg Landwehr Regiment Nr. 8-48
 - 2. Kombiniert Brandenburg Landwehr Regiment Nr. 12-52
 - 4. Landwehr Brigade (Colonel Ranisch)
 - 3. Kombiniert Brandenburg Landwehr Regiment Nr. 20-60
 - 4. Kombiniert Brandenburg Landwehr Regiment Nr. 24-64
 - Reserve Ulanen Regiment Nr. 4

Endnotes

- ¹ Modified from a map in Howard, Michael, *The Franco-Prussian War*, (Methuen: London, 1981), end pages.
- ² Rousset, Léonce, *Histoire Générale de la Guerre Franco-Allemande (1870-1871)*, (Librairie Illustrée: Paris, 1911), Volume I, page 97.
- ³ The 1^{er} Corps, a portion of the 5^e Corps and the 12^e Corps. Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 208.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, Volume I, page 97.
- ⁵ Very little mail is known from the 5th Corps bureaus: Qr Gl 5^e Corps and Bureaus T-W. An August 4 letter from the Qr Gl 5^e Corps is recorded (see Figure 2-15).
- ⁶ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 206.
- ⁷ Count de Kératry re-appears in Chapter Seven as commander of the republican Armée de Bretagne.
- ⁸ Trochu, Louis-Jules, *Œuvres Posthumes*, (Mame & Fils: Tours, 1896), Volume I, page 109.
- ⁹ As described in Appendix D and Chapter Two, each line regiment left a “4th battalion” in its mobilization depot. These depot battalions were later formed into new “march” (as opposed to “line”) regiments.
- ¹⁰ Vinoy, Joseph, *Siege de Paris, Operations du 13e Corps et de la Troisième Armee*, (Henri Plon: Paris, 1872), pages 3-9.
- ¹¹ Frémont, Paul, *Les Payeurs d'Armées*, (Plon-Nourrit & Cie: Paris, 1906), pages 598-600.
- ¹² This free frank is described on page 7 in Chapter Two.
- ¹³ The third known postmark from this expeditionary force is “CORPS EXPÉD^{RE} 1 ROME 1.” Waugh, William and Luft, Stanley, *A Chronology of French Military Campaigns and Expeditions With Their Postal Markings 1815-1983*, (France & Colonies Philatelic Society (N.Y.): New York, 1984), page 32.
- ¹⁴ Vinoy, *Op. Cit.*, page 12.
- ¹⁵ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, pages 211-213.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Volume I, page 283.
- ¹⁷ Modified from a map in Howard, *Op. Cit.*, back end pages.
- ¹⁸ This fieldpost was established on August 19, when the Crown Prince of Saxony was named head of the newly-formed IV Army. The postmark reads “Feldpost Exped. of the Supreme Commander of the Army Detachment of the Crown Prince of Saxony.” This is among the rarest of the German fieldpost postmarks, and is illustrated in Appendix A.
- ¹⁹ Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 181.
- ²⁰ Vinoy, *Op. Cit.*, page 15.
- ²¹ Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 195.
- ²² Modified from Howard, *Op. Cit.*, Map 9 on page 184.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, page 194.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, pages 194-95.
- ²⁵ The 4^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied was part of the 5th Corps. This soldier gave his letter to the 12th Corps payeur, since the 5th Corps fieldpost was not functioning after its retreat from the frontier.
- ²⁶ Described in Chapter Two.
- ²⁷ Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 197.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, page 198.
- ²⁹ Fromeréville-les-Vallons is seven kilometers west of Verdun.
- ³⁰ The letters “IB” (Irun à Bordeaux railroad bureau) in a lozenge.
- ³¹ Moltke, Helmuth von, *The Franco-German War of 1870-71*, in two volumes, (Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.: London, 1891), Volume I, page 102.
- ³² Howard, *Op. Cit.*, pages 205-206.
- ³³ Vinoy, *Op. Cit.*, page 22.
- ³⁴ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 349.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, Volume I, page 349.
- ³⁶ Other known letters from this correspondence are from the 7th Corps’ headquarters fieldpost bureau (August 14) and the Lannemezan military training camp. Abel Cersoy was an officer in the 8^e Régiment de Lanciers of the 7th Corps’ cavalry.
- ³⁷ The unpaid single letter rate from the Prussian 1st rayon.
- ³⁸ Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 222.
- ³⁹ The red postmark is from the Paris (SC) bureau in the Central Post Office.
- ⁴⁰ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 310. The siege of Toul ended on September 23.
- ⁴¹ Grand État-Major Prussien, Section Historique, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume I: Depuis l'Investissement de Paris jusqu'à la Reprise d'Orléans par les Allemandes*, (J. Dumaine: Paris, 1878), page 210.
- ⁴² The stamps are types III and II se-tenant.
- ⁴³ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, Pièces Justificatives, pages IX-X.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Volume I, Pièces Justificatives, pages IV-VII.
- ⁴⁵ The stamp is a one groschen rose (perf 13.5 x 14) of the 1869 North German Confederation Issue.

Chapter Four

Sieges of Fortified French Cities in Alsace-Lorraine

Introduction

After rapid advances at the start of the war, the German armies slowed considerably in mid-September, when they became tied down by the sieges of Metz and Paris. Until significant reserves could be brought into France, further advances were difficult. Even so, with four of the eleven French regular army corps in captivity and the other seven trapped in Metz and Paris, the Germans had every reason to believe that the war was effectively over and only waited for the inevitable fall of besieged Paris to formally end the war.

During their rapid advance, they bypassed fortified cities in northeast France and besieged the garrisons within to neutralize them. The map in Figure 4-1 shows the twelve besieged cities in Alsace-Lorraine.

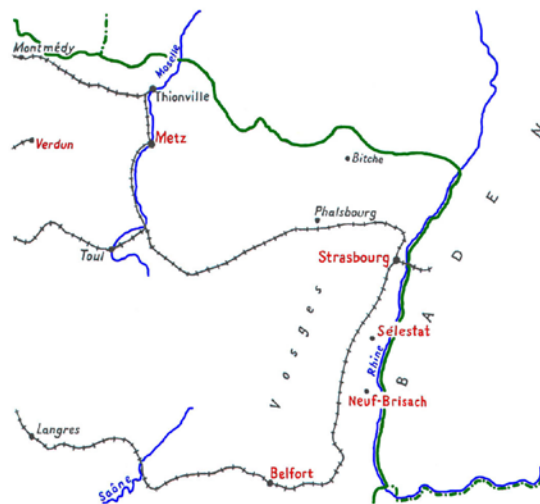


Figure 4-1. Map of besieged cities in Alsace-Lorraine. Cities in red are covered in this chapter.

As the Germans advanced deeper into France, the protection of their supply lines became critically important. In particular, Strasbourg and Toul were on major rail lines that supported the large army around Paris, so there was a priority on capturing them. Equally important, a close siege of Metz was required to neutralize Bazaine's large army there. After the surrenders of Strasbourg and Metz, however, troops were released for actions against other fortified cities.

This chapter describes the French mail services that developed during six of those sieges to maintain communications with the outside world. The sieges in Alsace-Lorraine from which mail is known (highlighted in red in Figure 4-1) are described in detail in this chapter and are listed below.

City	Siege Dates	Line-Crosser Mail Service
Strasbourg	August 11 to September 27, 1870	Red Cross couriers
Metz	August 19 to October 27, 1870	Balloons and couriers
Verdun	September 23 to November 8, 1870 ¹	Couriers
Neuf-Brisach	October 7 to November 10, 1870 ²	Couriers
Sélestat	October 10 to October 24, 1870 ³	Couriers
Belfort	November 4, 1870 to February 16, 1871	Balloons and couriers

4 – Sieges of Fortified Cities in Alsace-Lorraine

No mail is known from the six sieges that are listed below. Because they had no known line-crosser mail services, they are not discussed in this chapter.

City	Siege Dates
Bitche	August 8, 1870 to March 26, 1871 ⁴
Phalsbourg	August 12 to December 12, 1870 ⁵
Toul	August 16 to September 23, 1870
Thionville	October 6 to November 25, 1870 ⁶
Montmédy	November 16 to December 14, 1870 ⁷
Langres	December 18 to 27, 1870

The Siege of Strasbourg – August 11 to September 27

As described in Chapter Two, the German III Army defeated the French 2nd Division of the 1st Corps at the frontier on August 4. The commander of the 1st Corps, Maréchal Mac-Mahon, immediately advanced from Strasbourg with the remainder of his corps and the 1st Division of the 7th Corps, but was defeated on August 6 at Wörth. The victorious III Army wasted little time in making new dispositions. The major part of the army began a pincer move designed to trap the Armée du Rhin around Metz, while its Baden Division was detached on August 7 to capture Strasbourg. General von Werder was promised two additional Landwehr divisions⁸ to assist with this task. His cavalry first reached Strasbourg on August 8, and his infantry began arriving around the fortress on August 9.⁹ The encirclement was complete by the evening of August 10, so the siege began on August 11. Figure 4-2 illustrates an extraordinary letter (unfolded to show the markings on the reverse) that entered Strasbourg just as the siege began.



Figure 4-2. August 9, 1870 letter from the 7th Corps to Strasbourg

4 – Sieges of Fortified Cities in Alsace-Lorraine

This letter from Général Félix Douay, commander of the 7th Corps, was postmarked at the 7th Corps' headquarters fieldpost bureau on August 9 at Mulhouse. Douay apparently did not realize that he was eligible for a military free frank, so domestic postage was prepaid by a 20 centimes stamp,¹⁰ which received the rare "A.R.7° C" cancel. The letter arrived in Strasbourg on August 10, just before the German siege closed all communications with the city. Madame Douay had left for Besançon, so it was re-addressed and postmarked again in Strasbourg on August 11. It was held there until the end of the siege on September 27, and was finally delivered in Besançon on October 8.

The commander of the Strasbourg garrison, Général Uhrich, had about 17,000 men to defend the fortress.¹¹ The kernel was the 87th line infantry regiment, four mobilization depots¹² and about 50 naval marines. These were augmented by 2,000 escapees from the August 4 and August 6 French defeats, three battalions of Gardes Mobiles and 3,000 Gardes Nationales. The 1st Corps fieldpost service left on August 4, so there were apparently no military postmasters in the besieged city.

The Germans began the siege with the Baden Division, but were reinforced by the August 29 arrivals of the Garde Landwehr Division and the 1st Landwehr Division. This brought the German force to about 40,000 men. Their order of battle is shown at the end of this chapter. Figure 4-3 shows a fieldpost card from the besiegers.



Figure 4-3. September 5, 1870 postcard from the Garde Landwehr Division

Datelined "Souffelweyersheim b. Strassburg" on September 5, this card was postmarked that day at the Garde Landwehr Division fieldpost bureau north of Strasbourg. It is endorsed from the 2nd Garde Landwehr Regiment, and arrived at Achern on September 8.

On August 13, the Germans began to bombard the city in an effort to force its capitulation. The negative impact on the civilian population attracted the interest of the Red Cross, which formed a relief committee for Strasbourg. That committee prepared special Red Cross postcards that could be used by the garrison and the civilians to notify their loved ones about their health. The German besiegers allowed the transmission of these messages through the siege lines, and the range of known dates on the cards is August 20 to September 25. An example is shown in Figure 4-4.



Figure 4-4. August 20, 1870 Red Cross card from Strasbourg

This card was datelined on August 20 and processed by the Strasbourg Red Cross, which added its red cachet at lower left. Per regulations, the message is on the front, so there is nothing on the reverse. Captain Roederer left Strasbourg that day with dispatches to be exchanged at the Baden Division's headquarters near Schiltigheim,¹³ and apparently carried the first group of Red Cross cards. After examination, this card was postmarked at Rastatt, Baden on August 26 and marked free of Baden postal charges by the "B.S.P." (Baden public service) marking. On its way to Bourbonne-les-Bains, it entered France via Mulhouse on August 28 per the red entry postmark. Strasbourg Red Cross postcards with arrival markings are rare.

The Germans maintained a very tight siege, so virtually no line-crosser mail from or to Strasbourg is known. However, a Swiss delegation to Strasbourg carried a few letters from the besieged garrison in September.¹⁴ An example is illustrated in Figure 4-5.



Figure 4-5. September 11, 1870 letter from besieged Strasbourg

4 – Sieges of Fortified Cities in Alsace-Lorraine

The Swiss delegation had approached General von Werder about letting the women and children leave the bombarded city. They offered to escort them out, and then to house them in Switzerland for the duration of the war. The besiegers accepted this proposal, so the delegation entered Strasbourg on September 11 to make arrangements with Général Uhrich. They left that day, and carried a few letters from the besieged garrison.¹⁵ Among them was the letter illustrated in Figure 4-5, which was datelined “Strasbourg Dimanche 11 September 1870.” It was written by naval Captain Dupetit-Thouars, who had arrived at Strasbourg on August 2 to establish a flotilla of ships on the Rhine River. The flotilla never came into being, so Dupetit-Thouars was employed in supervising the northern defenses of the city. He wrote that, “today, it is the delegates of Swiss cantons who were allowed to come here to find the unfortunate population and conduct them out.” The Swiss visitors posted his letter unpaid at Berne, Switzerland on September 17. It entered France at Mont Cenis on September 18, and was rated for 50 centimes due as an unpaid letter from Switzerland. It arrived in Vendôme on September 25.

From September 15 to September 20, a number of civilians were escorted out of the city under this program.¹⁶ However, the sustained German bombardment and siege operations wore the ruined city’s defenses down. Strasbourg raised the white flag of surrender at 5pm on September 27.¹⁷

Immediately after the end of the siege, General von Werder and the Baden Division left to form the German XIV Corps, and the Garde Landwehr Division was transferred by rail to the siege of Paris. The 1st Landwehr Division and the 27th Infantry Regiment were left to occupy Strasbourg.¹⁸ A postcard from the occupation force is shown in Figure 4-6.



Figure 4-6.
October 15,
1870 card
from the 1st
Landwehr
Division at
Strasbourg

This fieldpost card was posted at the 1st Landwehr Division fieldpost bureau in Strasbourg on October 15. It bears the private blue cachet of the 67th Magdeburg Infantry Regiment, and was received in Mainz on October 18.

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In late October, the 1st Landwehr Division left Strasbourg to initiate the siege of Belfort, and the remaining garrison in Strasbourg came under the direction of the Governor-General of Alsace. An example of that fieldpost postmark is shown in Figure 4-7.

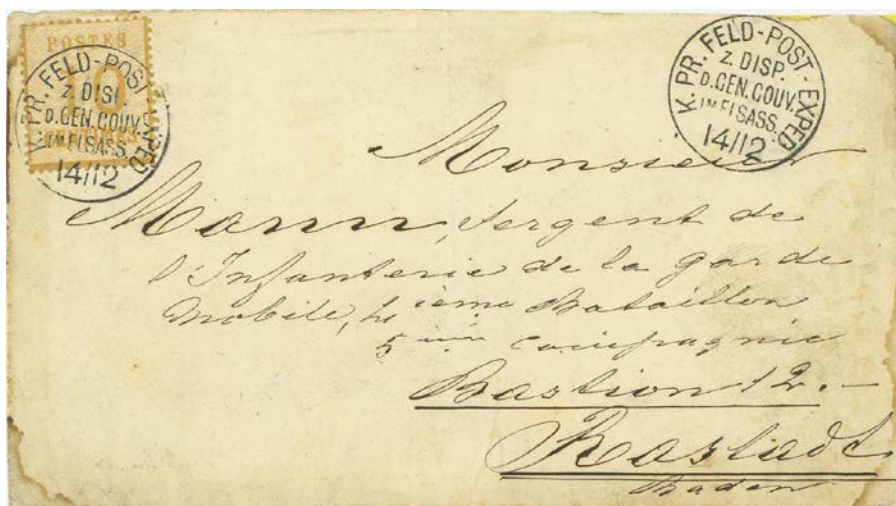


Figure 4-7. December 14, 1870 letter from the Governor-General of Alsace at Strasbourg

This envelope front was postmarked on December 14 at the fieldpost bureau “for the disposition of the Governor-General in Alsace” in occupied Strasbourg. It is addressed to a French Garde Mobile prisoner-of-war who had been part of the Strasbourg garrison, and is franked¹⁹ for the ten centimes rate from occupied France to Rastatt, Baden. Fieldpost markings on the Alsace-Lorraine occupation issue are rare.



Ruins of Strasbourg after the bombardment in 1870

The Siege of Metz – Introduction

As described in Chapter Two, Metz was besieged from August 19 to October 27. At the start of the siege, the French assumed that Bazaine would quickly break out with his large army to continue the conflict. For the first two weeks, therefore, only a few line-crossers were used to carry military dispatches and some private letters across the enemy siege lines. When it became clear that Bazaine was content to stay at Metz, regular across-the-lines mail systems began to develop in early September. These consisted of two different unmanned balloon schemes, since the tight siege made it much harder to cross the lines on foot.

The Metz balloon mail services were conceived of and operated by military personnel, but none of the mail that they carried bears fieldpost markings. Separate from this, the Armée du Rhin fieldpost service continued to operate in Metz during the siege, but none of the letters deposited with those fieldpost bureaus left Metz before the end of the siege, as described in Chapter Two.

The Siege of Metz - Pharmacists' Balloon Mail Service, September 5 - 15

The first balloon service was proposed by Dr. Julien-Francois Jeannel, Chief Pharmacist of the Armée du Rhin and Dr. Eugene-Ernest Papillon, of the Garde Impériale ambulance. They proposed to send small unmanned balloons over the siege lines to unoccupied France, and suggested that military dispatches could be carried along with personal messages. Général Jarras, Bazaine's Chief of Staff, approved their plan on September 2,²⁰ but declined to send military dispatches by such an unproven method.

Jeannel and Papillon set about fabricating their balloons, and Jarras approved the launch of the first four on September 5-6. He even added some messages of his own, but the first three balloons were never heard from again, and probably captured. The fourth balloon's mail was probably recovered on October 25 near Niort, based on a surviving letter,²¹ as seen in the census of surviving Pharmacists' balloon mail in Appendix B.

To better manage the weight of each balloon's payload, Jeannel eliminated envelopes and reduced the allowable size of the messages. The fifth balloon was launched on September 10 with 40 messages ("papillons"),²² and was recovered near Lille.²³ One surviving letter is known, and is shown in Figure 4-8.



Figure 4-8. September 7, 1870 papillon carried by Pharmacists' balloon #5 from besieged Metz

Datelined "Sous Metz" on September 7, this letter was addressed to Paris. The sender wrote that, "Yesterday 6th I entrusted a little note to a balloon, the only means of communication with France remaining to us. This one will be taken up in another balloon, because henceforth, they will launch them

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often, to be sure that some of them arrive.” The papillon was postmarked on September 19 at Lille, and granted a military free frank, per the red “P.P.” marking.

Three balloons were launched on September 11. Balloon #6, with about 50 papillons, landed in occupied France near Forbach. Figure 4-9 was carried by this balloon.



Figure 4-9. September 8, 1870 papillon carried by Pharmacists' balloon #6 from besieged Metz

This papillon was datelined “Sous Metz” on September 8 and the sender wrote that, “Three little balloons carrying each about fifty slips have left...I am still camping with my cavalry division.” The postmaster at Forbach postmarked this papillon on September 14, but then realized that he had no way to get the mail directly to unoccupied France. Accordingly, he scratched out his Forbach postmark to conceal the origin of the letter, and placed it in a forwarding envelope to be mailed across the German frontier at nearby Saarbrücken. That forwarding envelope is illustrated in Figure 4-10.



Figure 4-10. Forwarding envelope for the Sept. 8 papillon in Figure 4-9

This unpaid envelope was postmarked on September 15 at Saarbrücken, and sent to Paris via Belgium. The Paris post office added the blue “Prusse Erquelines” entry marking on September 18 and delivered it to the Paris address with five décimes postage due. The addressee had left for Saumur, so the envelope was postmarked at the Corps Legislatif post office on September 18 (6th collection) for forwarding. Unfortunately, the German siege had closed around Paris that day, so the envelope was carried out of Paris by the first balloon of that siege, the *Neptune*, on September 23.²⁴ The letter was finally delivered to Madame Lejeune on September 25, after having escaped from two sieges.

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Balloon #7 landed near Ravenstein, Germany where it was found on September 11. The captured mail bag contained 63 papillons, and bore the description, “Ballon No. 7, Armée du Rhin, Poste aérostatique de la garde Impériale.”²⁵ Figure 4-11 shows an extraordinary letter carried on that balloon.

Figure 4-11. September 7, 1870 papillon carried by Pharmacists’ balloon #7 from besieged Metz



This papillon was datelined “Metz le 7 Septembre 1870.” Along with about 25 other papillons addressed to Paris, it was sent to Versailles, where it was examined at Bismarck’s headquarters. The papillons were then given to Antoine Schmit, an employee of the American delegation in Paris, who was returning to Paris on October 14 after having escorted General Ambrose Burnside and Colonel Paul Forbes out of the city.²⁶ Schmit then gave this papillon to the headquarters of the French 14th Corps at Porte Maillot, which placed it in the forwarding envelope illustrated in Figure 4-12.



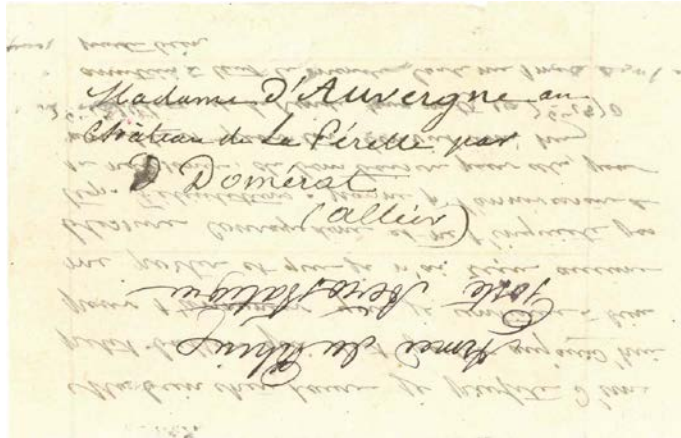
Figure 4-12. Forwarding envelope for the September 7 papillon in Figure 4-11

A 14th Corps officer included a note that reads, “I am very pleased to send you these few words from your husband. This letter and many others were given to us this evening by an American diplomat. The latest dates of the letters received from him are from September 16.” He then mailed it with a military free frank at the main Paris post office on October 15. This papillon also crossed the lines of two different sieges.

Balloon #8 landed near Elmstein, Germany but was not found until November 28. It had a packing slip that read, “Armée du Rhin Poste aérostatique de pharmaciens de la garde imp. Ballon No. 8 Metz 11 7bre 1870, 120 gram 90 de lettres.”²⁷ Since its mail was captured and never delivered, surviving examples (probably kept as souvenirs) show no postmarks.

Figure 4-13 shows a papillon carried by this balloon (unfolded to show the reverse). This papillon is a single slip of paper folded in two, with the address on one side and “Armée du Rhin Poste Aérostatique” on the other side. It was datelined “sous Metz” on September 10.

Figure 4-13. September 10, 1870 papillon carried by Pharmacists' balloon #8 from besieged Metz



Balloons #9 through #12 were launched on September 12-13, but no surviving mail from them is known. Balloon #11 was reported as recovered near Fénétrange with 137 papillons,²⁸ but no reports were made of the others, so they were probably captured. The last two Pharmacists' balloons were launched on September 15. Balloon #13 landed in occupied territory near St Dié-des-Vosges, but its mail was recovered by the French.



Engraving of the discovery of a balloon from Metz

Balloon #14 landed near St Louis, a French suburb of the Swiss city of Basel. Its 130 papillons were recovered on the evening of September 16 and sent to Marseille for processing.²⁹ Figure 4-14 shows a small papillon from this balloon.

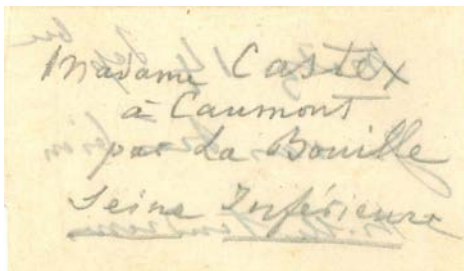


Figure 4-14. September 14, 1870 papillon carried by Pharmacists' balloon #14 from besieged Metz

This simple folded slip was datelined “Metz 14 Sepbre” with a short message on the reverse. At Marseille, it was enclosed in a postal envelope for forwarding, as shown in Figure 4-15.

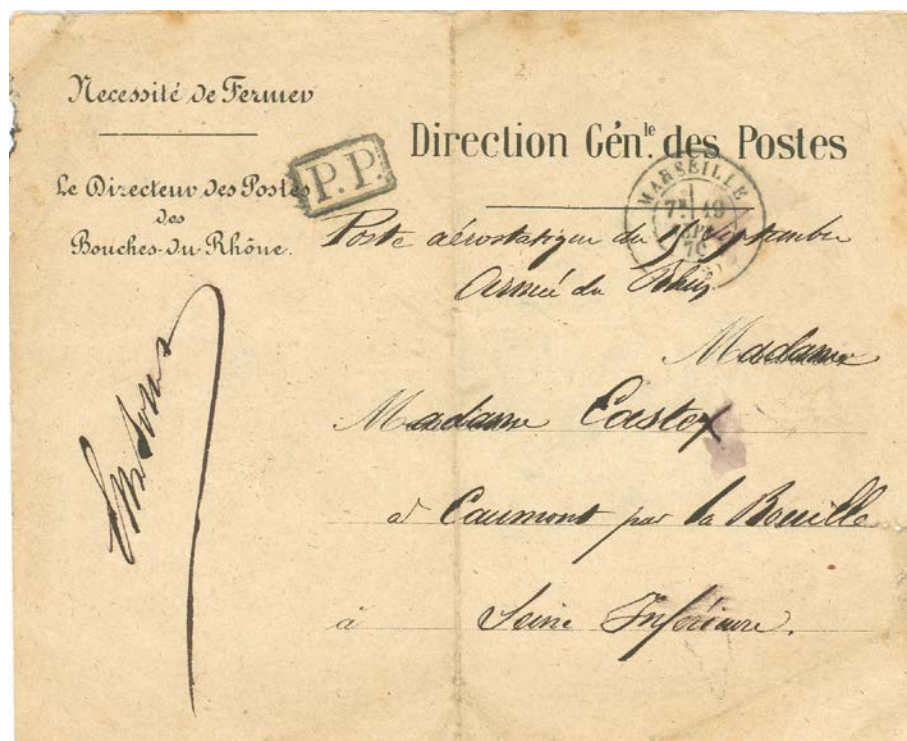


Figure 4-15. Forwarding envelope for the Sept. 14 papillon in Figure 4-14

This official post office envelope was postmarked at Marseille on September 19 and sent with a free frank to La Bouille on September 23. It was endorsed “Poste aérostatique du 15 Septembre Armée du Rhin.”

The Pharmacists’ balloon service was superseded by the Engineers’ balloon service on September 16. In total, it dispatched about 1,500 papillons in 14 small balloons, six of which are reported to have been recovered safely. The remaining eight were probably captured by the Germans after landing. Consequently, surviving Pharmacists’ papillons are rare, with only 24 known. A detailed census is included in Appendix B, and the following table summarizes the Pharmacists’ balloon service.

September 5-15 Metz Pharmacists’ Unmanned Balloon Service

Balloon	Launched	Papillons	Disposition
#1	September 5		probably captured
#2	September 5		probably captured
#3	September 6		probably captured
#4	September 6		landed near Niort and recovered on October 25
#5	September 10	40	landed near Lille; mail processed there on Sept. 19
#6	September 11	50	landed near Forbach; mail processed there on Sept. 14
#7	September 11	63	landed in Germany and captured
#8	September 11	90	landed in Germany and captured
#9	September 12		probably captured
#10	September 12		probably captured
#11	September 13	137	landed near Fénétrange; mail recovered
#12	September 13		probably captured
#13	September 15		landed near St. Dié; mail recovered
#14	September 15	130	landed near St. Louis; mail processed at Marseille on Sept. 19

The Siege of Metz - Engineers' Balloon Mail Service, September 16 – October 3

On August 27, Captain Schultz of the artillery and George Robinson, correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, met with Général Coffinières, military commander of Metz,³⁰ to propose an unmanned balloon service managed by the military garrison of Metz. Coffinières immediately approved the idea and introduced them to Colonel Goulier, commander of the “École d'Application et du Génie,” who supervised the construction of the unmanned balloons that would carry messages out of besieged Metz.³¹ Because they were constructed at the school of engineering, they are known as Engineers' balloons.

The September 14 Order of the Day announced the Engineers' balloon service: “Balloons carrying messages will leave Metz, starting in the morning of 15 September. To permit the dispatching of the greatest number of letters, they must be written on thin paper, 10 x 5 centimeters; they will be sent open and without envelope to the Headquarters of the Commanding General of Metz, to be sent as and when balloons are built.” Mail was to be reviewed for content and processed by agents of the Treasury and Posts at the offices of General Coffinières.³² Thus, the garrison's military payeurs handled this mail.

Meticulous records on departures were not kept, so it is not known with certainty how many balloons were launched by the Engineers' service. Piecing together reports on departures and recoveries,³³ it is clear that at least 11 balloons were sent between September 16 and October 3. The total number of papillons carried is not known, but the capacity of the Engineers' balloons was much greater than that of the Pharmacists' balloons. The number of papillons carried is known for seven balloons, and ranges from 5,000 to 45,000 messages carried. At an average of 15,000 per balloon launched, that would suggest a total of over 165,000 papillons dispatched. A census of surviving Engineers' mail is included in Appendix B.

Although the September 14 Order of the Day announced the start of the service on September 15, the first balloon left a day later with about 5,000 papillons. It was recovered near Neufchâteau on September 16 at about 6:30pm. The sub-prefect of that town sent a telegram about the discovery.³⁴

In its nacelle was found a package, carefully wrapped and covered with a white rubberized cloth. It was opened, and one read first of all, on a piece of parchment, a statement dated this morning, 16 September, signed by General Coffinières, Commandant of the City of Metz, and sealed with his seal, by means of which this Superior Officer asked the person, in whose hands the package in question would fall, to take it to the nearest French post office. The mayor of Pargny informed of this discovery, hastened to comply with the request of the General, and took the package to the office at Neufchâteau.

The Neufchâteau post office postmarked this large group of papillons on September 17 (2nd and 4th collection periods). Figure 4-16 shows an example.

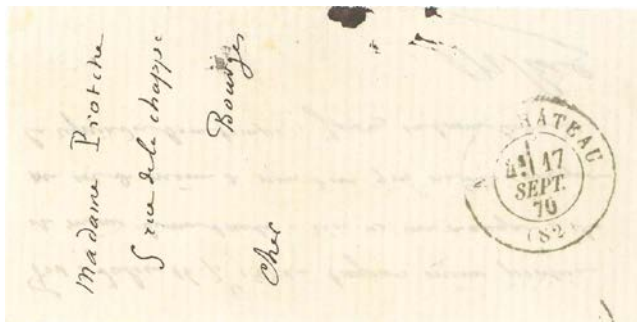


Figure 4-16. September 16, 1870 papillon carried by Engineers' balloon #1 from besieged Metz

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This small slip of paper was datelined “Fort St Julien 16 7bre 1870” by Colonel Protche, commander of the fort. It was postmarked on September 17 (4th collection period) at Neufchâteau, and sent to Bourges.

After recovery outside of Metz, papillons were sorted by destination region, and bundles were put into envelopes (known as an “enveloppes de re-expédition,” or forwarding envelopes) addressed to a large post office in that region. Those post offices also sorted the papillons and sent them on to the various recipients, sometimes in another envelope. These forwarding envelopes are greatly prized by collectors.

The papillon in Figure 4-16 was received at Bourges along with another papillon addressed to Madame Protche, so both were placed in the forwarding envelope shown in Figure 4-17.

Figure 4-17. Forwarding envelope for the Sept. 16 papillon in Figure 4-16



Stamped with the blue cachet “Cabinet du Préfet du Cher” (office of the prefect for the department of Cher), this envelope was hand-delivered to the address in Bourges. Madame Protche had moved to Libourne, so 20 centimes postage was added, and the letter was mailed at Bourges on September 21.

The balloons of September 17 and 20 were captured, but the 4th Engineers’ balloon was recovered safely with 25,000 papillons in occupied France.³⁵ Figure 4-18 shows an extraordinary letter from that balloon.



Figure 4-18. September 21, 1870 papillon carried by Engineers’ balloon #4 from besieged Metz

George Robinson, one of the co-creators of the Engineers’ balloon service, sent this papillon. It was datelined “Metz, Sep 21, 1870” and carried by the 4th Engineers’ balloon, which left on September 21 and was recovered that day between Metz and Verdun. The papillon was postmarked at Fresnes-en-Woëvre on September 22 and sent on to England with six pence due. In his note to his wife, Robinson writes,

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I have made many attempts to write to you, but all in vain, and have therefore invented a system of Postal Balloons; two have gone away and we dispatched another yesterday, made by Capt. Schultz of the artillery, the inventor of the mitrailleuse; but this, though it started well, from some unexplained cause came to grief and fell within the Prussian lines, and with it 40,000 letters, amongst them two for you; but I fear our enemies will not be sufficiently polite to send them on.

Robinson's papillon was enclosed in an official British post office envelope for final delivery from London to Southport on September 30. Robinson also wrote two messages to his wife on the skin of the balloon. These were cut out and sent in a post office envelope from Tours that was postmarked on October 1. Figure 4-19 shows one of those two message fragments written on the 4th Engineers' balloon.



Figure 4-19. September 21, 1870 message written on the 4th Engineers' balloon

Papillons addressed to foreign destinations, such as the Robinson papillon in Figure 4-18 are very unusual. Figure 4-20 illustrates an even more exotic destination.

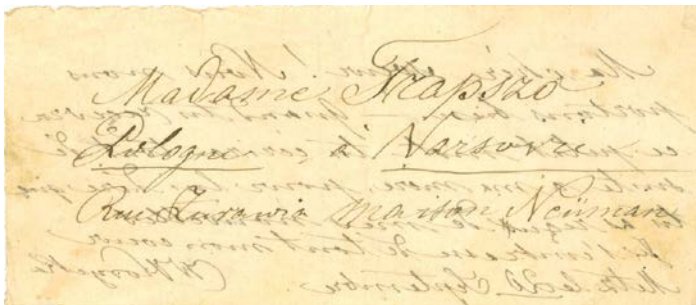


Figure 4-20. September 20, 1870 papillon carried by Engineers' balloon #4 from besieged Metz

This papillon, datelined "Metz le 20 Septembre," was addressed to Warsaw, Poland and was carried out of Metz on the 4th Engineers' balloon. Unlike Figure 4-18, it was not postmarked at Fresnes, proving that

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Figure 4-21. Forwarding envelope for the Sept. 20 papillon in Figure 4-20

The envelope was posted unpaid in Dijon on October 3 and was received in Warsaw on October 9 with 32 kopecks due.³⁶ A note on the front observes, “Parvenu en ballon” (arrived by balloon).

Mézières, October 2, 3 PM

That area of the Ardennes was under German occupation, so the papillons were carried across the lines to Mézières on September 28, and then to Lille. Figure 4-22 shows a letter from this balloon.

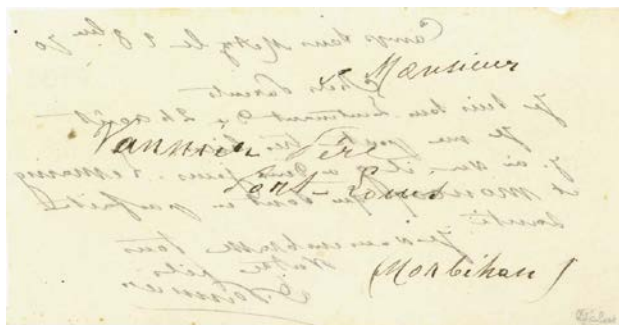
Figure 4-22. September 26, 1870 letter carried by Engineers' balloon #8 from besieged Metz

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was postmarked at Lille on October 4 and marked free per the red “F.S.P.” (France Service Public) marking. Even so, it was charged six pence postage due upon arrival in England on October 5. This is the only known papillon sent from Metz in an envelope.

The 9th balloon was launched on September 28 with 32,000 papillons, but was captured. Unfortunately, it carried a message from Robinson that was critical of Maréchal Bazaine.³⁸ The Prussians sent this message back to Bazaine under a flag of truce on October 3, so he stopped all future balloon launches without his approval. This ended the Engineers’ balloon service as of that date but, in the interim, balloons #10 and #11 were launched on September 30 and October 3. Both were captured. Figure 4-23 shows a papillon carried on the last flight.

Figure 4-23. October 2, 1870 papillon carried by Engineers’ balloon #11 from besieged Metz



Dateline “Camp sous Metz le 2 8bre 70,” this simple papillon left on October 3 aboard the 11th Engineers’ balloon. Its capture was reported on October 4 by a German observer,³⁹

Yesterday evening there was a steeple chase for a balloon. As soon as one is sighted, the most varied horsemen ride on saddled and unsaddled horses to the spot, in order to see where the balloon will land. Men of the infantry shoot at it. Thus yesterday when, one mile from here, the balloon was shot, sank and was captured by a dragoon. According to a notice attached to the balloon proper, it contained 12,000 letters.

The following table summarizes the Engineers’ balloon service.

September 16 – October 3 Metz Engineers’ Unmanned Balloon Service

Balloon	Launched	# of Papillons	Disposition
#1	September 16	5,000	Recovered near Neufchâteau; postmarks of September 17
#2	September 17	12,000	Captured; mail destroyed
#3	September 20	45,000	Captured; some mail survived without arrival marks
#4	September 21	25,000	Recovered near Fresnes; postmarks of September 22
#5	September 23	?	Recovered “Ballon de Dijon”; arrivals of October 7-10
#6	September 24	?	Recovered; arrivals of October 2-10
#7	September 25	?	Captured near Amanvilliers; some mail survived
#8	September 27	17,000	Recovered; mail postmarked at Lille on October 4
#9	September 28	32,000	Captured at Verneville; some mail survived
#10	September 30	?	Captured; some mail survived without arrival marks
#11	October 3	12,000	Captured; some mail survived without arrival marks

The Siege of Metz – Mail Carried by Line-Crossers

With over 150,000 German soldiers around Metz, the French line-crosser's job was extremely hazardous. Travelers were frequently stopped and searched. If a person was found carrying dispatches, he was subject to summary execution. Nonetheless, a small number of persons did make the attempt and succeeded in getting through. Not much of the mail that they carried has survived. In total, fewer than ten line-crosser letters from Metz are known.



“Dispatch Carrier” by Alphonse de Neuville (1880)

One documented line-crosser was a travelling merchant named Macherez, who left Metz with military and private dispatches on August 26, and reached Verdun (west of Metz) the following day.⁴⁰ A private letter carried by him is shown in Figure 4-24.

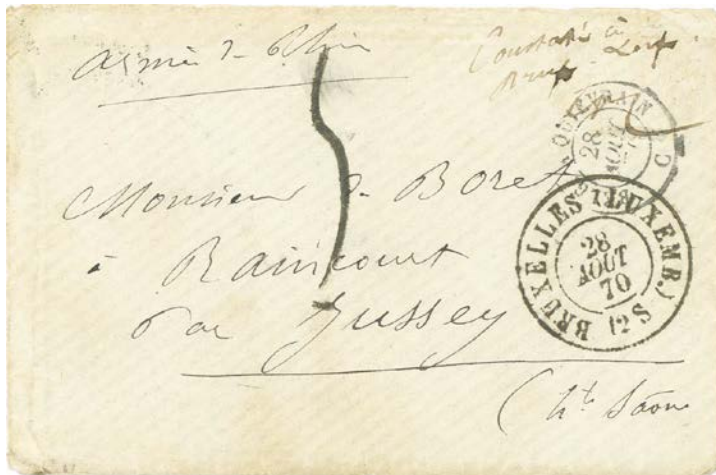


Figure 4-24. August 20, 1870 letter carried by a line-crosser from Metz

Colonel Thibaudin, commander of the 67th Infantry Regiment in the 2nd Corps, datelined this letter at Metz on August 20. He wrote of his wound received during the August 16 Vionville battle, and extolled the bravery of his regiment, “brave 67th - of the 2,100 when I took command, there remain only 1,260!” The letter was posted unpaid in Brussels, Belgium on August 28, and reached its destination in eastern France on August 31 with 50 centimes due. Even though it was endorsed “Armée du Rhin,” letters from foreign countries were not eligible for a military free frank.

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Other line-crossers were not as fortunate as Macherez. Figure 4-25 shows a captured line-crosser letter.

Figure 4-25. September 23, 1870 letter captured on a line-crosser from besieged Metz



This envelope contained a papillon datelined at Metz on September 23. The writer gave it instead to a line-crosser and put it in this envelope, franked by 30 centimes for the rate to Belgium. The line-crosser was captured near Verdun by the 9th Brigade of the German III Corps, which added its private unit marking to the reverse. The letter was then sent under cover to Frankfurt, where the French franking was accepted and postmarked on October 3. It entered France via Calais on October 4, and reached Dunkerque on October 9, rated fully paid.

The Siege of Metz – The Surrender on October 27

Metz surrendered on October 27, and the French army began leaving for captivity two days later. The end of the Metz siege released 150,000 German soldiers for service elsewhere in France. The VII Corps and the 3rd Landwehr Division were left in garrison around Metz, as shown in Figure 4-26.



Figure 4-26. November 11, 1870 fieldpost card from the 3rd Landwehr Division

Dateline at Thionville (north of Metz) on November 9, this fieldpost card was postmarked at the 3rd Landwehr Division's fieldpost bureau in Metz on November 11. It arrived in Heidelberg a day later.

The Siege of Verdun - September 23 to November 8

The pursuit of the Armée de Châlons by the German IV Army (described in Chapter Three) passed by French-occupied Verdun. On August 24, the XII Corps attempted a quick attack to capture the fortress, but was repulsed by the city's garrison. Accordingly, the XII Corps left to continue its pursuit of the Armée de Châlons, but left the 47th Infantry Brigade to observe the city. On September 7, that brigade was relieved by the 65th Infantry Regiment and two cavalry regiments, which continued to observe the city in an attempt to neutralize its garrison.⁴¹ At that point, there was no siege, since the German force was not large enough to surround the city.

The Verdun garrison was formed around the 4th battalions and depot companies from the 57th and 80th line infantry regiment depots, and two battalions of the Garde Mobile de la Meuse.⁴² Those 4,700 men were supplemented by about 1,400 local Gardes Nationales Sédentaires. They easily held the Germans at bay until, on September 23, four additional Landwehr battalions were sent to Verdun to commence the actual siege. The enlarged German force also began to construct siege batteries, and the bombardment of the fortress began on October 13.

The October 28 surrender of Metz released additional German troops and siege artillery for Verdun, so the besieging force grew to about 15,000 men in early November. The siege line, which had been tight, became nearly impenetrable. Nonetheless, a line-crosser succeeded in carrying a mail out from the besieged garrison, as shown in Figure 4-27.⁴³



Figure 4-27. October 30, 1870 letter carried out of besieged Verdun

Dateline October 30, 1870 at Verdun, this letter was carried across the nearby Belgian frontier to Virton on November 3. It was posted there and sent via Erquelines into northern France on November 4. It arrived in southern France on November 8 with 2 décimes postage due. This is the only known surviving line-crosser letter from Verdun. The author, a sergeant in the Garde Mobile artillery, reported that, "I take advantage of a Belgian courier who leaves tonight...although solidly besieged we have great confidence."

The additional German troops and siege artillery alarmed the French commander at Verdun, Général Guérin de Waldersbach. He requested a suspension of arms to consider his position, and a temporary armistice was granted by the Germans on November 5. On November 8, Guérin signed an agreement for the capitulation of Verdun, effective the following day at 10am.

The Siege of Neuf-Brisach - October 7 to November 10

The September 27 surrender of Strasbourg released General von Werder's army for further action in the Vosges region of eastern France. He was reinforced by General von Schmeling's 4th Reserve Division, which was formed in Baden on September 20, and assigned to siege duties. It crossed the Rhine river on October 2 and reached Neuf-Brisach five days later.⁴⁴ Its order of battle is shown at the end of this chapter, and Figure 4-28 shows a letter from one of the besiegers.

Figure 4-28. October 28, 1870 letter sent from the 4th Reserve Division near Neuf-Brisach



Sent by a soldier in the 3rd Reserve Ulanen Regiment, this letter was postmarked on October 28 at the 4th Reserve Division's fieldpost bureau outside of Neuf-Brisach. It arrived in Berlin on October 31.

The French garrison initially consisted of the 4th battalion and four depot companies from the 74th line infantry regiment and two battalions of the Garde Mobile du Haut-Rhin,⁴⁵ with Lt.-Colonel Lostic de Kerhor in overall command. On September 25, they were reinforced by the 2nd Battalion of the Garde Mobile du Rhône from Belfort and a company of francs-tireurs from Mirecourt, bringing the total force to about 5,000 men.⁴⁶

The Germans began a bombardment of the city on October 7. The garrison declined to surrender after a day's bombardment, so von Schmeling left with the Ostpreussen Landwehr Brigade to start the siege of Sélestat.⁴⁷ The weakened siege line opened opportunities for line-crossers.⁴⁸ Figure 4-29 shows an October 12 card carried out by a line-crosser.

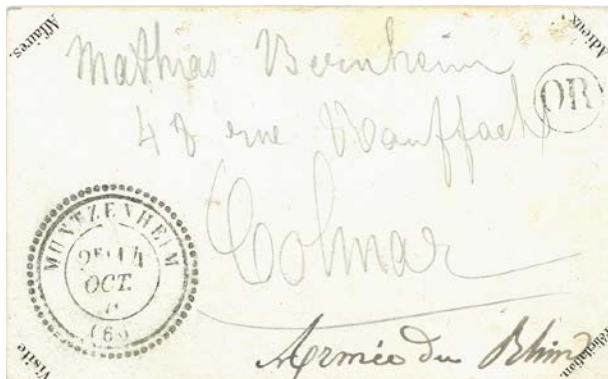


Figure 4-29. October 12, 1870 card carried out of besieged Neuf-Brisach

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Written on Jules Bernheim's carte de visite, this message was datelined "Mercredi 12" in Neuf-Brisach. It was carried to Muntzenheim (northwest of Neuf-Brisach) on October 14, where it was mailed with a military free frank.

On October 14, the commander forbade all outside correspondence without his approval, but did send officially-sanctioned couriers northwest to Colmar and south to Mulhouse on October 18.⁴⁹ Two more couriers left on October 19 for Mulhouse. A courier carried the card illustrated in Figure 4-30.

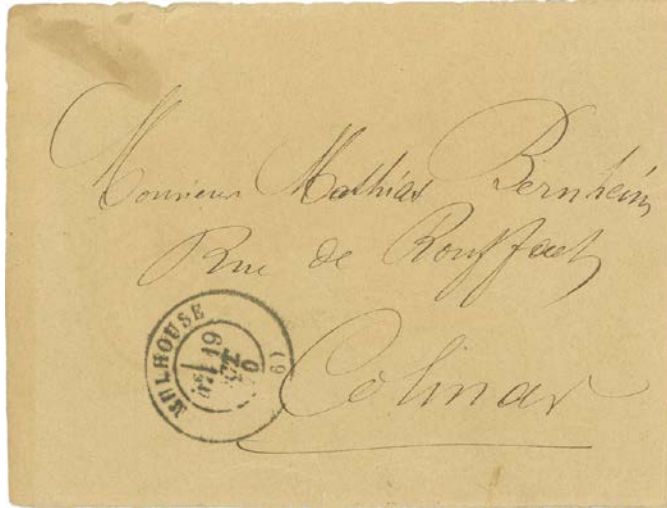


Figure 4-30. October 17, 1870 card carried out of besieged Neuf-Brisach

Datelined "N.B. le 17 Octobre 1870," this card was carried by the October 18 courier from Neuf-Brisach to Mulhouse. It was postmarked the next day in Mulhouse and sent free of postal charges to Colmar.

Most of the surviving line-crosser messages from Neuf-Brisach⁵⁰ are on cut-down stiff cards. Figure 4-31 shows an interesting example used on October 21.



Figure 4-31. October 21, 1870 card carried out of besieged Neuf-Brisach

This message was written on a piece of music card and datelined "Neuf-Brisach le 21 Octobre 1870." It was sent by Lieutenant Robert of the Garde Mobile du Rhône, and endorsed "Armée du Rhin." Carried out that day, it was postmarked in Mulhouse on October 21 and reached Lyon three days later.

The siege of Sélestat ended on October 24, so Schmeling moved the Ostpreussen Landwehr Brigade back to Neuf-Brisach.⁵¹ The strengthened siege line made it much more difficult for line-crossers, so fewer letters are known after October 24. Figure 4-32 shows an October 27 card.

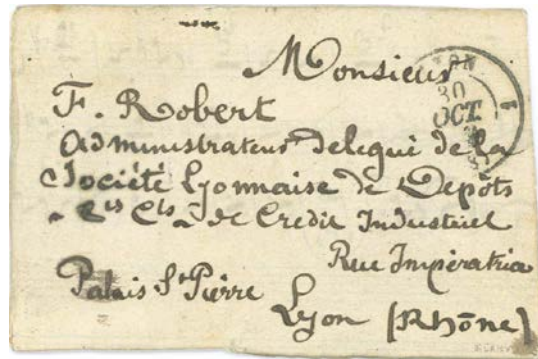


Figure 4-32. October 27, 1870 card carried out of besieged Neuf-Brisach

This message was written on a cut-out from a music card and datelined “Neuf-Brisach le 27 8bre 1870.” It was postmarked upon its arrival in Lyon on October 30. This is the latest known line-crosser letter from Neuf-Brisach.

The German besiegers began a sustained bombardment of the city on November 2. It surrendered on November 10 in the early afternoon.⁵²

The Siege of Sélestat (Schlestadt) – October 10 to October 24

As described above, the German 4th Reserve Division under General von Schmeling was formed to conduct sieges of fortified French cities in the Vosges region of eastern France. Schmeling’s first target was Neuf-Brisach, but when that city did not immediately surrender, he divided his forces and sent his East Prussia brigade to initiate the siege of Sélestat on October 10.⁵³

This short-lived siege did not produce much line-crosser mail. Figure 4-33 illustrates one of the two known examples.⁵⁴



Figure 4-33. October 17, 1870 slip carried out of besieged Sélestat

This slip of paper was datelined “Schlestadt⁵⁵ 17 Octobre 1870” and franked 20 centimes for the domestic postage to Marseille. It was postmarked at Schlestadt on October 17 and taken south by a line-crosser to Mulhouse on October 20. The sender wrote that, “Since the 9, we have received no news of you...we have been besieged since the 10, but not bombarded yet. All this has not prevented us from voting yesterday.”

The German bombardment began on October 20⁵⁶ and the city surrendered four days later.

The Siege of Sélestat - Transit Mail

Mail addressed to Strasbourg during its August 11-September 27 siege was held in transit at Sélestat. That mail was also caught in the siege of Sélestat, but was released after the surrender on October 24. A special German cachet reading “In Schlettstadt vorgefunden” (found at Sélestat) was prepared for this mail. A contemporary report stated that,⁵⁷

Immediately after the occupation of Schlettstadt by German troops, the German post office was opened there on 25 October 1870. German officials found large amounts of correspondence stored there, because all letters from Switzerland, France, etc. had been kept there, which could not be moved during the almost 8-week siege of Strasbourg to the northern part of Alsace. Several carloads of mail sacks were immediately moved to Strasbourg. Because the railway to Strasbourg was not yet usable, the connection from Schlettstadt was made by using private carriages that travelled via Barr.

This delayed mail finally reached Strasbourg on October 30.⁵⁸ An example is shown in Figure 4-34.



Figure 4-34. August 15, 1870 letter addressed to besieged Strasbourg and held in Sélestat

This letter was posted on August 15 in St. Dié des Vosges and addressed to besieged Strasbourg. It reached Sélestat on August 16, where it was postmarked and held. On October 25, it was marked “In Schlettstadt vorgefunden” and sent to Strasbourg. Figure 4-35 illustrates this marking and the August 16 Schlestadt transit postmark from the back of Figure 4-34.



Figure 4-35. Reverse of August 15, 1870 letter addressed to besieged Strasbourg

The addressee in Strasbourg had moved to Lauterbourg, so the letter was forwarded there with 30 centimes due. It finally arrived on November 13.

The Siege of Belfort – Start of the Siege on November 4

The surrender of Metz on October 27 released additional German forces for offensive actions in eastern France under the overall direction of General von Werder. His 4th Reserve Division was still occupied with the siege of Neuf-Brisach, so he assigned the task of capturing Belfort to General von Treskow's 1st Landwehr Division, which had been occupying Strasbourg. Its order of battle is shown at the end of this chapter. German troops completed their encirclement of Belfort during the evening of November 3, and began the siege on the next day. Figure 4-36 shows a letter from one of the besiegers.



Figure 4-36. December 26, 1870 letter sent from the 1st Landwehr Division around Belfort

This letter was postmarked on December 26 at the 1st Landwehr Division fieldpost bureau outside of Belfort. It bears a blue cachet from a siege artillery unit (“Festungs-Artillerie”), and arrived in Gerabronn, Württemberg on December 28.

The French garrison of Belfort was formed around a regular army kernel consisting of the 35^e Régiment de Marche.⁵⁹ This was supplemented by the 16th and 65th regiments of the Garde Mobile du Rhône and the 57th regiment of the Garde Mobile de la Haute-Saône. Smaller units of gardes mobiles brought the garrison to about 16,000 men, under the overall command of Colonel Denfert-Rochereau.⁶⁰ Their order of battle is shown at the end of this chapter.

The Siege of Belfort – Mail Carried by Line-Crossers

The siege line around Belfort was about 35 kilometers, so the 1st Landwehr Division's 20,000 men were spread thinly.⁶¹ This made the siege line somewhat porous, so line-crossers enjoyed considerable success at the start of the siege. Nearby Montbéliard was occupied on November 8, followed by Mulhouse on November 14. These occupations cut off the line-crosser routes to the southwest and east. Since the besiegers were more heavily concentrated to the north of the city, virtually all couriers from Belfort escaped to the southeast toward Switzerland.

Figure 4-37 shows a period map of the Belfort region with the key towns highlighted in red. The Swiss border is designated by small green crosses at the lower right of the map, and runs between the French town of Delle and the Swiss town of Boncourt. Surviving line-crosser mail was mailed at Swiss or French post offices after crossing the Belfort siege lines, and the census of outgoing line-crosser mail in Appendix B shows that most line-crosser letters were posted in Switzerland at Porrentruy, Boncourt, Fahy or Courtemaiche.

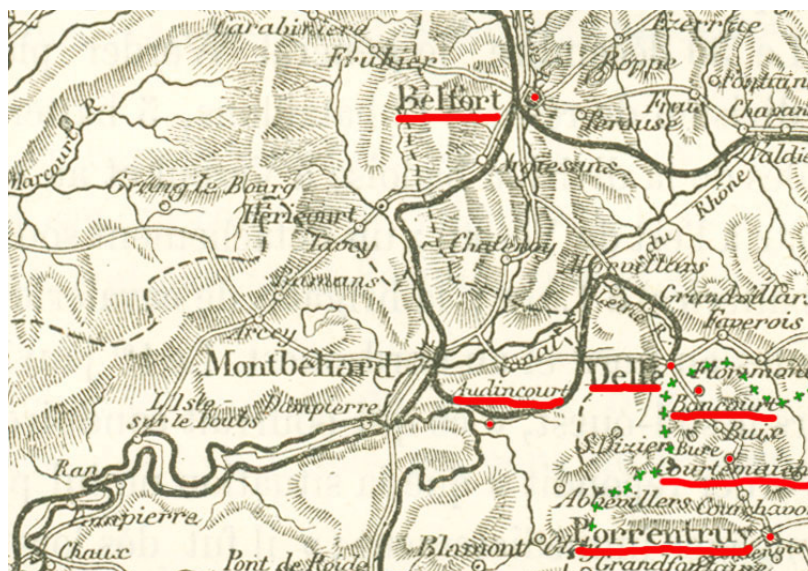


Figure 4-37. Map of the Belfort region

Some outgoing line-crosser mail was left at small French post offices in the region between Audincourt and Delle, including Beaucourt, Bourogne and Hérimoncourt.

Figure 4-38 shows a letter mailed in Belfort on the first day of the siege, and before the capture of Montbéliard. The route that it took out of the city is not indicated by transit postmarks, but it probably left to the southwest via Montbéliard and Besançon, which was the pre-war postal route.



Figure 4-38. November 3, 1870 letter carried out of besieged Belfort

Dated "Belfort le 3 Novembre 1870," this letter was posted with a military free frank in Belfort on the following day. The sender was a Garde Mobile du Rhône who used a preprinted "Armée du Rhin" envelope. It was carried out of Belfort by a line-crosser and received in Lyon on November 15. November 4 and December 25 are the only days during the siege that Belfort postmarked outgoing letters.

More surviving line-crosser letters were posted at Porrentruy, Switzerland than at any other post office. The earliest known example is shown in Figure 4-39.

Figure 4-39. November 16, 1870 letter carried out of besieged Belfort



This letter was datelined in Belfort on November 16, and carried by a line-crosser to Porrentruy on November 22. It was rated there for 50 centimes due to France per the black “5.” It entered France via Mt. Cenis on November 23, and reached its destination in eastern France a day later. The sender, an officer in the Garde Mobile du Rhône, wrote that,

Yesterday morning, three battalions of the Haute-Saône, one of line troops, and my battalion left before daybreak thinking that we could surprise the Prussians in a nearby village. Instead of finding a small force there, we found them in great number, well dug in, and perfectly ready for us...we had one killed and about twenty wounded...it was just a reconnaissance to find out if the Prussians are all around Belfort, since until now we have barely seen any.

Address your letters to Madame Juster, care of M. Chavanne, confectioner at Porrentruy, with a request to forward them to us.

Some Haute-Saône mobiles were captured during this action, as described below Figure 4-42. Figure 4-40 shows a November 19 letter posted in Boncourt, Switzerland.



Figure 4-40. November 19, 1870 letter carried out of besieged Belfort

Datelined in Belfort on November 19, this letter was posted in Boncourt on December 8 and rated for 15 centimes due. It then passed through Porrentruy, where the due amount was corrected to the unpaid rate of 50 centimes, per the black “5.” It entered France via Lyon on December 10, and reached western France four days later.

The census of outgoing Belfort siege letters in Appendix B shows that all but one of the 44 recorded letters were sent unfranked, since they were typically entitled to a French military free frank. Figure 4-41

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shows the only known franked letter. This is also one of only five surviving letters that were posted at French post offices after crossing the Belfort siege line.



Figure 4-41. November 22, 1870 letter carried out of besieged Belfort

This letter was datelined at Belfort on November 22, and prepaid 20 centimes⁶² domestic postage. This was not necessary, since the sender had endorsed his letter "Armée du Rhin." It was carried by a line-crosser to the south, and mailed at the French village of Hérimoncourt on November 28. It was then carried by rail southwest toward Besançon on December 1.

On November 28, the German siege line was considerably strengthened by the addition of 10,000 men in the Debschitz Detachment of von Werder's XIV Corps.⁶³ Line-crossers were still able to successfully cross the siege line to the south, but it became more hazardous. Figure 4-42 shows a December incoming line-crosser letter addressed to the French commandant, Colonel Denfert-Rochereau.



Figure 4-42. December 1, 1870 letter from Mulhouse to besieged Belfort

Datelined "Mulhouse 1 Decbr. 1870," this letter was carried by line-crosser into Belfort. On arrival, it was marked for a military free frank per the red "P.P." and delivered to the commandant. The letter describes a conversation with a lieutenant of the Garde Mobile de la Haute-Saône from the Belfort garrison who had recently been captured. As he was being taken north to captivity in Germany, the lieutenant reported the ongoing construction of siege artillery emplacements north of Belfort. This presaged the start of a sustained bombardment of Belfort on December 3.

The strengthened siege line also meant that virtually all outgoing line-crosser mail was taken to Switzerland for posting after December 4. One exception to this was a military courier who left in mid-December and carried the letter shown in Figure 4-43.

Figure 4-43. December 12, 1870 letter carried out of besieged Belfort



This letter was datelined in Belfort on December 12 by the secretary to the captain payeur for the Garde Mobile du Rhône. The payeur postmarked the letter with his blue “ARMÉE DE L’EST” fieldpost marking and sent it by military courier through the lines. He used this postmark because the Belfort garrison was a part of Général Cambriels’ Armée de l’Est, which is discussed in Chapter Nine. The letter reached Lyon on December 19, where it was granted a military free frank, per the red P.P. mark.

On February 3, 1871 a Swiss postal circular extended a free frank to the besieged garrison of Belfort.⁶⁴ From this date, line-crosser mail from Belfort was rated as fully-paid and not charged 50 centimes, as in the case of Figure 4-39. Figure 4-44 shows an example sent free of Swiss postal charges.



Figure 4-44. January 18, 1871 letter carried out of besieged Belfort

Datelined “Belfort 18 janv. 1871,” this letter was carried by a line-crosser to Porrentruy, Switzerland on February 10. The Swiss post office rated it fully-paid per the small “PD” marking, and sent it to Lyon, where it arrived on February 13. The sender was a captain in the 16th Regiment of the Garde Mobile du Rhône, and wrote that, “for five days now, the cannon roars a few kilometers from here and fills us with hope...the deliverance of Belfort would be a fatal blow to our enemies...the mails have become very irregular: after having heard nothing from you for a long time, we received four letters in one day but nothing since.”

His description of nearby cannon fire coincides with the January 15-17 effort by the Bourbaki’s 1^e Armée to relieve Belfort, which is described in Chapter Nine. They reached a point only eight kilometers west of Belfort, but were forced to retreat after the Battle of La Lisaine. His report on receiving letters confirms the intermittent arrival of line-crossers to Belfort. Figure 4-45 shows a January 1871 incoming example. This envelope was sent from Chalon-sur-Saône in January 1871 to a Garde Mobile de la Haute-Saône at Belfort. Addressed to Porrentruy, Switzerland for further delivery to Belfort, it was franked for the 30

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centimes rate to Switzerland in stamps of the Bordeaux Issue.⁶⁵ They were cancelled by the “842” lozenge of Chalon, and the letter was sent via Geneva on January 17. The postmaster at Porrentruy arranged to have it carried by line-crosser to Belfort, where it was docketed as received on January 28. Incoming line-crosser mail is considerably scarcer than outgoing mail.



Figure 4-45. January 1871 letter sent from Chalon-s-Saône to Belfort

By the end of January, the German bombardment had lasted for nearly 60 days, causing great hardship to the civilian population of Belfort. The Swiss Red Cross was able to enter Belfort in February, and carried some letters out. Figure 4-46 shows an example (unfolded to show the reverse).



Figure 4-46. January 30, 1871 letter carried out of besieged Belfort by the Red Cross

Dated “Belfort le 30 janvier 1871,” this letter was given to the Red Cross to be taken out of besieged Belfort. They added their red “Agence Internationale Bale” oval marking and sent it to the auxiliary Red Cross committee at St. Louis (a French suburb of Basel), which marked the letter with their blue cachet and a linear “ARMÉE DU RHIN.” It arrived in Lyon on February 27.

The Siege of Belfort – Unmanned Balloon Service

Captain Chouette supervised the construction and dispatch of unmanned balloons with messages from the besieged garrison and population. The first effort was released on November 14, but was captured upon landing northeast of Belfort near Phaffans.⁶⁶ Its mail was probably destroyed. Undeterred, Captain Chouette released another balloon on December 25, but it burst immediately after launch.⁶⁷ Mail for this balloon had been collected by the mail clerks of each military unit, and then transmitted to the civilian post office. The post office had added some civilian letters, and then delivered the load to Captain Chouette’s men.

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A third attempt was made with the same mail on December 27. That one launched successfully, but landed inside of the siege lines, so the mail was once again taken back to Chouette. Concluding that weight was the problem, Chouette divided the mail in two, and consigned it to two balloons released on December 30. One was captured in the forest of Bavilliers (southwest of Belfort) and its mail was probably destroyed. The second landed near Saignelégier, Switzerland⁶⁸ (well south of Belfort), where it was found around January 6, 1871.⁶⁹ Figure 4-47 shows a small letter (unfolded to show the reverse) carried by this balloon.



Figure 4-47. December 25, 1870 letter carried out of besieged Belfort by unmanned balloon

This letter was datelined “Belfort le 25 Dec. 1870” and given to a military mail clerk. The sender wrote that, “I profit from the attempt of a balloon to send you my news and wishes for a happy New Year.” The Belfort post office added the red “P.P.” to confirm the military free frank, and added the letter to the group for Captain Chouette. It finally left on December 30, and was received in Thizy on January 8.

Some letters were given directly to the post office and received December 25 Belfort postmarks. Figure 4-48 shows an example.



Figure 4-48. December 24, 1870 letter carried out of besieged Belfort by unmanned balloon

This letter was datelined at Belfort on December 24 and given to the post office, which postmarked it on December 25, but rated it for thirty centimes due (20 centimes domestic postage plus a 50% unpaid letter surcharge) since it was not from a soldier. It was carried out by balloon on December 30 and was received in Angoulême on January 10.

No additional flights were attempted from Belfort. Eight surviving balloon letters are known and four have December 25 Belfort postmarks. One of those bears a January 6 Saignelégier transit postmark. This small census is included in Appendix B.

After holding out for three and a half months, Belfort capitulated on February 16, 1871.

The Orders of Battle Referenced in this Chapter

German Strasbourg Siege Army August 29 Order of Battle⁷⁰

Commandantur: General von Werder

Badische Feld-Division (General von Beyer)

1. Infanterie Brigade (General von Jarrys)
 - Lieb Grenadier Regiment Nr. 1
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 2
2. Infanterie Brigade (General von Degenfeld)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 3
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 4
3. Infanterie Brigade (General Keller)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 5
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 6
- Kavallerie Brigade (General von Roche-Starkenfels)
 - Lieb Dragoner Regiment
 - Dragoner Regiment Nr. 2
 - Dragoner Regiment Nr. 3

Garde Landwehr-Division (General von Löen)

1. Garde Landwehr Brigade (Colonel Girodz von Gaudy)
 - Garde Landwehr Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel von Plehwe)
 - Garde Landwehr Regiment Nr. 2 (Lt. Colonel von Münchhausen)
2. Garde Landwehr Brigade (Colonel von Roehl)
 - Garde Grenadier Landwehr Regiment Nr. 1 (Lt. Colonel Prinz von Schoenburg-Waldenburg)
 - Garde Grenadier Landwehr Regiment Nr. 2 (Lt. Colonel von Besser)

1. Landwehr Division (General von Tresckow I)

1. Landwehr Brigade (General von Buddenbrock)
 1. Kombiniert Pommern Landwehr Regiment Nr. 14/21 (Colonel von Zitzewitz)
 - Gneissen Landwehr Batallion (Major Gruppe)
 - Schneidemühl Landwehr Batallion (Major Weissshun)
 - Konitz Landwehr Batallion (Captain Kausch)
 2. Kombiniert Pommern Landwehr Regiment Nr. 21/54 (Colonel von Ostrowski)
 - Inowrazlaw Landwehr Batallion (Captain von Chagnian)
 - Bromberg Landwehr Batallion (Major von Petery)
 - Deutsche-Krone Landwehr Batallion (Major von Pawelsz)
2. Landwehr Brigade (General von Avemann)
 3. Kombiniert Pommern Landwehr Regiment Nr. 26/61 (Colonel von Berger)
 - Stendahl Landwehr Batallion (Major Reppert)
 - Burg Landwehr Batallion (Lt. Colonel von Schutz)
 - Neustadt Landwehr Batallion (Captain von Tschammer)
 4. Kombiniert Pommern Landwehr Regiment Nr. 61/66 (Colonel Gericke) – arrived Nov. 8
 - Halberstadt Landwehr Batallion (Captain Uterwedde)
 - Neuhaldensleben Landwehr Batallion (Major von Westernhagen)
 - Stargardt Landwehr Batallion (Major von Bojan)
 4. Magdeburg Landwehr Regiment No. 67 (Colonel von Zglinicki)
2. Reserve Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment (Colonel von Bredow)

French Armée de Belfort November 4 Order of Battle⁷¹

Commandant: Colonel Denfert-Rochereau

35^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Marty)

4^e Bataillon du 45^e Régiment de Ligne

4^e Bataillon du 84^e Régiment de Ligne

57^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Haute-Saône (Lt. Colonel Fournier) - 1^{er}, 2^e, et 3^e Bataillons

16^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Rhône (Lt. Colonel de la Marlière) – 2^e, 3^e et 5^e Bataillons

65^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Rhône (Lt. Colonel de Garnier) - 1^{er} et 4^e Bataillons

4^e Bataillon de Garde Mobile de la Haute-Saône (Cmdt. de Chabaud)

5 compagnies des gardes mobiles de Saône et Loire

2 compagnies des gardes mobiles des Vosges

3 compagnies des gardes mobilisées du Haut-Rhin

Garde Nationale Sédentaire de Belfort (390 hommes)

German Belfort Siege Army November 3 Order of Battle⁷²

Commandantur: General von Tresckow I

1. Landwehr Division (General von Tresckow I)

1. Landwehr Brigade (General von Buddenbrock)

1. Kombiniert Pommern Landwehr Regiment Nr. 14/21 (Colonel von Zitzewitz)

Gneissen Landwehr Battalion (Major Gruppe)

Schneidemühl Landwehr Battalion (Major Weissshun)

Konitz Landwehr Battalion (Captain Kausch)

2. Kombiniert Pommern Landwehr Regiment Nr. 21/54 (Colonel von Ostrowski)

Inowrazlaw Landwehr Battalion (Captain von Chagnian)

Bromberg Landwehr Battalion (Major von Petery)

Deutsche-Krone Landwehr Battalion (Major von Pawelsz)

2. Landwehr Brigade (General von Avemann)

3. Kombiniert Pommern Landwehr Regiment Nr. 26/61 (Colonel von Berger)

Stendahl Landwehr Battalion (Major Reppert)

Burg Landwehr Battalion (Lt. Colonel von Schutz)

Neustadt Landwehr Battalion (Captain von Tschammer)

4. Kombiniert Pommern Landwehr Regiment Nr. 61/66 (Colonel Gericke) – arrived Nov. 8

Halberstadt Landwehr Battalion (Captain Uterwedde)

Neuhaldensleben Landwehr Battalion (Major von Westernhagen)

Stargardt Landwehr Battalion (Major von Bojan)

4. Magdeburg Landwehr Regiment No. 67 (Colonel von Zglinicki)

2. Reserve Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment (Colonel von Bredow)

Abtheilung Debschitz (General von Debschitz) – arrived December 29-30

1. Battalion der 2 Westpreussen Landwehr Regiment Nr. 7 (Major von Borowski)

2. Battalion der 2 Westpreussen Landwehr Regiment Nr. 7 (Major von Sothen)

1. Battalion der 2 Niederschlesien Landwehr Regiment Nr. 47 (Major Kierstein)

2. Battalion der 2 Niederschlesien Landwehr Regiment Nr. 47 (Major Brinckmann)

1. Battalion der 1 Schlesien Landwehr Regiment Nr. 10 (Captain Arretz)

1. Battalion der 3 Niederschlesien Landwehr Regiment Nr. 50 (Captain von Schmidt)

2. Battalion der 3 Niederschlesien Landwehr Regiment Nr. 50 (Captain von Münenberg)

2. Battalion der Schlesien Landwehr Regiment Nr. 84 (Captain von der Schulenburg)

German Neuf-Brisach and Sélestat Siege Army October 1 Order of Battle⁷³

4. Reserve Division (General von Schmeling)

Kombiniert Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Knappstaedt)

1. Rhein. Infanterie Regiment Nr. 25 (Colonel von Loos)

2. Komb. Landwehr Infanterie Regiment Nr. 4/5 (Colonel von Krane)

Ostpreussen Landwehr Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Zimmermann)

1. Komb. Landwehr Infanterie Regiment Nr. 1/3 (Lt. Colonel Scheuermann)

3. Komb. Landwehr Infanterie Regiment Nr. 43/45 (Colonel von Usedom)

4. Reserve Kavallerie Brigade (General von Treskow II)

1. Reserve Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment (Lt. Colonel von Wulffen)

3. Reserve Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment (Lt. Colonel von Schmidt)

Endnotes

¹ Le Faure, Amédée, *Histoire de la Guerre Franco-Allemande 1870-71*, (Garnier Frères: Paris, 1886), Volume 2, pages 156-57.

² Risler, Charles, *Neuf-Brisach Souvenirs de Siège et du Captivité*, (Berger-Levrault & Co.: Paris, 1873), page 80.

³ Moltke, Helmuth von, *The Franco-German War of 1870-71*, (Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.: London, 1891), Volume I, page 232.

⁴ Rousset, Léonce, *Histoire Générale de la Guerre Franco-Allemande (1870-1871)*, (Librairie Illustrée: Paris, 1911), Vol. II, page 443.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Volume I, page 100.

⁶ Cohn Ernst, *Unusual Mail in Occupied France 1870-1871*, (James Bendon: Cyprus, 2000), page 37.

⁷ Le Faure, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, page 262.

⁸ Landwehr means “defense of country” and consisted of men who had previously served seven years in the army and in the first-line reserve, and were serving a subsequent five years in the Landwehr second-line reserve.

⁹ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 98.

¹⁰ The franking is a 20 centimes stamp of the 1863 “Laureated” Issue.

¹¹ Howard, Michael, *The Franco-Prussian War*, (Methuen: London, 1981), page 273.

¹² Strasbourg was the location for the mobilization depots for the 18th and 96th line infantry regiments and the 10th and 13th chasseurs à pied battalions. Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 425.

¹³ Cohn, *Op. Cit.*, page 21.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, page 23.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, page 23.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, page 25.

¹⁷ Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 276.

¹⁸ Le Faure, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, page 12.

¹⁹ The stamp is a ten centimes type II with reversed burelage of the 1870 “Alsace-Lorraine” Issue.

²⁰ Lutz, Louis, *Les Papillons de Metz*, Bulletin de la Société des Amis du Musée Postale, No. 22, 1968, page 21.

²¹ Cohn, Ernst, “Butterflies by Balloon,” *Collectors Club Philatelist*, (January-February 1992), pp. 15-28, page 17.

²² Papillon is the name used by philatelists to describe the letters carried out of Metz on Pharmacists’ or Engineers’ balloons. The term either comes from the name of the service’s co-inventor, Dr. Eugene-Ernest Papillon, or because the light slips of papers resemble butterflies (“papillons” in French).

²³ Cohn, “Butterflies,” page 18.

²⁴ It is also possible that this letter was carried out by the Parisian post office line-crossers Brare and Gême, who left Paris with mail on September 22 at noon and reached St Germain (west of Paris, outside of the German siege line) that night.

²⁵ Cohn, “Butterflies,” page 23.

²⁶ Burnside and Forbes had visited Paris on October 2-3 and October 8-10. Schmit was scheduled to carry diplomatic dispatches to London, but was informed by Bismarck that he could only re-enter Paris on October 14, so he opted to re-enter Paris. Cohn, Ernst, *Ordinary Mail by Diplomatic Means during the Siege of Paris 1870-1871*, (Bendon: Cyprus, 1995), pages 17-28.

²⁷ Cohn, “Butterflies,” page 23.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, page 24.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, page 24.

³⁰ Coffinières was the general commanding the 5th Military District, headquartered in Metz. He was responsible for the permanent garrison of Metz, and did not answer to Maréchal Bazaine.

³¹ Lutz, *Op. Cit.*, page 34.

³² *Ibid.*, page 36.

- ³³ Many of these are listed in Cohn, Ernst and Harmer, Cyril, “Metz Papillons: George T. Robinson’s Airmail of 1870” in the 39th *American Philatelic Congress Book*, (New Orleans, 1973).
- ³⁴ Lutz, *Op. Cit.*, page 38.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, page 42.
- ³⁶ The envelope bears an “F.42” tray marking, which indicates that France was due 25 groschen and 3 pfennigs per 7.5 grams on unpaid mail to Prussia, according to Article 42 of the January 1866 Franco-Prussian postal convention. Under the Prussian-Russian postal convention, Prussia was entitled to 6 silbergroschen per loth from Russia for transit postage plus the amount due to France. 6 silbergroschen was equivalent to 22 kopecks, to which internal Russian postage of 10 kopecks per loth was added to arrive at 32 kopecks due. This information was provided through the courtesy of Jeffrey Bohn.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, page 30.
- ³⁸ Cohn and Harmer, *Op. Cit.*, page 32.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, page 33.
- ⁴⁰ Lutz, *Op. Cit.*, page 15.
- ⁴¹ Tiedemann, Benno von, *The Siege Operations in the Campaign against France, 1870-71*, translated by Major Tyler, (H.M. Stationery Office: London, 1877), page 87.
- ⁴² The Garde Mobile battalions were the 1st and 2nd of Meuse. Tiedemann, *Op. Cit.*, page 89.
- ⁴³ Image provided courtesy of Corinphila Auktionen AG, November 22, 2017 Sale 220, lot 3667.
- ⁴⁴ Risler, *Op. Cit.*, page 37.
- ⁴⁵ 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Garde Mobile du Haut Rhin, consisting of 900 men each. Le Faure, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, page 20.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Volume 2, page 20.
- ⁴⁷ The cavalry brigade and the 1st Combined Landwehr Infantry Regiment were left to besiege Neuf-Brisach. Grand État-Major Prussien, Section Historique, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume I*, (J. Dumaine: Paris, 1878), page 339.
- ⁴⁸ The early literature on this siege referred to an unmanned balloon service organized by two officers in the Mobs du Rhône. Further research has concluded that there was no balloon service, just line-crossers. Cohn, *Unusual Mail*, pages 113-116.
- ⁴⁹ Kerhor, Lostic de, *Journal du Siège de Neuf-Brisach en 1870*.
- ⁵⁰ There are fewer than ten surviving examples of Neuf-Brisach line-crosser mail known.
- ⁵¹ Le Faure, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, page 20.
- ⁵² Cohn, *Unusual Mail*, page 119.
- ⁵³ Le Faure, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, page 19.
- ⁵⁴ The other Schlestadt siege letter has identical postmarks to this one, but is addressed to Altkirch. It was illustrated as lot 1196 in the September 19, 2006 Roumet Histoire Postale Vente sur Offres.
- ⁵⁵ Sélestat concurrently used two varieties for the name of the town – Sélestat (French) and Schlestadt (German).
- ⁵⁶ Moltke, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 233.
- ⁵⁷ Cohn, *Unusual Mail*, page 120, referencing “Die Organisation des Deutschen Postwesens im Elsass,” *Deutsches Postarchiv Beiheft*, Berlin, No. 3 (February 1873).
- ⁵⁸ A letter posted in Paris on August 17 and addressed to Strasbourg bears the “In Schlettstadt vorgefunden” marking and an arrival postmark in Strasbourg of October 30 (1st collection). Cohn, *Unusual Mail*, page 121.
- ⁵⁹ Formed on October 16, 1870 by the 4th (depot) battalions from the 45th and 84th line regiments.
- ⁶⁰ Dussieux, L., *Le Siège de Belfort*, (Librairie Cerf: Paris, 1882), page 46.
- ⁶¹ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 431.
- ⁶² The stamp is an 1863-70 “Empire Lauré” Issue 20 centimes type II.
- ⁶³ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 434.
- ⁶⁴ Pittier, Raymond, “Le Siège de Belfort (1870-1871),” *Association Internationale d’Histoire Postale de la Guerre de 1870-1871*, Number 2, (June 1995), page 26.
- ⁶⁵ Five centimes report 2, state 2, positions 14-15, and 20 centimes type II, report 3, position 1.
- ⁶⁶ Cohn, Ernst, “A Critical Guide to Balloon Mails – Fact and Fables about the 1870 War Mails,” *Collectors Club Philatelist*, (November-December 2003), page 296.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, page 296.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, page 297.
- ⁶⁹ As reported in the *Gazette Jurassienne* (Porrentruy) on January 8, 1871.
- ⁷⁰ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, Pièces Justificatives, pages VI-VII.
- ⁷¹ Dussieux, *Op. Cit.*, page 46.
- ⁷² Grand État-Major Prussien, Section Historique, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume II*, (J. Dumaine: Paris, 1880), Supplément CXXXI, page 378.
- ⁷³ Grand État-Major Prussien, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume I*, Supplément LXXXII.

Chapter Five

Campaign for Paris: September 3 to January 28

Introduction

The surrender of the French Armée de Châlons at Sedan on September 1 (described in Chapter Three) left only seven pre-war infantry regiments and 13 pre-war cavalry regiments available for service in the field against four invading German armies.¹ By most measures, the war was over, but the capture of Paris was the final step needed to end it. Figure 5-1 shows the area of operations for the Paris Campaign.

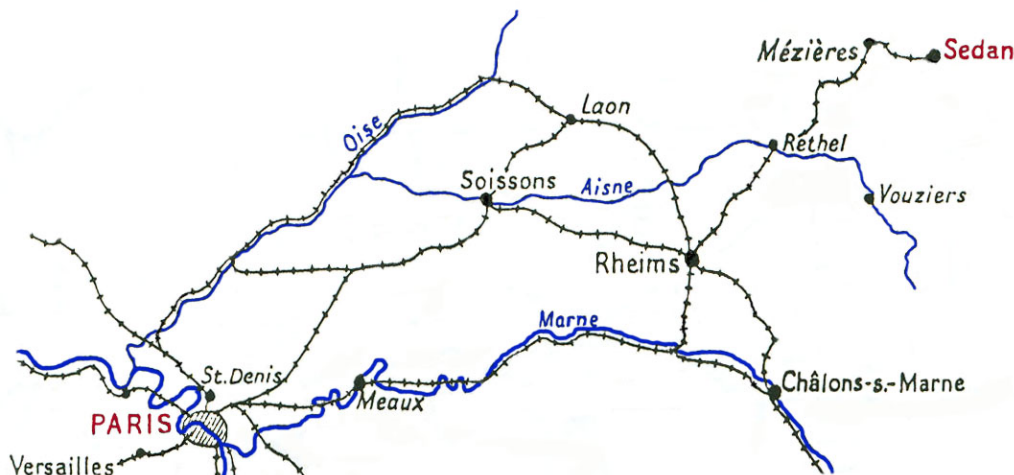


Figure 5-1. Theater of Operations for the Campaign for Paris²

On September 3, the German III and IV armies were on the march from Sedan to Paris. With no armies to oppose them, they advanced rapidly. Within two days, the Prussian royal headquarters had moved to Reims, and the two armies were advancing along a broad front between Laon and Reims. By September 14, III Army infantry columns had reached Meaux (east of Paris). On September 15, orders were issued for the III Army to invest Paris from the south, along the left bank of the Seine River, and for the IV Army to take positions north of the city on the right bank of the Seine.³ The gap between the Seine and Marne Rivers to the southeast of Paris was initially filled by the I Bavarian Corps. Postal communications with Paris ended when the last railroad connection to the west was cut in the evening of September 18,⁴ and the military investment of the city was complete on September 19. The Germans expected a short siege.

They had not adequately assessed the resolve of the French. Following the collapse of the Second Empire at Sedan, the French Third Republic was proclaimed at Paris on September 4. Without the means to conduct national elections, a National Assembly could not be convened, so a provisional Government of National Defense was named. This new government began to vigorously organize continued resistance at Paris and in unoccupied France.

This chapter describes the development of fieldpost mail services for the newly constituted French army in Paris, and follows the siege through letters posted at both the French and German fieldposts. The French Armée du Rhin fieldpost system mostly disappeared with the imperial army, but fieldpost bureaus were established in Paris for a portion of the French army. The German fieldpost structure remained virtually unchanged from the start of the war.

The Formation of the Armée de Paris

The two August 6 defeats of the Armée du Rhin on the frontier opened the door to a German invasion of France, so French military authorities immediately took steps to prepare for an all-out defensive war and a possible siege of Paris. A division of naval infantry, which had been preparing for an amphibious attack against the German Baltic coast,⁵ was called instead to Paris. On August 7, the Emperor ordered that all depot battalions be sent to Paris. Finally, about 80,000 untrained conscripts from the class of 1869 were called to their regimental depots in mid-August.⁶

In addition to the naval infantry, all ship crews not at sea were called to Paris to man the forts there. The naval infantry division arrived at Paris on August 9, where it was incorporated into the “8^e Corps d’armée territoriale” under the orders of General Baraguey d’Hilliers. On August 12, the 8th Corps project was scrapped in favor of creating new 12th, 13th and 14th army corps for the Armée de Châlons. Accordingly, the naval division was sent to Châlons camp to be incorporated into the 12th Corps, only to be lost three weeks later at Sedan.

Two regular army line infantry regiments, the 35th and 42nd, were re-called from Rome to form the kernel of the new 13th Corps. The balance of that corps, along with all of the forming 14th Corps, was made up of newly constituted march infantry regiments, formed from the depot battalions of 100 line infantry regiments. Accordingly, 78 depot battalions began arriving at Paris on August 14⁷ to be formed into march regiments for the 1st, 12th, 13th and 14th Corps.⁸ However, the heterogeneous composition of the march regiments made command and control difficult, and the soldiers were primarily lightly trained first-line reserves, so they were not yet combat ready.

As described in Chapter Three, the 13th Corps was ready for action on August 26, and was sent to protect the flanks of the Armée de Châlons at Mézières and Reims. It escaped from the September 1 debacle at Sedan, and retreated to Paris on September 6-9. The 13th Corps was expected to have a cavalry division under General Reyau. It was sent instead to support operations along the Loire River, and did not take part in the siege of Paris.

The 14th Corps was created by an August 19 Imperial Decree, and was available for service in Paris on September 9 with about 33,000 men. It consisted of 12 march infantry regiments (15th through 26th), formed from 36 depot battalions. Twelve of these battalions arrived on August 28-31 already formed into a division that had been created at Lyon under General de Maussion. A cavalry division under General de Champéron was formed on September 9 for the 14th Corps, consisting of the 1st and 9th Chasseurs line cavalry regiments (from Algeria) and two march cavalry regiments. On the same day, an independent cavalry brigade was formed at Paris under General de Bernis, consisting of three march cavalry regiments.⁹ The order of battle for the 13th Corps and 14th Corps is shown at the end of this chapter.

Eight additional march infantry regiments were formed at Paris, but were not incorporated into the 13th or 14th Corps. On September 11, the 28^e Régiment de Marche was formed from 25 Parisian depot companies of the Garde Impériale, and was sent to defend St. Denis.¹⁰ The Régiment de Marche de Zouaves was formed on September 26 around a portion of the 3rd Zouave Regiment that had escaped from Sedan, and reinforcements for the 1st and 2nd Zouave Regiments that had not been able to reach their units. The 34^e, 35^e, 36^e and 37^e Régiments de Marche were formed in late September from companies sent to Paris from provincial regimental depots.¹¹ The remaining depot companies in Paris were formed into the 38^e and 39^e Régiments de Marche on October 19.

In total, about 80,000 regular army troops were available in Paris.¹² This was not adequate to face the approaching 180,000 German veterans, so additional forces had to be drawn from the second and third lines of reserves in the Garde Nationale Mobile (“Garde Mobile”) and the Garde Nationale.

The Garde Mobile consisted of men between the ages of 20 and 24 who had avoided conscription. Their term of service was for five years, so the classes of 1864-1868 were available in the standing reserve, representing about 575,000 men on paper. On July 17, the Interior Ministry mobilized the Garde Mobile and over 300 battalions began to form in the various departments of France. On August 10, the War Ministry decreed a universal call-up of all eligible men between the ages of 25 and 30 who were to be incorporated into the Garde Mobile.¹³ Accordingly, from August 17 to September 17, 93 Garde Mobile battalions (about 111,000 men) from 25 departments were called to Paris to bolster the city's defenses. They were initially distributed into four divisions of over 27,000 men each.¹⁴

The Garde Nationale was a third-line reserve that was intended only for local defense. When the news of the disaster at Sedan was received at Paris, there were already 60 Parisian battalions with about 90,000 men. On September 6, the Interior Ministry called for the formation of 60 additional battalions, but 194 new battalions (of varying sizes) were created before the government stopped the formation of any more on October 1.¹⁵ Their intended use was to guard the ramparts of Paris, and there was no expectation that they would participate in offensive military actions. The large number of Parisians enrolled in the Garde Nationale clearly indicates that the August 10 universal call-up for the Garde Mobile had not been broadly observed in Paris.

In total, there were about 200,000 mostly reliable soldiers and about 300,000 less reliable members of the Garde Nationale in Paris during the siege. This was enough to hold the Germans at bay for as long as food supplies held out.

The Operations of the Armée de Paris from mid-September to November 8

Figure 5-2 shows the French defensive positions around Paris (stars designate external forts).

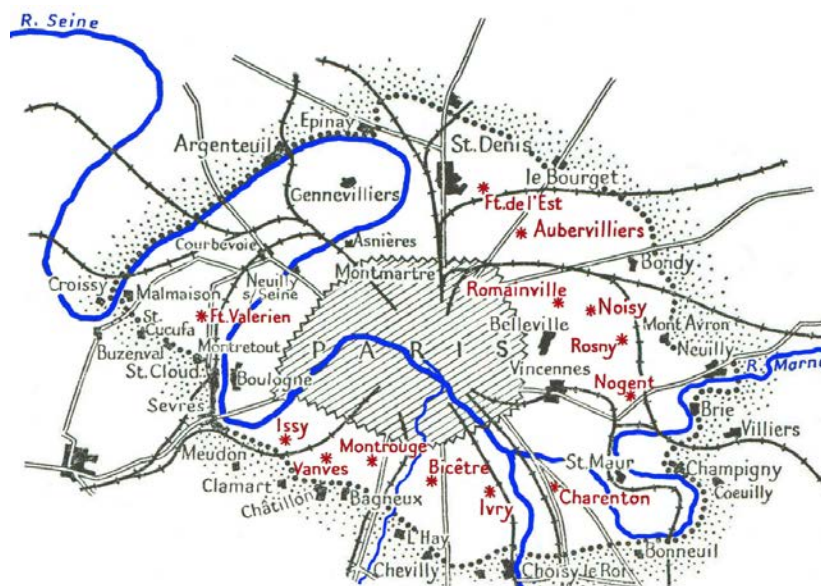


Figure 5-2. Map of the French defensive line around Paris¹⁶

On September 15, the 13th Corps was moved from its initial positions west of Paris to Vincennes, covering the southeast between the Nogent and Charenton forts. D'Exéa's 1st Division was placed around Charenton, while Maud'huy's 2nd Division and Blanchard's 3rd Division were placed around Vincennes. The 13th Corps headquarters was based at St. Mandé, between Vincennes and the walls of Paris. Around the same time, on September 13-15, the 14th Corps was moved from assembly areas inside of Paris to defensive positions south of Paris. De Caussade's 1st Division was placed between the Issy and Montrouge forts, d'Hughes' 2nd Division was concentrated in front of Montrouge, and de Maussion's 3rd Division defended the line between Bicêtre and Ivry. The 14th Corps headquarters was established at Montrouge. As the German III Army closed the circle around Paris on September 19, the French 14th Corps attacked the German V Corps at Châtillon (south of Paris). The right wing of the attack quickly collapsed under light artillery fire, and left the French high command with little confidence in the 14th Corps. This led to a re-alignment of the army.¹⁷

On September 20-23, the 14th Corps moved to new positions west of Paris. The 1st Division was based around Clichy-la-Garenne (northeast of Neuilly-sur-Seine), the 2nd Division at Neuilly and the 3rd Division around Boulogne. The 2nd and 3rd Divisions of the 13th Corps were moved into the former 14th Corps positions between the Issy and Ivry forts, and the 13th Corps headquarters was established in the Montparnasse train station in southern Paris.¹⁸

During the second half of September and throughout October, Général Ducrot, commander of the 13th and 14th Corps, sent his young soldiers on frequent attacks against the German siege line. The purpose was to test the strength of the German siege line, and to give combat experience to the march regiments and a few regiments of mobiles. Aside from the disappointing September 19 sortie by the 14th Corps at Châtillon, the French troops performed well, and began to coalesce into an effective fighting force.

In recognition of this, Général Trochu, President of the Government of National Defense, re-designated all Parisian infantry march regiments as more prestigious line regiments on October 28. Thus, the 5^e Régiment de Marche became the 105^e Régiment de Ligne, the 28^e Régiment de Marche became the 128^e Régiment de Ligne, the Régiment de Marche de Zouaves became the 4^e Régiment de Zouaves, and so on. The five Parisian cavalry march regiments were also re-designated as line regiments on November 2.

Also on October 28, a small group of soldiers from the Corps de St. Denis¹⁹ surprised the German garrison in Le Bourget (north of Paris) and drove them out. This led to a great celebration in Paris, which turned to bitter disappointment when a counter-attack by the German Garde Corps recovered Le Bourget two days later.

On October 30, French diplomat Adolphe Thiers entered Paris with the discouraging news of Bazaine's surrender of the Armée de Metz, and of the refusal by the European powers to intervene in the war. He did, however, bring news that the Prussians were willing to discuss a French surrender that included the annexation of Alsace and two billion francs in war reparations. Not being an elected body, the Government of National Defense was unsure of its authority to negotiate such a peace, but sent Thiers back to Versailles for further negotiations. However, the triple news of Bazaine's capitulation, the loss of Le Bourget, and the possibility of surrender galvanized the Parisian radicals, who seized the seat of government on October 31, and proclaimed the overthrow of the Government of National Defense. The insurrection was quickly put down by loyal troops, but eroded Thiers' ability to negotiate a peace with Bismarck. Both sides hardened their positions, so the discussions broke down, and the war would continue for another three months.

The Armée de Paris Fieldposts from September 17 to November 8

Fieldpost services were only provided for the 13th and 14th Corps. This followed the long tradition of providing fieldposts for the regular army, but left more than three-fourths of the Paris defenders without dedicated fieldposts. That larger part of the Parisian army used civilian postal facilities, and their mail handling is described in Chapter Six. The table below shows the 13th Corps fieldpost bureaus and their associated markings. Prepayment of 20 centimes domestic postage was required for balloon mail (although this was not always strictly observed), so the payeurs were supplied with cancelling devices.²⁰

13th Corps Fieldpost Bureaus

Unit	Postmark	Cancel	Known Dates of Use ²¹
Headquarters	ARMÉE DU RHIN Q ^R G ^L 13 ^E CORPS	A.R.A.L	September 20 to November 24
1 st Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN BA ^U AL	A.R.13 ^E .C	September 17 to November 24
2 nd Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN BA ^U AM	A.R.A.M	September 30 to November 27
3 rd Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN BA ^U AN	A.R.A.N	September 25 to December 13

Some 13th Corps units received their payeur officers on September 15. Since the 13th Corps was a part of the Armée du Rhin mobilization, the payeurs came equipped with “Armée du Rhin” postmarks and cancels, and began processing mail two days later.

Military personnel in Paris were initially accorded a free frank per the July 24 law.²² Given the extra costs of the balloon post, however, the Government of National Defense issued a decree on September 26 that required full payment of postage on balloon mail.²³ Military mail sent internally within the Paris siege lines continued to be eligible for a free frank.

Figure 5-3 shows the earliest known 13th Corps fieldpost letter, which details the start of the 1st Division’s fieldpost service. This letter was datelined at Charenton on September 16 and postmarked the next day at the 1st Division’s Bureau AL. The “13^e Corps d’Armée, 1^{ère} Division d’Infanterie, Général d’Exéa” private blue unit cachet justified the military free frank. The letter was written by an officer on d’Exéa’s staff, who reported that, “Yesterday we received the movement order...we are just now camping between Charenton and Vincennes...since yesterday we have our Treasury officers with our division.” On September 17, he wrote again,²⁴ explaining that, “our division’s post did not start until today, so I think that the letter I wrote yesterday will be delayed at least 24 hours.” The letter escaped from Paris before the German siege closed, and arrived in southwest France on September 19.



Figure 5-3. September 17, 1870 letter from Bureau AL of the 13th Corps’ 1st Division

In an apparent mix-up, the Bureau AL payeur received the headquarters' "A.R.13^e.C" cancel, while his counterpart at the headquarters bureau received the "A.R.A.L" cancel. Figure 5-4 illustrates this mix-up.



Figure 5-4. November 6, 1870 postcard from Bureau AL of the 13th Corps' 1st Division

This postcard was datelined "5th of Nov. 70" and postmarked the next day at the 1st Division's Bureau AL. Postage to Ireland was 30 centimes, so it was overfranked by two 20 centimes stamps of the old 1862 "Empire Dentelé" Issue, which were cancelled "A.R.13^e.C." The card was carried out of Paris on the balloon *Gironde*, which left on November 8 and landed safely to the west of Paris. Its mail was processed immediately at Evreux, so this card reached Ireland on November 11.

The 13th Corps' headquarters probably received their payeur officers on September 15 at St Mandé, but census in Appendix C shows September 20 as the earliest recorded use. Figure 5-5 shows an unusual example from the Montparnasse train station.



Figure 5-5. October 3, 1870 postcard from the 13th Corps' headquarters

Datelined "Paris le 28bre²⁵ 1870" by Colonel Hennet, commander of the 13th Corps artillery reserve, this postcard was postmarked on October 3 at the 13th Corps' headquarters bureau. The unusual ten centimes franking²⁶ is made up by five two centimes stamps of the 1863 "Empire Lauré" issue, which were cancelled "A.R.A.L." The card was initially carried out of Paris on the manned balloon *Non Denommé No. 2* which left on October 7 with two sacks of postcards. Unfortunately, it crashed between the French and German lines north of Paris, so the passengers and mail waited until nightfall before returning to Paris. The mail was returned to the post office,²⁷ and most of the cards left again on October 16 aboard the *Jean Bart No. 2*, which left Paris toward the northeast. After reaching a safe height of 1,100 meters, the balloon abruptly fell to a height of 400 meters near the city of Soissons, which had surrendered to the Germans

the day before. Upon receiving multiple gunshots, the pilot frantically threw out the bags of postcards to rise above the gunfire, and proceeded to a safe landing in Belgium.²⁸ The cards were recovered in occupied territory and smuggled to northern France. This card finally arrived in Le Mans on October 24.

The census in Appendix C shows that the earliest recorded letter from Bureau AM (2nd Division) was postmarked on September 30, and that the earliest known Bureau AN (3rd Division) letter was postmarked on September 25. Figure 5-6 shows an interesting letter from Bureau AM (unfolded to show the reverse).



Figure 5-6. October 17, 1870 letter from Bureau AM of the 2nd Division

This letter was datelined in Paris on October 16 and franked with 30 centimes postage to Wiesbaden, Germany.²⁹ It was postmarked the next day at the 2nd Division's Bureau AM and marked paid to destination. The Bureau AM postmark is repeated inside the letter, perhaps reflecting French censorship. It was carried out of Paris on the balloon *Victor Hugo*, which left on October 18 and landed that day in occupied territory near Soissons. Its mail was smuggled northwest to Amiens, where it was processed into the French postal system, and sent to Cologne via Verviers, Belgium. This letter was diverted at Cologne by German postal authorities and sent to Versailles, where it was examined per the blue "Auswartiges Amt des Norddeutschen Bundes"³⁰ marking on the reverse. It was finally released to its destination on November 8, rated for two groschen due. This censor mark is known used by the North German Confederation Foreign Affairs Department at Versailles from October 19 to November 16.³¹

Figure 5-7 shows a letter from Bureau AN.



Figure 5-7. October 27, 1870 letter from Bureau AN of the 3rd Division

This letter was postmarked at the 3rd Division's Bureau AN on October 27. The 20 centimes franking clearly shows the A.R.A.N" cancel. It was carried out of Paris aboard the balloon *Colonel Charras*, which left on October 29 and landed in occupied territory near Langres. Its mail was smuggled to unoccupied Chaumont on October 30, so this letter arrived in Brittany on November 2.

On September 18, the 14th Corps payeur officers had still not yet been assigned, so the commander, Général Renault, requested action from the Paris Governor, Général Trochu.³² Per the census in Appendix C, the 14th Corps finally received its fieldpost service in mid-October. By then, "Armée du Rhin" was an inappropriate designation, so the 14th Corps postmarks were denominated "Armée Française." The table below shows the 14th Corps fieldpost bureaus and their associated markings.

14th Corps Fieldpost Bureaus

Unit	Postmark	Cancel	Known Dates of Use
Headquarters	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE QUART ^R GAL	Datestamp	October 17 to November 29
1 st Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE 14 ^E CORPS A	Datestamp	October 23 to November 11
2 nd Division	(payeur not assigned)		
3 rd Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE 14 ^E CORPS B	Datestamp	November 14

No cancelling devices were provided to the 14th Corps payeurs, so the datestamps were used as cancelling devices.

Figure 5-8 shows an example from the headquarters bureau.³³



Figure 5-8. November 8, 1870 letter from the 14th Corps HQ bureau

This letter was datelined on November 8 at Porte Maillot (west of Paris at Neuilly-s-Seine) by a staff officer who added the private "14^e Corps d'Armée/État Major Général" unit marking. It was postmarked that day at the 14th Corps headquarters bureau, which used its datestamp to cancel the 20 centimes franking. This letter was then carried by the balloon *Daguerre*, which left Paris on November 12 with five sacks of mail. Hit by gunfire as she passed over the siege line, the *Daguerre* descended rapidly toward German cavalry and dropped a mail bag to regain altitude. The balloon continued to lose altitude, and was captured on landing 35 kilometers east of Paris. The dropped mail bag was recovered by a game warden and, after a delay, was smuggled south to unoccupied France.³⁴ This letter was in the recovered bag, and arrived in central France on November 28.

At the end of October, the 14th Corps was still positioned west of Paris. The 1st Division was northeast of Neuilly-s-Seine, the 2nd Division was near Asnières, and the 3rd Division was southwest at Boulogne-s-Seine.³⁵ The payeur for the 1st Division was supplied with the "Armée Française 14^e Corps A" postmark,

which he applied exclusively in red ink. Since this bureau was in operation for just over a month, surviving covers are rare. Figure 5-9 shows an unusual example to Italy.

Figure 5-9. October 29, 1870 letter from Bureau A of the 1st Division



This letter was datelined “(Paris) Clichy la Garenne il 28 Ottobre 1870” and franked with 50 centimes postage to Italy. It was postmarked at the 1st Division’s Bureau A on October 29, and was carried out of Paris by the balloon *Fulton*, which left on November 2. It landed in unoccupied France near Angers, where its mail was processed. This letter arrived in Viterbo, Italy on November 10.

No “Armée Française” postmarks are known for the 2nd Division of the 14th Corps. On October 28, its 2nd Brigade was detached to the 13th Corps at Bicêtre.³⁶ Consequently, the 2nd Division fieldpost service was never initiated, since a payeur would not have been assigned to just the 1st Brigade. Soldiers in the 1st Brigade could use the fieldposts for the 14th Corps’ headquarters or 1st Division, while those in the 2nd Brigade used the 13th Corps’ fieldpost. Figure 5-10 illustrates a letter from a 2nd Brigade soldier.



Figure 5-10. November 1, 1870 letter from a soldier in the 2nd Division of the 14th Corps

Datelined “Camp d’Ivrie le 19bre 1870” by a corporal in the 21^e Régiment de Marche, this letter was posted that day at Bureau AM of the 13th Corps’ 2nd Division, which was south of Paris at the Bicêtre fort. He wrote that, “after the Châtillon-Clamart affair, we have taken part in many reconnaissances notably at Rueil on the 21st and several days ago we changed camps from Neuilly to Bicêtre...Our 14th Corps of Paris was commended in the order of the day for its bravery and good conduct...we are no longer the 21^e de marche but now the 121^e de ligne.” He franked the letter with 20 centimes for the service by balloon, so the payeur marked it “P.P.” (postage paid) and sent it out of Paris on the balloon *Fulton* on November 2. This letter arrived in southern France on November 5.

The 3rd Division received its fieldpost service in early November. That bureau was only in existence for about three weeks, so only one surviving letter from Bureau B is known. It is illustrated in Figure 5-11.



Figure 5-11. November 14, 1870 letter from the 3rd Division's Bureau B

This letter was datelined “Boulogne 14 Novembre” by a supply officer in the 3rd Division and postmarked “Armée Française 14^e Corps B 14 Nov 70.” The postmark and the location of the sender confirm that the 3rd Division used the Bureau B fieldpost. The 20 centimes franking was cancelled by the datestamp, and the letter was carried out of Paris by the balloon *Archimède* on November 21.³⁷ That balloon landed in the Netherlands, and its mail was distributed from Belgium on November 22. This letter arrived in Brittany on November 25, and was forwarded to Dinard.

One curious letter from Paris is known with an “Armée du Rhin B^{au} AH” postmark. That bureau had been originally assigned to the 1st Reserve Cavalry Division at Metz. Half of that division, along with the fieldpost officer, escorted Napoléon III from Metz to Châlons on August 16, and was incorporated into the Armée de Châlons. Six cavalry regiments escaped from the disaster at Sedan, and evidently the payeur for Bureau AH also escaped to Paris, as illustrated in Figure 5-12.

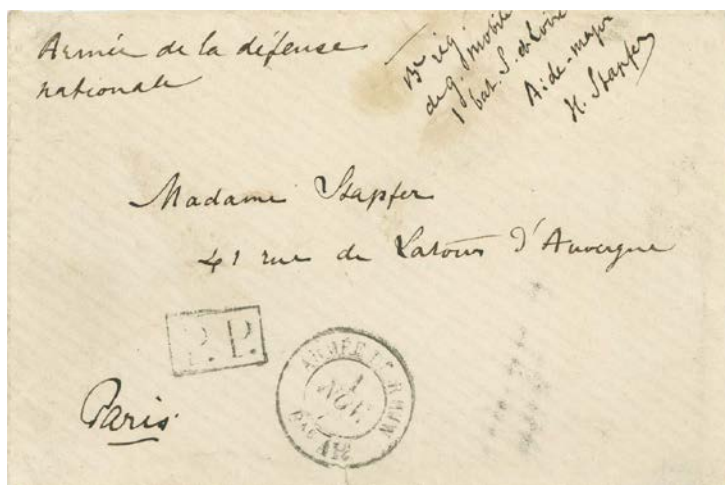


Figure 5-12. November 1, 1870 letter from the Armée du Rhin Bureau AH

Endorsed “Armée de la défense nationale,” this letter was postmarked “Armée du Rhin Bureau AH” on November 1. The sender identified his unit as the 1st Battalion of the 13th Regiment of the Garde Mobile de la Saône-et-Loire, which was attached to the Corps de St. Denis at that time. Evidently, the Bureau AH payeur serviced some mail at St. Denis. He granted a free frank to this letter sent within the Paris siege.

The Operations of the 2^e Armée from its Formation on November 8 to December 3

With growing confidence in the combat readiness of their troops, the military leadership in Paris realized that their army was of little use trapped in Paris. They formulated a plan to break out a major portion of the army toward the west in mid-November, and re-organized their forces into three armies on November 8. The new 2^e Armée, under the command of Général Ducrot, contained most of the effective fighting units, and was given the task of fighting its way out of Paris to link up with the provincial armies. The 3^e Armée, under Général Vinoy, consisted mostly of Garde Mobile regiments and was to continue the defense of Paris. The 1^{er} Armée, under Général Thomas, contained 266 mobilized Garde Nationale battalions, and was intended to remain in Paris and serve as a reserve to the 3^e Armée. The 2^e Armée consisted of 100,000 men in three corps with eight infantry divisions and a cavalry division. It included nine reliable regiments of Gardes Mobiles, and its initial order of battle is included at the end of this chapter. The 1st Corps of the 2^e Armée initially included three divisions, but its 2nd Division, under Général de Maud'huy, was transferred to the 3^e Armée on November 26.

With the November 8 re-organization complete, Général Ducrot finalized his plans for a mid-November break out by the 2^e Armée. His planning was interrupted on November 14, when the astonishing news of the November 9 re-capture of Orléans by the Armée de la Loire was received at Paris. With a viable French army on the Loire, the strategic equation changed dramatically. It now made more sense to break out southeast of Paris to better enable a link-up with the Armée de la Loire.³⁸

Ducrot's plan, although over a month in the making, had to be changed in the course of two weeks. Accordingly, large quantities of munitions were transferred across Paris, and the 2^e Armée moved on November 27-28 from staging points on the west side of Paris to the southeast around Vincennes. Notification of the change in plans was sent to Gambetta, so that he could set the Armée de la Loire in motion to support the breakout. Unfortunately, the notification was sent on the balloon *Ville d'Orleans*, which was blown all the way to Norway, so its dispatches were not received in France until after the November 29 scheduled start of the breakout. Figure 5-13 shows a map of the 2^e Armée breakout plan.³⁹

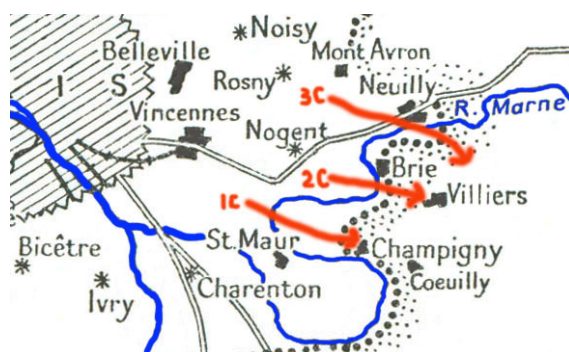


Figure 5-13. Map of the November 30-December 2 Battle of Champigny

The 1st Corps (red line labelled “1C”) was to lead the attack on November 30, moving from Vincennes across the Marne River and up the plateau to capture Champigny and Coeuilly from the Württemberg Division. The 2nd Corps was to cover their left by attacking through Brie to Villiers. The 3rd Corps was ordered to move from Rosny fort to capture Neuilly-s-Marne and then to ascend the heights and attack Villiers from the side and rear. Meanwhile, the 1st Division of the 2nd Corps was ordered to intercept German reinforcements by attacking from Charenton fort toward the south.

The 1st Corps easily reached Champigny, but was blocked by the Württemberg Division from capturing Coeuilly. Similarly, the 2nd Corps easily captured Brie, but was stopped in front of Villiers. The 3rd Corps, which was supposed to support the attack on Villiers from the flank, was late in crossing the Marne, and did not attack up the plateau until after the 2nd Corps had been repulsed. A coordinated attack on Villiers probably would have taken that position and opened the door to the French breakout. Instead, blocked at Coeuilly and Villiers, the 2^e Armée dug into positions at Brie and Champigny and waited for the inevitable German counterattack. This came on December 2, and was repulsed by the French at great loss to both sides. Stymied on the Champigny plateau, the French finally retreated back across the Marne River on December 3, and returned to their original positions around Vincennes.

The brunt of the French attack fell on the Württemberg Division, but the XII Corps and the II Corps rushed reinforcements to the battle. Figure 5-14 shows a fieldpost card from the II Corps (which had arrived at Paris from Metz⁴⁰ on November 5). This card was datelined at La Queue en Brie (southeast of Champigny) on December 5 by a soldier in the 2nd Pomeranian Jaeger Battalion of the II Corps. It was postmarked the next day at the II Corps' headquarters bureau, and arrived in Jacobsdorf on December 10.



Figure 5-14. Dec. 6, 1870 fieldpost card from the II Corps' headquarters

Figure 5-15 shows an unusual letter from a French 1st Corps soldier captured at Champigny.



Figure 5-15. December 6, 1870 letter from a French soldier captured at Champigny

This letter was initially datelined “Arcueil pré Paris 26 9bre 1870” by a soldier in the 35^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Vendée. That regiment was part of the 3rd Division of the 1st Corps, and moved from Arcueil (south of Paris near the Montrouge fort) to Vincennes on November 28 in preparation for the attack on Champigny. The soldier did not have time to mail his letter, so he carried it with him into the battle, where he was captured on the first day during the attack on Coeuilly. The Germans took him to Meaux, where he added a December 6 note in pencil to his letter, announcing that, “I have been a prisoner of war since November 30.” An aid society, perhaps the Red Cross, marked his letter “Armée Française” and transported it to Caen (in Normandy), where it was postmarked on January 3 and granted a military free frank, per the “P.P.” marking. It was finally received in western France on January 6.

The 2^e Armée Fieldposts from November 8 to December 19

Payeurs were assigned to the 2^e Armée in the November 8 re-organization, but did not receive postmarks for the new formations until around November 28. Before that, the old 13th and 14th Corps postmarks serviced the new formations, as shown in the table below.

November 8-27 2^e Armée Fieldpost Assignments

2 ^e Armée Unit	Postmark	Cancel	Previous Unit
1 st Corps Headquarters	ARMÉE DU RHIN Q ^R GL 13 ^E CORPS	A.R.A.L	13 th Corps Headquarters
1 st Division	(not assigned)		14 th Corps 2 nd Division ⁴¹
2 nd Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN BA ^U AM	A.R.A.M	13 th Corps 2 nd Division
3 rd Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN BA ^U AN	A.R.A.N	13 th Corps 3 rd Division
2 nd Corps Headquarters	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE QUART ^R GAL	Datestamp	14 th Corps Headquarters
1 st Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE 14 ^E CORPS A	Datestamp	14 th Corps 1 st Division
2 nd Division	(not assigned)		14 th Corps 2 nd Division
3 rd Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE 14 ^E CORPS B	Datestamp	14 th Corps 3 rd Division
3 rd Corps Headquarters	(not assigned)		No pre-existing fieldpost
1 st Division	(not assigned)		No pre-existing fieldpost
2 nd Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN BA ^U AL	A.R.13 ^e .C	13 th Corps 1 st Division
Cavalry Division	(not assigned)		No pre-existing fieldpost

Figure 5-16 shows a letter from the 1st Corps’ headquarters, datelined “Paris le 17 Novembre 70” by a headquarters secretary who added the “2^{me} Armée 1^{er} Corps/État-Major Général” private unit marking.



Figure 5-16. November 17, 1870 letter from the 1st Corps’ headquarters

It received a November 17 “Armée du Rhin Q^R GL 13^e Corps” postmark, which was being used by the 1st Corps’ headquarters. The sender, who received an unauthorized⁴² free frank per the red “P.P.” marking, wrote that, “I took a position as secretary to Général Blanchard’s headquarters...and am lodged with the

headquarters on rue de Rennes. I started on the very day that my old battalion left to camp at the foot of Mont Valérien...When you can write address it to Proust, Secretary in the 1st Corps Headquarters bureau at Montparnasse station, Paris.” This letter left Paris on November 21 aboard the balloon *Archimède*, and arrived in Nantes on November 25.

On December 1, the 45^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de l’Hérault was detached from the 3^e Armée and sent to the St. Maur peninsula (southeast of Paris) to cover the anticipated retreat of the 1st Corps from Champigny.⁴³ The fieldpost officer for the 3rd Division of the 1st Corps used Armée du Rhin Bureau AN postmarks for mail from this regiment. Figure 5-17 shows an example.

Figure 5-17. December 13, 1870 letter mailed at Bureau AN



This letter was datelined “Parc de St. Maur le 12 Xbre 1870” by a sergeant in the 45th Regiment of the Garde Mobile de l’Hérault who wrote that, “we are still in the St. Maur park...although we expect to leave here soon...last week we participated in the attack on Creteil.” He franked his letter with 20 centimes and mailed it at the fieldpost bureau for the 3rd Division of the 1st Corps, which postmarked it “Armée du Rhin B^{au} AN” on December 13⁴⁴ and cancelled the stamp with the “A.R.A.N” lozenge of dots. It left Paris on the balloon *Parmentier*, which departed on December 17 and landed in occupied territory east of Paris. The mail was smuggled south to Nevers around December 26, where it entered the French mails. This letter arrived in Montpellier on December 29. Figure 5-18 shows the reply by Boule de Moulins.



Figure 5-18. January 2, 1871 response by Boule to Figure 5-17

This letter was a response to the letter in Figure 5-17. Posted in Montpellier on January 2, it was prepaid one franc⁴⁵ for the Boules de Moulins mail service to Paris. It was sent to Moulins-sur-Allier, where it was

placed in a boule for immersion in the Seine River. The boule was recovered sometime in June 1871 and postmarked “Paris Poste Restante” on June 22. The sergeant had returned to Montpellier in March 1871 so, after some confusion, the letter was sent back to Montpellier, where it arrived on August 27.

The balloon post was successful in maintaining outgoing letter communications from Paris, but mail to Paris remained a problem. The French government endorsed the “Boules de Moulins” system in late December 1870. Paying a premium charge, correspondents outside of Paris were instructed to send their letters in the regular mail to Moulins-sur-Allier, from whence the letters would be transmitted into besieged Paris. This system employed water-tight zinc balls (or “boules”), into which 400-700 letters were packed. Each boule was then launched in the Seine River upriver from Paris. The boule traveled in the river just below the surface of the water until it could be caught in nets placed across the Seine in Paris. In all, 55 boules were launched, although none of their letters were received in Paris until after the siege.⁴⁶

Figure 5-19 illustrates a letter from the 2nd Corps of the 2^e Armée.

Figure 5-19. November 11, 1870 letter from the 2nd Corps’ 1st Division



Dated “Clichy la Garenne 10 9bre 1870,” this letter⁴⁷ was franked with 20 centimes postage.⁴⁸ Captain Deschamps, of the 2nd Corps’ 21st Artillery Regiment, reported that, “We took part in the reconnaissance of October 21 against Rueil, Malmaison and Garches. We stayed in the saddle and in battery from 9am to 8pm, in front of Mont Valérien...I didn’t lose anyone from my battery.” His letter received a red November 11 “Armée Française 14^e Corps A” postmark, which was being used by the fieldpost for the 2nd Corps’ 1st Division. This letter was carried out of Paris by the balloon *Daguerre*, which left on November 12. It was in the portion of the mail that was captured by the Germans, so it has no arrival markings.

The new “Armée Française” postmarks and cancels for the re-organized 2^e Armée fieldpost began appearing on November 28. The table below lists the twelve fieldpost bureaus (there was no Bureau I).

November 28 2^e Armée Fieldpost Assignments

2 ^e Armée Unit	Postmark	Cancel	Notes
2e Armée Headquarters	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE A	A.F.A	Earliest known date: December 9
1 st Corps HQ	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE B	A.F.B	No covers are known from this period
1 st Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE C	A.F.C	Only known date: December 19
2 nd Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE D	A.F.D	Earliest known date: November 28
3 rd Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE E	A.F.E	Only known date: December 14
2 nd Corps HQ	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE F	A.F.F	Earliest known date: December 14
1 st Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE G	A.F.G	Earliest known date: December 16
2 nd Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE H	A.F.H	No covers are known from this period
3 rd Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE J	A.F.J	No covers are known from this period

November 28 2^e Armée Fieldpost Assignments (continued)

3 rd Corps HQ	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE K	A.F.K	No covers are known from this period
1 st Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE L	A.F.L	Only known date: December 12
2 nd Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE M	A.F.M	Earliest known date: December 12

These bureaus were in operation for only about three weeks, so surviving covers from this period are rare.⁴⁹ No covers are known from Bureaus B, H, J and K, indicating that they may not have begun operations before December 20. Appendix A illustrates these postmarks and Appendix C gives a census of known covers from these bureaus in this period. Figure 5-20 shows an early 2^e Armée fieldpost letter.



Figure 5-20. Nov. 30, 1870 letter from Bureau D of the 2nd Corps' 2nd Division

Dateline "Bicêtre, le 29 9bre 70," this letter was postmarked "Armée Française D" on November 30. It was franked by a 20 centimes stamp that was cancelled with the new "A.F.D" device. The payeur for the 2nd Division of the 2nd Corps marked the letter with a red "P.P." marking⁵⁰ and forwarded it to the *Jules Favre* #2, which left on November 30 in the evening. The balloon landed on an island west of St. Nazaire, and its mail was left at Nantes on December 2. This letter arrived not far from there on December 3. Figure 5-21 shows a December 12 letter mailed at the 2nd Army's headquarters bureau.



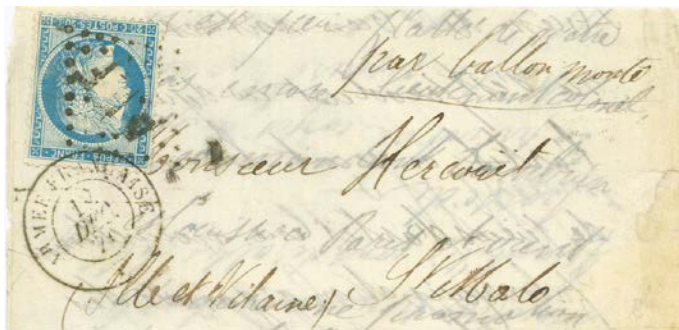
Figure 5-21. December 12, 1870 letter from Bureau A of the 2nd Army's HQ

This letter, from a captain in the 42nd infantry regiment, was datelined "Paris Camp de St. Maur le 12 Décembre 1870" and postmarked "Armée Française A" on the same day. Its 20 centimes franking was cancelled "A.F.A." The letter left Paris on December 15 aboard the balloon *Ville de Paris*, which landed in Prussia. Its mail was captured and never delivered.

During this period, Bureau F markings were in black. As described below, the payeur for the 2nd Corps' headquarters changed to red Bureau F postmarks during the next period. Figure 5-22 shows a letter datelined "Fontenay le 17 Xbre," and franked by a 20 centimes stamp that was cancelled "A.F.F." The letter was also postmarked "Armée Française F" on December 17. It left Paris a day later aboard the

balloon *Davy*, which landed in unoccupied territory near Beaune after flying over the battle of Nuits.⁵¹ This letter finally arrived in Brittany on December 28.

Figure 5-22. Dec. 17, 1870 letter mailed at the 2nd Corps' Bureau F



Bureaus K, L, and M were assigned to the 3rd Corps, and were discontinued on December 20. The census in Appendix C lists no known letters from Bureau K, one from Bureau L, and three from Bureau M. Figure 5-23 shows the only known letter from Bureau L.



Figure 5-23. Dec. 12, 1870 letter from Bureau L of the 3rd Corps' 1st Division

This letter was datelined on December 10 and franked by a 20 centimes stamp that was cancelled "A.F.L." It was postmarked two days later at Bureau L of the 3rd Corps' 1st Division. It left Paris on December 15 aboard the balloon *Ville de Paris*, which was captured upon landing, so its mail was never delivered. Figure 5-24 shows a postcard mailed at Bureau M.

Figure 5-24. December 19, 1870 postcard from Bureau M of the 3rd Corps' 2nd Division



Datelined December 17, this card was endorsed "Capt. au 105^e de ligne Don Mattat 2^e Armée de Paris." The captain franked his note with ten centimes for the postcard rate and posted it on December 19 (the "9" is reversed in the postmark) at the 2nd Division's Bureau M. It was carried out of Paris on the balloon

Lavoisier, which left on December 22 and landed southwest of Paris. The mail was processed through Angers on December 22, but much of the mail was held for four days because of the December 21 German attack on nearby Tours. This card arrived in central France on December 27.

The Operations of the Re-organized 2^e Armée from December 4 to January 28

The 1st Corps suffered the most during the battles of November 30 – December 2. Its 2nd Division had been transferred to the 3^e Armée on November 26, and its 1st and 3rd Divisions had been decimated at Champigny. Accordingly, the 1st Corps was dissolved in the re-organization that was announced on December 4, and the former 2nd and 3rd Corps became the 1st and 2nd Corps, respectively.⁵² The new December 4 order of battle for the 2^e Armée is shown at the end of this chapter.

The three Garde Mobile regiments in the 1st Corps suffered greatly during the Marne battles. Just after the battle, the 10^e Régiment de la Côte-d'Or and the 26^e Régiment d'Ille-et-Vilaine were sent into Paris for recuperation and the 35^e Régiment de la Vendée followed them there on December 10.⁵³ The remaining six regular army regiments of the old 1st Corps were grouped into a new Reserve Division.

Général Ducrot wasted no time in planning a new breakout. On December 4, Général Trochu approved his plan for an attack to the northeast through Le Bourget on December 7. Just after this, General von Moltke informed Général Trochu of the December 5 defeat of the Armée de la Loire and the subsequent re-capture of Orléans by German troops. This slowed the planning for the breakout, but the 2^e Armée was finally moved to staging areas northeast of Paris on December 20. The 1st Corps was placed around Aubervilliers, while the 2nd Corps took positions between the Noisy and Bondy forts. The Reserve Corps was placed in the second line behind Noisy fort.⁵⁴ The key to the breakout was the capture of Le Bourget to secure the 2^e Armée's left flank. The Corps de St. Denis launched its attack against the Garde Corps at Le Bourget on December 21. The French succeeded in taking part of Le Bourget, but were ultimately pushed back to their starting positions.⁵⁵ This failure to take Le Bourget stopped the 2^e Armée in its advance, so it retreated back to its positions northeast of Paris.



**“Bivouac at Le Bourget after the Battle of December 21”
by Alphonse de Neuville (1872)**

Headquarters was established at Aubervilliers⁵⁶ until December 31, when the German bombardment forced it to move to Les Lilas (behind the Romainville fort northeast of Paris). Just before the

bombardment started on December 27, the 2^e Armée was partially dispersed, since its military commanders felt that it was no longer capable of significant offensive actions. The 1st Division of the 1st Corps was moved to positions northwest of Paris, while the 2nd Division of the 2nd Corps moved to barracks at St. Maur (southeast of Paris). The rest of the 2^e Armée remained in defensive positions northeast of Paris.⁵⁷ The German bombardment expanded into a constant deluge of shells on the eastern and southern forts on January 5.⁵⁸ German shells also began hitting targets within southern Paris itself, causing much consternation and considerable damage to buildings on the Left Bank.

After agitation from the Parisian populace for a mass sortie, the Government of National Defense decided to make one final attempt at a breakout, this time with significant participation from the Garde Nationale. Orders to attack the German V Corps, which was supported by the Garde Landwehr Division and the II Bavarian Corps, were issued on January 18. The following day, five divisions of the 2^e Armée, three brigades from the 3^e Armée and 22 mobilized Garde Nationale regiments⁵⁹ (equivalent to five and a half divisions) from the 1^e Armée attacked toward the southwest from Mont Valérien, but were stopped short of their objectives. In total, there were 90,000 French soldiers engaged, of which 42,000 were from the Garde Nationale Mobilisée.⁶⁰



“The Battle of Buzenval” by Alphonse de Neuville (1879)

The grand experiment of having citizen soldiers overwhelm veteran German soldiers had failed, and there would be no further attempts to break out. On January 24, the Government of National Defense opened negotiations for an armistice and the capitulation of Paris. Four days later, a preliminary peace treaty was signed, with an armistice until March 12. The French National Assembly was finally elected, and began considering the terms of surrender on February 13 at Bordeaux.⁶¹ On March 1, the National Assembly ratified the peace, which involved ceding Alsace and part of Lorraine to Germany, and a war indemnity of five billion francs.⁶² On March 15, the Garde Mobile was disbanded, and the regular army left Paris for Orléans.⁶³ The final peace treaty was signed on May 10, 1871 and ratified by both sides on May 21.

The 2^e Armée Fieldposts from December 19 to January 28

Although the second 2^e Armée re-organization occurred on December 4, the payeurs continued to serve their old units until December 19-20. Payeurs for bureaux H and J began operations with their new units on December 19. For the other the fieldposts, there was a significant gap between the discontinuance with the old units and the start-up with the new units. The table below lists the nine fieldpost bureaux, which

were in operation for only about six weeks. Consequently, surviving covers are rare, with fewer than 100 identified in Appendix C.

December 19 2^e Armée Fieldpost Bureaus

2 ^e Armée Unit	Postmark	Cancel	Notes
2 ^e Armée Headquarters	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE A	A.F.A	Used A.F.A or datestamp as cancel
1 st Corps HQ	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE B	A.F.B	Red postmarks in this period
1 st Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE C	cds	Used datestamp as cancel
2 nd Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE D	A.F.D	
3 rd Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE E	A.F.E	
2 nd Corps HQ	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE F	A.F.F	Red postmarks in this period
1 st Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE G	A.F.G	
2 nd Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE H	A.F.H	Used A.F.H or datestamp as cancel
Reserve Division	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE J	A.F.J	

As can be seen in the table, the former 2nd Corps and 3rd Corps took over the 1st and 2nd Corps fieldpost bureaus and bureaus K, L and M of the old 3rd Corps were no longer used. Figure 5-25 shows an example with a “Défense de Paris/Deuxième Armée/État-Major Général” private marking that was posted at Bureau A.

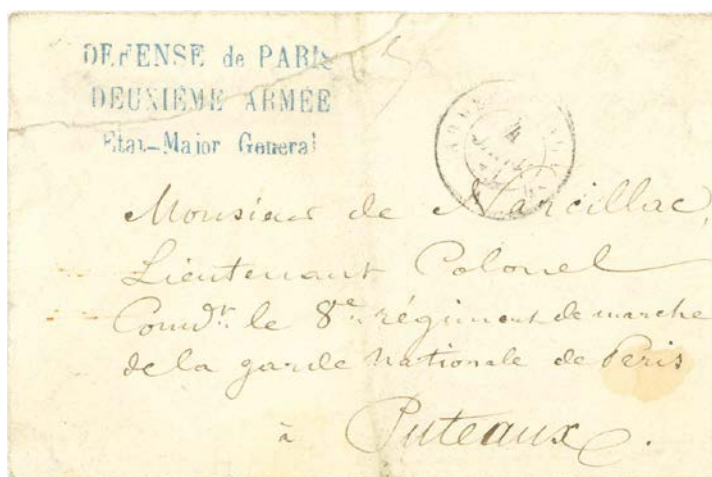


Figure 5-25. January 4, 1871 letter from the 2nd Army's headquarters

This letter was datelined “Paris, le 3 Janvier 1871” and marked with the private blue unit cachet of the 2^e Armée headquarters. It was postmarked the next day at the headquarters’ Bureau A near Les Lilas (northeast of Paris, outside of the city walls) and sent with a military free frank to Lt. Colonel de Narcillac of the 8th regiment of the Garde Nationale Mobilisée at Puteaux (west of Paris, near Neuilly-s-Seine).

Figure 5-26 shows an example from Bureau B of the 1st Corps’ headquarters. Datelined “Paris le 14 Janvier,” this letter was prepaid 20 centimes for transport by balloon. It was postmarked “Armée Française B” faintly in red on January 14, and the franking was cancelled “A.F.B.” This bureau used only red ink for its postmarks. The letter then left Paris on January 15 aboard the balloon *Vaucanson*, which landed in northern France near Lille. The *Vaucanson*’s mail was processed immediately at Lille, but this letter was delayed five days by a sea detour from Calais to Cherbourg around the German occupation area. It finally arrived in southwest France on January 23.



Figure 5-26. January 14, 1871 letter from Bureau B of the 1st Corps' HQ

Figure 5-27 shows an interesting letter posted at the bureau assigned to the 1st Corps' 1st Division.



Figure 5-27. January 12, 1871 letter from Bureau C of the 1st Corps

This letter was written on a *Gazette des Absents* newsletter #25 and datelined at Aubervilliers on January 11. Addressed to Italy, it was franked 50 centimes,⁶⁴ which was cancelled by January 12 “Armée Française C” postmarks. This bureau was evidently not supplied with an “A.F.C” cancelling device, since all surviving covers show the datestamp as the cancel. Figure 5-9 is from the same correspondence, and confirms the progression from the “Armée Française 14^e Corps A” fieldpost bureau to the 2^e Armée Bureau C. This letter was carried out of Paris on the balloon *Général Faidherbe*, which left on January 13 and landed uneventfully near Bordeaux. It arrived in Viterbo, Italy on January 20.

Figure 5-28 shows a letter posted at Bureau D, which was assigned to the 1st Corps' 2nd Division.



Figure 5-28. January 7, 1871 letter from Bureau D of the 1st Corps

Datelined at Aubervilliers (northeast of Paris) on January 7, this letter was franked with a 20 centimes stamp and mailed that day at Bureau D, where the stamp was cancelled “A.F.D.” It was then postmarked

in transit at Paris on January 8, and carried by the balloon *Duquesne*, which left on January 9 and landed in occupied territory near Reims. The mail was smuggled north to unoccupied France on January 10. This letter was then taken on a sea detour from Calais to Cherbourg, and arrived in Normandy on January 14.

Figure 5-29 shows a letter posted at the 3rd Division's Bureau E.



Figure 5-29. January 12, 1871 letter from Bureau E of the 1st Corps

This letter was datelined “Paris, le 11 Janvier” by Captain Henri de Sérour, who reported that “the regiment is at Romainville.” He franked his letter with 20 centimes and gave it to Bureau E, where it was postmarked on January 12 and the stamp was cancelled “A.F.E.” His letter was carried out of Paris on January 13 aboard the balloon *Général Faidherbe*, and finally arrived in occupied France on March 3, 1871.

Figure 5-30 shows a letter posted at Bureau F, which was assigned to the headquarters of the 2nd Corps. It was carried on the ill-fated balloon *Richard Wallace*.



Figure 5-30. January 26, 1871 letter from Bureau F of the 2nd Corps' HQ

Datelined “Les Lilas le 25 Janvier 1871” by a soldier in the 108^e Régiment de Ligne, this letter was prepaid 30 centimes for the postage to Belgium. It was postmarked “Armée Française F” in red on January 26, and the franking was cancelled “A.F.F.” The soldier, Adrien Robinet de Cléry,⁶⁵ reported that, “rumors are that there are negotiations ongoing for the capitulation of Paris, since we are almost out of bread...for the moment we are in force between Romainville fort and Belleville.” His letter was carried out of Paris by the second to last balloon, the *Richard Wallace*, which left on January 27 toward the southwest. The pilot, Emile Lacaze, started to touch down safely at Niort, but re-ascended in an apparent attempt to reach Bordeaux, the seat of the provincial government. Unfortunately, he flew over the coastline and was lost in the Atlantic Ocean off La Rochelle. Mail from his balloon washed up on French shores from February to April 1871. Most of it, like this letter, shows the effects of the water-soaking. In this case, 20 centimes of the franking floated off, but the letter was still delivered free of any additional postage charges in Belgium on February 23.

The letter in Figure 5-31 was posted at Bureau G of the 2nd Corps' 1st Division. This letter was datelined "Noisy-le-Sec le 28 Décembre 1870" by a soldier in the 31^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Morbihan, who reported that, "My regiment has participated in all of the battles that have taken place since November 28...in my battalion we were about 1,000 men when we left Lorient but now we have only 700 men present...our old commandant who was named colonel of the regiment in replacement of M. de Camas was wounded on the 21st." He franked the letter 20 centimes for transport by balloon, and posted it at the 1st Division's Bureau G on December 28. The payeur cancelled the stamp "A.F.G" and forwarded the letter to the balloon *Bayard*, which left on December 29. It landed in unoccupied territory southwest of Paris, and its mail was processed at Nantes on December 30. This letter arrived in Brittany a day later.



Figure 5-31. December 28, 1870 letter mailed at the 2nd Corps' Bureau G

The letter illustrated in Figure 5-32 was posted at Bureau H of the 2nd Corps' 2nd Division.



Figure 5-32. January 19, 1871 letter from Bureau H of the 2nd Corps' 2nd Division

Datelined "Bagnolet le 18 janvier 1871" by a soldier in the 108^e Régiment de Ligne (same correspondence as Figure 5-30), this letter was prepaid 30 centimes postage to Belgium. In his letter, Robinet de Cléry stated that, "tell all who think of me not to worry about a large sortie that will take place tomorrow, January 19, and which should last several days. My regiment is not involved. We are staying between the Noisy and Rosny forts to defend the trenches." He posted his letter on January 19 at the 2nd Division's Bureau H, where the stamps were cancelled by the "A.F.H" lozenge of dots. It was carried out of Paris by the balloon *Général Bourbaki*, which left on January 20 and landed in occupied territory near Reims. The mail was smuggled north on January 22, and this letter arrived in Belgium three days after that.

The letter shown in Figure 5-33 was posted at the Reserve Division's Bureau J.



Figure 5-33. December 19, 1870 letter mailed at the Reserve Division's Bureau J

Dateline "Vincennes le 18 Dbre 1870" by a corporal in the 122^e Régiment de Ligne, this letter was prepaid 20 centimes. The writer reported that, "I have been employed by Colonel Lespieau of my regiment...the 28th of November I was with my regiment facing the Prussians...only half of my company returned from the battlefield. Our regiment suffered nearly 900 men killed or missing. As a result, we were placed in the reserve division upon our return...corporal in the 122^e de ligne, 1st battalion, 5th Company, 3rd Brigade, Reserve Division of the 2^e Armée." He posted his letter on December 19 at the Reserve Division's Bureau J, where the "A.F.J" cancel was applied. It was then carried out of Paris by the balloon *Lavoisier*, which left on December 22 and landed in unoccupied territory southwest of Paris. Its mail was processed immediately, so this letter arrived in southwest France on December 25.

The letter illustrated in Figure 5-34 shows the latest known 2^e Armée fieldpost letter.



Figure 5-34. January 28, 1871 letter from the 1st Corps' Bureau C

This cover front was postmarked at the 1st Division's Bureau C on January 28. It was franked 20 centimes for transport by balloon, but the balloon service had stopped after the morning of January 28. It was delivered once the normal postal channels with Paris re-opened.

On January 25, the 2^e Armée was dissolved,⁶⁶ and Paris surrendered three days later. Under the terms of the armistice, the Armée de Paris moved into Paris on January 29, and its fieldpost organization stopped functioning at that point. The soldiers of the 2^e Armée surrendered their arms over a three-week period during February and, except for a division under Général Faron, marched out of Paris on March 15.

The Fieldposts of the German Siege Armies

Two days after the September 1 victory at Sedan, the IV Army (Garde Corps, IV Corps and XII Corps, accompanied by the 5th, 6th and 12th Cavalry Divisions) was released for the advance on Paris. The bulk of the III Army (V Corps, VI Corps and II Bavarian Corps, along with the 2nd Cavalry Division and the Bavarian Cavalry Division) was also set in movement toward Paris. The remainder of the III Army (I Bavarian Corps, XI Corps and 4th Cavalry Division) was delayed at Sedan to process the large number of French prisoners captured there.

The two armies reached the outskirts of Paris on September 15 and began to fan out around the city. From Meaux (east of Paris) the supreme headquarters issued orders for the placement of the first eight German corps. Figure 5-35 shows the initial locations of the German army around Paris, with the III Army covering the south of the city along the left bank of the Seine River, and the IV Army placed to the north of the city on the right bank of the Seine.

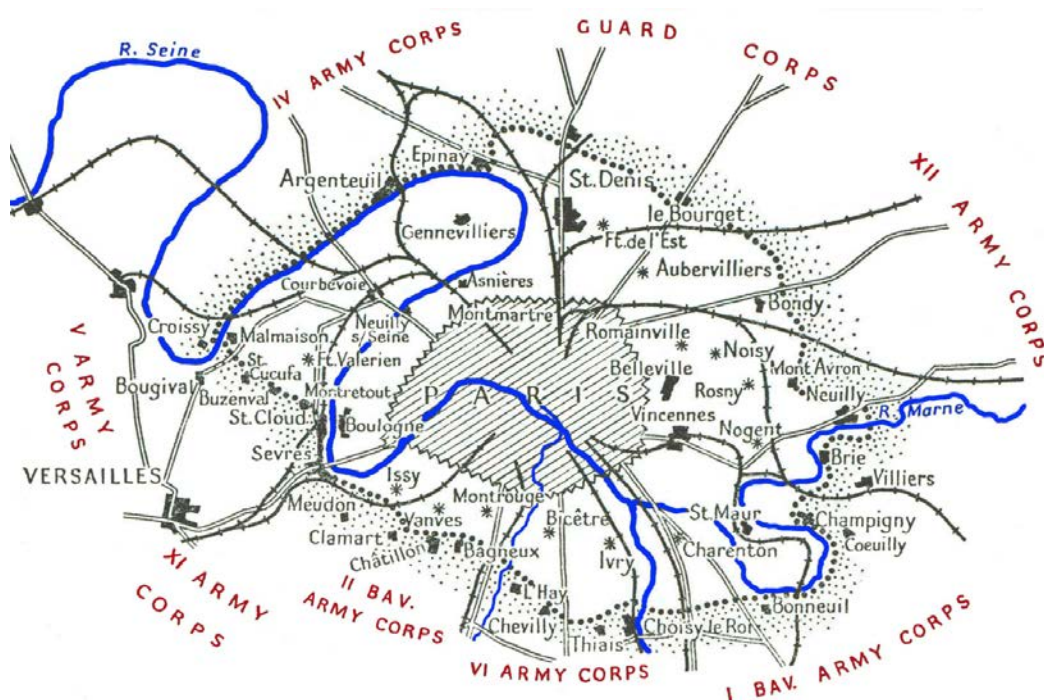


Figure 5-35. Map of the initial German siege line around Paris⁶⁷

The fieldpost bureau listing for the III and IV armies is included in Appendix A, and their order of battle is included at the end of this chapter.

Figure 5-36 shows a fieldpost card from the supreme headquarters east of Paris. This card was datelined on September 16 at Chauconin-Neufmontiers (near Meaux) by a soldier in the 10th Grenadier Regiment (VI Corps of the III Army). It was posted the following day at the “Feld-Ober-Post” bureau at Meaux, and arrived in Breslau on September 22.



Figure 5-36.
September 17,
1870 fieldpost
card from the
Supreme HQ

The III Army headquarters moved from Meaux to permanent quarters at Versailles (southwest of Paris) on September 20. Figure 5-37 shows a letter sent just before that move.



Figure 5-37. September
17, 1870 letter posted at
the III Army's HQ

This letter from a French civilian was posted on September 17 at the III Army headquarters near Meaux. Twenty centimes postage was received in cash by the German postal authorities per the manuscript red "f20." The 20 centimes franking paid for the postage in unoccupied France per the red "P.P." marking, and the letter reached Le Havre on October 8. German fieldpost markings are rare on French stamps.

The III Army's I Bavarian Corps, XI Corps and 4th Cavalry Division left Sedan on September 11 and arrived 12 days later at Paris, where they were added to the southern siege line.⁶⁸ Figure 5-38 shows a fieldpost card from the 4th Cavalry Division upon its arrival outside of Paris.



Figure 5-38.
September 23,
1870 card from
the 4th Cavalry
Division

This card was posted on September 23 at the 4th Cavalry Division's fieldpost bureau, which used the "5. Armee-Cps Avantgarde" postmark. It bears a private blue unit cachet which reads, "Konigl. Preuss. Westpreuss. Kurassier Regiment (No. 5)" and arrived in Berlin on October 3.

The Württemberg Division, which had stayed behind to protect the German lines of communication and supply, reached Paris in late September and took the I Bavarian Corps' place in the Paris siege line. It was placed under III Army command. Figure 5-39 shows a fieldpost card from the Württemberg Division.



Figure 5-39.
January 26, 1871
card from the
Württemberg
Division

This Württemberg fieldpost card was datelined at Noisy-le-Grand (east of Paris) on January 26 and postmarked “K.W. Feldpost 1. Jaeger Bat”⁶⁹ just two days before the siege ended.

On October 6, the German supreme headquarters detached the I Bavarian Corps, the 22nd Division (of the XI Corps), the 2nd Cavalry Division and the 4th Cavalry Division to counter the build-up of new French armies along the Loire River.⁷⁰ This detachment was placed under the orders of General von der Tann, and its campaign is described in Chapter Seven.

On October 10, the 17th Division (of the recently-formed XIII Corps) arrived at Paris and was placed southeast of the city.⁷¹ At this point, the German siege force reached a total of about 180,000 men.⁷² Figure 5-40 shows a fieldpost card from the 17th Division, which was under the orders of the III Army.



Figure 5-40. Oct. 28, 1870 card from the 17th Division

Datelined October 28 at Yerres (southeast of Paris, opposite Ivry fort), this card was posted that day at the 17th Division's fieldpost bureau. It arrived in Berlin on November 3.

The 17th Division did not stay at Paris for long. With the November 5 arrival of the II Corps at Paris from Metz, the German high command decided to strengthen the von der Tann Detachment, which was spread thinly between Chartres and Orléans. The 17th Division and the 6th Cavalry Division were detached from the III Army on November 6, and the enlarged Detachment was placed under the orders of the Grand-Duke of Mecklenburg. The order of battle for the Mecklenburg Detachment is detailed at the end of Chapter Seven.

The September 27 surrender of Strasbourg released the Garde Landwehr Division for duty around Paris. It arrived on October 16, and was placed northwest of the city, under the orders of the IV Army. Figure 5-41 shows a letter from that unit. This letter was posted on January 16 at the Garde Landwehr Division fieldpost bureau near Paris. It bears a private blue unit cachet which reads, “Kon:Pr: Leichte Garde Reserve Batterie” (Light Artillery Reserve), and was addressed to soldier in the Garde Corps at Paris.



Figure 5-41. January 16, 1871 letter from the Garde Landwehr Division

The IV Army headquarters was established north of Paris at Margency (opposite St. Denis) on October 8.⁷³ Figure 5-42 shows a fieldpost card which was postmarked “F.P.E. d. O.C. d. Arm. Abth. d. Kronpr. v. Sachsen” (fieldpost of the supreme commander of the army detachment of the Crown Prince of Saxony) on November 18 at the IV Army’s headquarters. It arrived in Berlin on November 22.

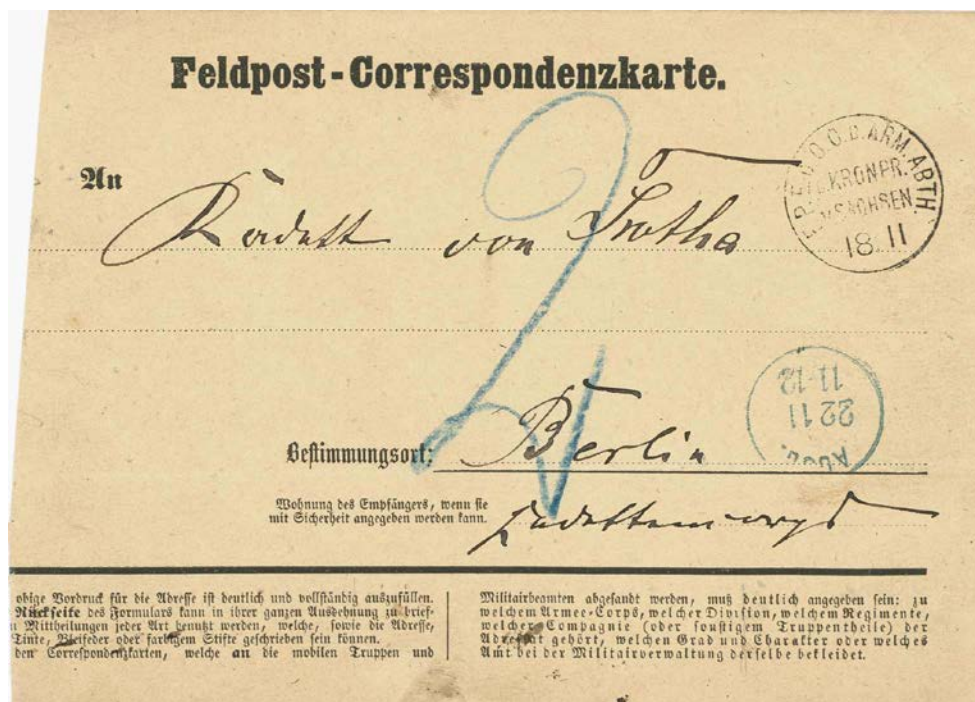


Figure 5-42. Nov. 18, 1870 card from the IV Army’s HQ

The Garde Corps maintained their headquarters at nearby Gonesse, opposite Le Bourget. Figure 5-43 shows an unusual mourning cover that was posted on October 20 at the Garde Corps’ headquarters bureau and postmarked “K.PR FELDPOST AMT*GARDE CORPS.” It was franked with a ten centimes stamp of the 1870 Alsace-Lorraine Occupation Issue for the postage to Prussia, and arrived in Neuwied on October 26.

Figure 5-43. October 20, 1870 fieldpost card mailed at the Garde Corps' headquarters



The IV Army also included the Saxon XII Corps, which was placed in the siege line northeast of Paris. Figure 5-44 shows a letter from the XII Corps' headquarters fieldpost bureau.



Figure 5-44. Nov. 11, 1870 letter from the XII Corps' HQ

Posted on November 12 at the XII Corps' headquarters bureau, this letter received a "K.S. Feld-Proviant-Amt" (Saxon field provisions bureau) private cachet. It arrived in Hubertusburg, Saxony on November 17.

On March 12, the III Army began leaving the south bank of the Seine River around Paris. The VI Corps, XI Corps and II Bavarian Corps were sent to occupation duties in the departments of Seine-et-Oise and Seine-et-Marne. Four days later, the IV Army was disbanded and its troops were placed under the III Army, now commanded by the Crown-Prince of Saxony. The 22nd Division occupied the eastern forts of Romainville, Noisy, Rosny and Nogent. It linked up with the 2nd Bavarian Division, which was placed southeast of Paris between the Seine and Marne Rivers. The 1st Guard Division occupied St. Denis and the northeastern forts. After March 21, there were no German troops left south of the Seine River.⁷⁴

The Orders of Battle Referenced in this Chapter

French 13^e Corps August 26 Order of Battle⁷⁵

Commandant: Général Vinoy – 30,500 men

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général d'Exea)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Mattat)

2 Compagnies de Chasseurs à Pied – from the 5^e and 7^e depots

5^e Régiment de Marche (Colonel Hanrion)

6^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel du Guiny)

2^e Brigade (Général Daudel)

7^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Tarayre)

8^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Drouet)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Maud'huy)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Dumoulin)

9^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Miquel de Riu – wounded on September 30 at Chevilly)

10^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Damedor de Moland)

2^e Brigade (Général Blaise)

11^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Née-Devaux)

12^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel de Labaume)

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Blanchard)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Baron de Susbielle – wounded on October 13 at Châtillon)

2 Compagnies de Chasseurs à Pied – from the 1^{er} and 2^e depots

13^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Morin)

14^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Vanche – wounded on October 13 at Châtillon)

2^e Brigade (Général Guilhem – killed on September 30 at Chevilly and replaced by Général de la Mariouse)

35^e Régiment de Ligne (Colonel de la Mariouse)

42^e Régiment de Ligne (Colonel Avril de Lenclos)

Independent Cavalry Brigade September 14 Order of Battle

Brigade de Cavalerie (Général de Bernis)

1^{er} Régiment de Marche de Cavalerie Mixte (Colonel de Lanauze)

2^e Régiment de Marche de Cuirassiers (Colonel Mariani)

2^e Régiment de Gendarmerie à Cheval (Lt. Col. Blondel)*

* In replacement of the 1^{er} Régiment de Marche de Lanciers, transferred for service at St Denis



“Tirailleurs de la Seine at the Battle of Rueil-Malmaison” by Étienne Berne-Bellecour (1875)

French 14^e Corps September 9 Order of Battle⁷⁶

Commandant: Général Renault – 33,500 men

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Béchon de Caussade)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Ladreit de la Charrière)

2 Compagnies de Chasseurs à Pied – from the 3^e and 4^e depots

15^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Col. Benedetti) - depot battalions from 10^e, 14^e and 26^e line regiments

16^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Col. Gaduel) - depot battalions from 35^e, 38^e and 39^e line regiments

2^e Brigade (Général Lecomte)

17^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Col. Sermensan) - depot battalions from 42^e, 46^e and 68^e line regiments

18^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Col. Beaufort) - depot battalions from 82^e, 88^e and 97^e line regiments

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général d'Hughes)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Bocher)

2 Compagnies de Chasseurs à Pied – from the 6^e and 9^e depots

19^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Col. Collasseau) - depot battalions from 16^e, 27^e and 58^e line regiments

20^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Col. Niel) - depot battalions from 73^e, 83^e and 87^e line regiments

2^e Brigade (Général Paturel) – detached to the 13th Corps on October 28

21^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Col. de Vandeuil) - depot battalions from 5^e, 37^e and 56^e line regiments

22^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Col. Barbe) - depot battalions from 72^e, 76^e and 99^e line regiments

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Maussion)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Benoit)

2 Compagnies de Chasseurs à Pied – from the 12^e and 14^e depots

23^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Col. Dupuy de Podio) - depot battalions from 3^e, 13^e and 21^e line regts.

24^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Col. Sanguinetti) - depot battalions from 30^e, 31^e and 34^e line regiments

2^e Brigade (Général Courty)

25^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Col. Jourdain) - depot battalions from 47^e, 48^e and 61^e line regiments

26^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Col. Cerf) - depot battalions from 66^e, 89^e and 98^e line regiments

Division de Cavalerie (Général de Champéron)

1^{re} Brigade (Général de Gerbrois)

1^{er} Régiment de Marche de Dragons (Colonel Lothe)

2^e Régiment de Marche de Dragons (Colonel Bonaparte-Paterson)

2^e Brigade (Général Cousin)

1^{er} Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel Gérard)

9^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel Charreyron)

1^{er} Régiment de Gendarmerie à Cheval (Colonel Allavène)



“Dans les Tranchées” by Alphonse de Neuville (1874)

French 2^e Armée November 8 Order of Battle⁷⁷

Commandant: Général Ducrot – 100,800 men

1^{er} Corps (Général Blanchard) – 42,200 men¹

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général de Malroy)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Martenot de Cordoux) – sent to re-fit in Paris on December 4

26^e Régiment de Mobiles de l'Ille-et-Vilaine (Colonel de Vigneral – wounded on December 2)

10^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Côte d'Or (Colonel de Grancey – killed on December 2)

2^e Brigade (Général Paturel – wounded on December 2)

121^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Maupoint de Vandeuil – killed on December 2)

122^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel de la Monneraye – killed on December 2)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Maud'huy) - detached to the 3^e Armée on November 26¹

1^{re} Brigade (Général Valentin)

109^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Miquel de Riu)

110^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel Mimerel)

23^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Finistère (Colonel de la Villesbret)

2^e Brigade (Général Blaise)

111^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Scholler)

112^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Lespieau)

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Faron)

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Comte)

113^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Pottier)

114^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Vanche)

35^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Vendée (Lt. Col. Aubry) - sent to re-fit in Paris on Dec. 10

2^e Brigade (Général de la Mariouse)

35^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Martinaud)

42^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Charpentier)

¹The detachment of the 2^e Division reduced the strength of the 1st Corps to 25,300 men.

2^e Corps (Général Renault – killed on November 30 and replaced by Général de Maussion) – 29,100 men

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général de Susbielle)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Ladreit de la Charrière – killed on November 30 and replaced by Colonel Ragon)

115^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Benedetti)

116^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Panier des Touches)

2^e Brigade (Général Lecomte)

117^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Montaru)

118^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel de Beaufort)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Berthaut)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Bocher)

119^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Cholleton)

120^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Hecquet)

2^e Brigade (Colonel de Miribel)

37^e Régiment de Mobiles du Loiret (Colonel de Montbrison) – four battalions

50^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Seine-Inférieure and 2^e B^{on} de la Drôme (Colonel Balette)

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Maussion)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Courty)

123^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Dupuy de Podio – killed on November 30)

124^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Sanguinetti – killed on November 30)

2^e Brigade (Général Avril de Lenclos)

125^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Jourdain – killed on November 30)

126^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Neltner – killed on November 30)

French 2^e Armée November 8 Order of Battle (continued)

3^e Corps (Général d'Exea) – 26,300 men

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général de Bellemare)

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Fournès)

4^e Régiment de Zouaves (Lt. Colonel Méric)

136^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Allard)

2^e Brigade (Colonel Colonieu)

38^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Seine-et-Marne (Lt. Col. Franceschetti– killed on November 30)

31^e Régiment de Mobiles du Morbihan (Lt. Colonel Tillet)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Mattat)

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Bonnet)

105^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Galland)

106^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel du Guiny)

2^e Brigade (Général Daudel)

107^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Tarayre)

108^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Coiffé)

Brigade de Gardes Mobiles (Colonel Reille)

7^e Régiment de Mobiles du Tarn, 3^e Bataillon de Mobiles de la Seine-Inférieure

Division de Cavalerie (Général de Champéron) – 3,200 men

1^{re} Brigade (Général de Gerbrois)

13^e Régiment de Dragons (Colonel Lothe) – previously the 1^{er} Rég. de Marche de Dragons

14^e Régiment de Dragons (Col. Bonaparte-Paterson) – was the 2^e Rég. de Marche de Dragons

2^e Brigade (Général Cousin)

1^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel Gérard)

9^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel Charreyron)

1^e Régiment de Gendarmerie à Cheval (Colonel Allavène)

French 2^e Armée December 4 Order of Battle⁷⁸

1^{er} Corps (Général de Maussion)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général de Susbille)

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Ragon) - 115^e Régiment d'Infanterie (RI) et 116^e RI

2^e Brigade (Général Lecomte) - 117^e RI et 118^e RI

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Berthaut)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Bocher) - 119^e RI et 120^e RI

2^e Brigade (Colonel de Miribel) - 37^e Rég. du Loiret et 50^e Rég. de la Seine-Inférieure

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Courty)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Avril de Lenclos) - 123^e RI et 124^e RI

2^e Brigade (Général Pistouley) - 125^e RI et 126^e RI

2^e Corps (Général d'Exea)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général de Bellemare)

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Fournès) - 4^e Régiment de Zouaves et 136^e RI

2^e Brigade (Colonel Colonieu) - 38^e Rég. de la Seine-et-Marne et 31^e Rég. du Morbihan

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Mattat)

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Bonnet) - 105^e RI et 106^e RI

2^e Brigade (Général Daudel) - 107^e RI et 108^e RI

Brigade de Mobiles (Colonel Reille) – detached to service in eastern forts on December 20⁷⁹

Division d'Infanterie de Reserve (Général Faron)

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Comte) – 113^e RI et 114^e RI

2^e Brigade (Général de la Mariouse) - 35^e RI et 42^e RI

3^e Brigade (Colonel Lespieau) - 121^e RI et 122^e RI

Division de Cavalerie (Général de Champéron) – unchanged from November 8

German III Army Order of Battle⁸⁰

Commandantur: General Kronprinz von Preussen

II Armee-Korps (General von Fransecky) – arrived on November 5 from Metz; left January 1

- 3. Infanterie Division (General von Hartmann)
 - 5. Infanterie Brigade (General von Koblinsky)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 2 (Colonel von Ziemietzky)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 42 (Colonel von der Knesebeck)
 - 6. Infanterie Brigade (General von Decken)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 14 (Colonel von Voss)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 54 (Lt. Colonel von Rechenberg)
 - Pommern Jäger Bataillon Nr. 2, Neumärk Dragoner Regiment Nr. 3
- 4. Infanterie Division (General Hann von Weyhern)
 - 7. Infanterie Brigade (General von Trossel)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 9 (Colonel von Ferentheil)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 49 (Lt. Colonel Laurin)
 - 8. Infanterie Brigade (General von Kettler)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 21 (Lt. Colonel von Lobenthal)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 61 (Colonel von Wedell)
 - Pommern Dragoner Regiment Nr. 11 (Lt. Colonel von Guretzky-Corintz)

V Armee-Korps (General von Kirchbach) – detached February 9, 1871 to Orléans

- 9. Infanterie Division (General von Sandrart)
 - 17. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Bothmer)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 58 (Colonel von Rex)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 59 (Colonel Eyl)
 - 18. Infanterie Brigade (General von Voigts-Rhetz)
 - Königs-Grenadier Regiment Nr. 7 (Colonel von Koethen)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 47 (Colonel von Burghoff)
- 10. Infanterie Division (General von Schmidt)
 - 19. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Henning)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 6 (Colonel von Floeckher)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 46 (Colonel von Stosch)
 - 20. Infanterie Brigade (General Walther von Montbarry)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 37 (Colonel von Heinemann)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 50 (Colonel Michelmann)
 - Kurmärken Dragoner Regiment Nr. 14 (Colonel von Schoen)

VI Armee-Korps (General von Tümpling)

- 11. Infanterie Division (General von Gordon)
 - 21. Infanterie Brigade (General von Malachowsky)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 10 (Colonel von Weller)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 18 (Colonel von Bock)
 - 22. Infanterie Brigade (General von Eckartsberg)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 38 (Colonel von Schmeling)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 51 (Colonel Knipping)
 - Schleswig Jäger Batallion Nr. 6, 2. Schleswig Dragoner Regiment Nr. 8
- 12. Infanterie Division (General von Hoffmann)
 - 23. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel Gündell)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 22 (Colonel von Quistorp)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 62 (Colonel von Bessel)
 - 24. Infanterie Brigade (General von Fabek)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 23 (Colonel von Briesen)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 63 (Colonel von Thielau)
 - 3. Schleswig Dragoner Regiment Nr. 15 (Colonel von Busse)

German III Army Order of Battle (continued)

XI Armee-Korps (General von Schlachtmayer) – arrived September 23 from Sedan

- 21. Infanterie Division (General von Schkopp)
 - 41. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Koblinski)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 80 (Colonel von Colomb)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 87 (Colonel Grolman)
 - 42. Infanterie Brigade (General von Thile)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 82 (Colonel von Grawert)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 88 (Lt. Colonel Preuss)
- Hessen Jäger Bataillon Nr. 11 (Major von Johnston)
- 2. Hessen Hussar Regiment Nr. 14 (Colonel von Bernuth)
- 22. Infanterie Division (General von Wittich) – detached October 6 to Orléans
 - 43. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Kontzki)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 32 (Colonel von Foerster)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 95 (Colonel von Beckedorff)
 - 44. Infanterie Brigade (General von Schkopp)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 83 (Colonel von Bieberstein)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 94 (Lt. Colonel von Pallmenstein)
 - 1. Hessen Husar Regiment Nr. 13 (Lt. Colonel von Heuduck)

I Bayern Armee-Korps (Gen. von der Tann-Rathsamhausen) – arrived Sep. 23; detached Oct. 6 to Orléans

- 1. Bayern Infanterie Division (General von Stephan)
 - 1. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General Dietl)
 - Korps Infanterie Regiment (Colonel von Täuffenbach)
 - 1 Infanterie Regiment (Colonel von Heckel)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 2 (Major Wirthmann)
 - 2. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General von Orff)
 - 2 Infanterie Regiment (2 battalions) (Colonel von der Tann)
 - 11 Infanterie Regiment (2 battalions) (Colonel Schmidt)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 4 (Captain Woehr)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 9 (Lt. Colonel von Massenbach)
- 2. Bayern Infanterie Division (General von Maillinger)
 - 3. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General Roth)
 - 3 Infanterie Regiment (Colonel Schuch)
 - 12 Infanterie Regiment (Colonel Narciss)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 1 (Major Wirthmann)
 - 4. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General von der Tann-Rathsamhausen II)
 - 10 Infanterie Regiment (Lt. Colonel von Joner-Tettenweiss)
 - 13 Infanterie Regiment (Colonel von Ysenbourg-Philippseich)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 7 (Captain Hoderlein)
- Chevauleger Regiment Nr. 4 (Colonel von Leonrod)
- Kürassier Kavallerie Brigade (General von Tauch)
 - Kürassier Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel Feichtmayr)
 - Kürassier Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 2 (Colonel Baumüller)

II Bayern Armee-Korps (General von Hartmann)

- 3. Bayern Infanterie Division (General Ritter von Walther)
 - 5. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General Schleich)
 - 6 Infanterie Regiment (Colonel Boesmillier)
 - 7 Infanterie Regiment (Colonel Hoefler)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 8 (Major Gebhard)

German III Army Order of Battle (continued)

II Bayern Armee-Korps (continued)

6. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General von Diehl)
 - 14 Infanterie Regiment (Colonel von Nesselrode-Hugenpoet)
 - 15 Infanterie Regiment (Colonel von Treuberg)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 3 (Lt. Colonel von Horn)
 - Chevauleger Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel von Grundherr)
4. Bayern Infanterie Division (General von Bothmer)
 7. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General Börries von Wissell)
 - 5 Infanterie Regiment (Colonel Mühlbaur)
 - 9 Infanterie Regiment (Colonel von Heeg)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 6 (Major Caries)
 8. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Leubling)
 - Bataillons der 1, 5, 7, 11 & 14 Infanterie Regiments
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 5 (Lt. Colonel von Gumpfenberg)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 10 (Colonel von Heckel)
 - Chevauleger Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 2 (Lt. Colonel Kiliani)
 - Ulanen Kavallerie Brigade (Colonel Horadam)
 - Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel von Ysenburg-Philippseich)
 - Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 2 (Colonel von Plummern)
 - Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 5 (Colonel von Weinrich)

Württemberg Division (General von Obernitz) – arrived in late September

1. Infanterie Brigade (General von Reitzenstein)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel von Berger)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 7 (Colonel von Rampacher)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 2 (Lt. Colonel von Knoerzer)
2. Infanterie Brigade (General von Starkloff)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 2 (Colonel von Ringler)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 5 (Colonel von Huegel I)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 3 (Lt. Colonel von Link)
3. Infanterie Brigade (General von Huegel)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 3 (Colonel von Pfeiffelmann)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 8 (Colonel von Mauch)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 1 (Lt. Colonel von Brandenstein)
- Kavallerie Brigade (General von Scheler)
 - Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel von Harling)
 - Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 3 (Colonel von Falkenstein)
 - Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 4 (Colonel von Norrmann-Ehrenfels)
17. Infanterie Division (General von Tresckow II) – arrived Oct 10; detached Nov. 6 to Orléans
 33. Infanterie Brigade (General von Kottwitz)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 75 (Lt. Colonel von der Osten)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 76 (Colonel von Neumann)
 34. Infanterie (Mecklenburg) Brigade (Colonel von Manteuffel)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 89 (Colonel von Kleist)
 - Füsilier Regiment Nr. 90 (Colonel von Gliszczynski)
 - Mecklenburg Jäger Bataillon Nr. 14 Major von Gaza)
 17. Kavallerie (Mecklenburg) Brigade (General von Rauch)
 1. Mecklenburg Dragoner Regiment Nr. 17 (Colonel von Kahlden)
 2. Mecklenburg Dragoner Regiment Nr. 18 (Lt. Colonel von Rathenow)
 2. Brandenburg Ulanen Regiment Nr. 11 (Colonel von Solms-Wildenfels)

German III Army Order of Battle (continued)

Garde Landwehr-Division (General von Löen) – arrived October 16 from Strasbourg

1. Garde Landwehr Brigade (Colonel Girodz von Gaudy)
 - Garde Landwehr Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel von Plehwe)
 - Garde Landwehr Regiment Nr. 2 (Lt. Colonel von Münchhausen)
2. Garde Landwehr Brigade (Colonel von Roehl)
 - Garde Grenadier Landwehr Regiment Nr. 1 (Lt. Col. von Schoenburg-Waldenburg)
 - Garde Grenadier Landwehr Regiment Nr. 2 (Lt. Colonel von Besser)

2. Kavallerie Division (General von Stolberg) – detached October 6 to Orléans

3. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Colomb)
 - Lieb-Kürassier Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel von Oppen)
 - Schleswig Ulanen Regiment Nr. 2 (Lt. Colonel Rode)
4. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Barnekow)
 - Lieb-Husar Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel von Hanstein)
 - Pommern Husar Regiment Nr. 5 (Lt. Colonel von Salmuth)
5. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Baumbach)
 - Schleswig Husar Regiment Nr. 4 (Major von Krieger)
 - Schleswig Husar Regiment Nr. 6 (Lt. Colonel von Graevenitz)

4. Kavallerie Division (General Prinz Albrecht von Preussen) – arrived Sep. 23; detached Oct. 6 to Orléans

8. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Hontheim)
 - Westpreussen Kürassier Regiment Nr. 5 (Lt. Colonel von Atrentschildt)
 - Posen. Ulanen Regiment Nr. 10 (Colonel von Barnekow)
9. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Bernhardt)
 - Westpreussen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel von Reckow)
 - Thüringen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 6 (Major von Knobloch)
10. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Krosigk)
 - Lieb-Husar Regiment Nr. 2 (Colonel von Schauroth)
 - Rheintal Dragoner Regiment Nr. 5 (Colonel Wright)

5. Kavallerie Division (General von Rheinbaben) – detached November 17 to the western side of Paris

11. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Barby)
 - Westfalia Kürassier Regiment Nr. 4 (Colonel von Arnim)
 - 1. Hannover Ulanen Regiment Nr. 13 (Major von Rosenberg)
 - Oldenburg Dragoner Regiment Nr. 19 (Colonel von Trotha)
12. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Bredow)
 - Magdeburg Kürassier Regiment Nr. 7 (Lt. Colonel von Larisch)
 - Altmark. Ulanen Regiment Nr. 16 (Major von der Dollen)
 - Schleswig-Holstein Dragoner Regiment Nr. 13 (Colonel von Brauchitsch)
13. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Redern)
 - Magdeburg Husar Regiment Nr. 10 (Colonel von Weise)
 - 2. Westfalia Husar Regiment Nr. 11 (Lt. Colonel von Eller-Eberstein)
 - Braunschweig Husar Regiment Nr. 17 (Lt. Colonel von Rauch)

6. Kavallerie Division (Gen. Herzog Wilhelm von Mecklenburg-Schwerin) – detached Nov. 8 to Orléans

14. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Schmidt)
 - Brandenburg Kürassier Regiment Nr. 6 (Lt. Colonel von Lynar)
 - Brandenburg Ulanen Regiment Nr. 3 (Colonel von der Groeben)
 - Schleswig-Holstein Ulanen Regiment Nr. 15 (Colonel von Alvensleben)
15. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Rauch)
 - Brandenburg Husar Regiment Nr. 3 (Major von Haenlein)
 - Schleswig-Holstein Husar Regiment Nr. 16 (Major von Heintze)

German IV Army Order of Battle

Commandantur: General Prinz Albert von Sachsen

Garde-Korps (General Prinz August von Württemberg)

1. Garde-Infanterie Division (General von Pape)
 1. Garde-Infanterie Brigade (General von Kessel)
 1. Garde-Regiment zu Fuss (Lt. Colonel von Oppell)
 3. Garde-Regiment zu Fuss (Colonel von Linsingen)
 2. Garde-Infanterie Brigade (General von Meden)
 2. Garde-Regiment zu Fuss (Colonel von Kanitz) – detached to I Army on September 26
 4. Garde-Regiment zu Fuss (Colonel von Neumann)
 - Garde-Füsilier Regiment (Lt. Colonel von Papstein)
 - Garde-Jäger Bataillon (Major von Arnim)
 - Garde-Hussar Regiment (Lt. Colonel von Hymmen) – detached to I Army on September 27
2. Garde-Infanterie Division (General von Budrizki)
 3. Garde-Infanterie Brigade (Colonel Knappe von Knappstaedt)
 1. Garde-Grenadier-Regiment (Colonel von Zeuner)
 3. Garde-Grenadier-Regiment (Lt. Colonel von Bernhardt)
 4. Garde-Infanterie Brigade (General von Berger)
 2. Garde-Grenadier-Regiment (Lt. Colonel von Boehn)
 4. Garde-Grenadier-Regiment (Major von Rosenberg)
 - Garde-Füsilier Bataillon (Major von Boeltzig)
 2. Garde-Ulanen Regiment (Colonel Prinz Heinrich von Hesse) – detached to I Army on Sep. 27

Garde-Kavallerie Division (General von der Goltz)

1. Garde-Kavallerie Brigade (General von Brandenburg I)
 - Garde-du-Corps Regiment (Colonel von Krosigk)
 - Garde-Kürassier Regiment (Colonel von Brandenstein)
2. Garde-Kavallerie Brigade (General Prinz Albrecht von Preussen)
 1. Garde-Ulanen Regiment (Lt. Colonel von Rochow)
 3. Garde-Ulanen Regiment (Colonel Prinz Frederich Wilhelm von Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen)
3. Garde-Kavallerie Brigade (General von Brandenburg II)
 1. Garde-Dragoner Regiment (Major von Brozowski)
 2. Garde-Dragoner Regiment (Major von Zedlitz-Leipe)

IV Armee-Korps (General von Alvensleben I) – detached Feb. 9 to Nogent-le-Rotrou; returned March 4

7. Infanterie Division (General von Schwartzhoff)
 13. Infanterie Brigade (General von Borries)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 26 (Colonel von Schmeling)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 66 (Lt. Colonel von Rauchhaupt)
 14. Infanterie Brigade (General von Zychlinski)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 27 (Colonel von Pressentin) – detached to I Army on September 27
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 93 (Colonel von Krosigk)
 - Magdeburg Jäger Bataillon Nr. 4 (Major von Lettow-Vorbeck)
 - Magdeburg Dragoner Regiment Nr. 7 (Lt. Colonel von Schleinitz)
8. Infanterie Division (General von Schöler)
 15. Infanterie Brigade (General von Kessler)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 31 (Colonel von Bonin)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 71 (Lt. Colonel von Kloeden)
 16. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Scheffler)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 86 (Colonel von Horn)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 96 (Lt. Colonel von Redern)
 - Thüringen Husar Regiment Nr. 12 (Lt. Colonel von Suckow)

German IV Army Order of Battle (continued)

XII Armee-Korps (Kronprinz von Sachsen)

- 23. Infanterie Division (General von Montbé)
 - 45. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel Garten)
 - 1. Lieb.-Grenadier Regiment Nr. 100 (Colonel von Rex)
 - 2. Grenadier Regiment Nr. 101 (Colonel von Schimpff)
 - Füsilier Regiment Nr. 108 (Colonel von Hausen)
 - 46. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Seydlitz-Gerstenberg)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 102 (Colonel Rudorff)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 103 (Colonel Dietrich)
 - 1. Reiter-Regiment Kronprinz (Lt. Colonel von Sahr)
- 24. Infanterie Division (General Nehrhoff von Holderberg)
 - 47. Infanterie Brigade (General von Leonhardi)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 104 (Colonel von Elterlein)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 105 (Colonel von Tettau)
 - Jäger Bataillon Kronprinz Nr. 12 (Lt. Colonel von Holtzendorff)
 - 48. Infanterie Brigade (General von Schultz)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 106 (Colonel von Abendroth)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 107 (Colonel von Lindemann)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 13 (Major von Goetz)
 - 2. Reiter-Regiment (Lt. Colonel Genthe)

12. Kavallerie (Sachsen) Division (General Graf zur Lippe) – detached to I Army on September 26

- 23. Kavallerie Brigade (General Krug von Nidda)
 - Garde-Reiter Regiment Nr. 5 (Colonel von Carlowitz)
 - 1. Sachsen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 17 (Colonel von Miltitz)
- 24. Kavallerie Brigade (General Senfft von Pilsach)
 - 3. Reiter-Regiment (Colonel von Standfest)
 - 2. Sachsen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 18 (Lt. Colonel von Trosky)

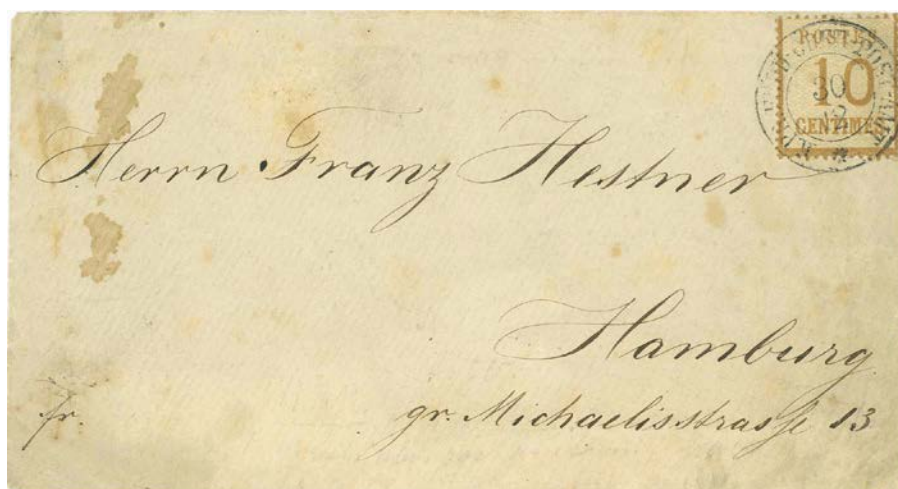


Figure 5-45. Dec. 30, 1870 letter posted at the Supreme Headquarters, prepaid 10 centimes to Hamburg

Endnotes

- ¹ Rousset, Léonce, *Histoire Générale de la Guerre Franco-Allemande (1870-1871)*, in two volumes, (Librairie Illustrée: Paris, 1911), Volume I, page 343 and pages II-X. See also Appendix D.
- ² Modified from a map in Howard, Michael, *The Franco-Prussian War*, (Methuen: London, 1981), back end pages.
- ³ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 351.
- ⁴ Brown, Gardner & Ruth, “Detoured Mail during the Franco-Prussian War, 1870-71,” *France & Colonies Philatelist*, (November 1975), page 357.
- ⁵ Described in Appendix F.
- ⁶ Rustow, Wilhelm, *The War for the Rhine Frontier 1870*, in three volumes, (Blackwood: London, 1871), Volume I, page 275.
- ⁷ État-Major de l’Armée, Section Historique, *La Guerre de 1870-71, l’Investissement de Paris, I Organisation de la Place*, (R. Chapelot et Cie.: Paris, 1908), page 240.
- ⁸ The 1^e and 2^e Régiments de Marche were added to the 1st Corps at Châlons, while the 3^e and 4^e Régiments de Marche were incorporated into the 12th Corps. The 5^e through 26^e Régiments de Marche were incorporated into the 13th and 14th Corps, as detailed in this chapter and Appendix D.
- ⁹ État-Major, *Op. Cit.*, pages 255-56.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, page 245.
- ¹¹ Ducrot, Auguste-Alexandre, *La Défense de Paris (1870-1871)*, four volumes, (E. Dentu: Paris, 1875-78), Volume I, page 80.
- ¹² Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 368.
- ¹³ Rustow, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 275.
- ¹⁴ Ducrot, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 80.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Volume I, page 98.
- ¹⁶ Modified from a map in Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 316.
- ¹⁷ Ducrot, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 71.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Volume I, page 229.
- ¹⁹ The composition and mail handling facilities for this unit are described in Chapter Six.
- ²⁰ Each of the 13th Corps fieldpost bureaus were supplied with cancelling devices. The “A.R.A.L” was intended to be used by Bureau AL, but was instead used by the headquarters payeur. At the same time, the “A.R. 13e C” cancel was intended for use at the headquarters bureau, but was used only by Bureau AL. Bureaus AM and AN used the correct cancelling devices (A.R.A.M and A.R.A.N, respectively). The first two letters in each cancel are abbreviations for “Armée du Rhin” while the second two letters refer to the particular fieldpost bureau.
- ²¹ A detailed census of surviving covers with dates of use is included in Appendix C.
- ²² The July 24 military free frank law is described in Chapter Two on page 7.
- ²³ Le Pileur, Jacques, *La Poste par Ballons Montés 1870-1871*, (Yvert & Tellier: Amiens, 1943), page 23.
- ²⁴ 13AL-2 in the census in Appendix C, from the same correspondence.
- ²⁵ French letter writers of this period often used abbreviations when dating their letters. Thus, “7bre” means “Sept”embre; “8bre” means “Octo”bre; “9bre” means “Neuve”embre (November); and “Xbre” means “Dix”embre (December).
- ²⁶ The September 27 announcement of the balloon service by the postal administration included the sending out of unmanned balloons carrying postcards at a reduced rate of ten centimes per three grams. In practice, only one unmanned balloon was sent out, and most cards were carried by regular manned balloons.
- ²⁷ Chaintrier, Louis A., *Balloon Post of the Siege of Paris, 1870-71*, (American Air Mail Society: Washington, 1976), page 16.
- ²⁸ Dollfus, Charles and Maincent, Paul, *Les Ballons du Siège, La Poste Aérienne*, (Icare No. 56: Paris, 1971), page 108.
- ²⁹ The franking consists of ten centimes and 20 centimes stamps of the 1863 “Empire Lauré” Issue.
- ³⁰ Translates to “Foreign Affairs Office of the North German Confederation.”
- ³¹ Cohn, Ernst M., “Rare Censorship Mark for Paris Balloon Mail,” *Collectors Club Philatelist*, Volume 73, No. 6, (November-December 1994), page 361.
- ³² État-Major, *Op. Cit.*, page 288.
- ³³ In prior literature, this bureau was incorrectly associated with the later series of Armée Française postmarks for the 2^e Armée. The earliest known use is from October 17 in green ink. An October 21 cover (14QG-2) has a red postmark; all subsequent known postmarks are in black ink.
- ³⁴ Dollfus, *Op. Cit.*, page 119.
- ³⁵ Ducrot, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 5.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, Volume II, page 5.
- ³⁷ Most of the November 14-18 Paris mail was delayed from the *Général Ubrich* (which left on November 18) and carried on the following balloon, the *Archimède*, which left on November 21.
- ³⁸ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 432.
- ³⁹ Modified from a map in Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 316.

⁴⁰ Moltke, Helmuth von, *The Franco-German War of 1870-71*, in two volumes, (Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.: London, 1891), Volume I, page 251.

⁴¹ The 14th Corps' 2nd Division had been split in two on October 28, and was never re-united.

⁴² Prepayment of 20 centimes domestic postage was obligatory on all balloon mail after September 26, although some military free franks were still accepted after that.

⁴³ Vinoy, *Op. Cit.*, page 479.

⁴⁴ December 13 is the latest known date for an Armée du Rhin postmark.

⁴⁵ Made up by five 20 centimes type II Report 3 stamps (positions 3, 4, 5, 1 and 2) of the 1870 "Bordeaux" Issue.

⁴⁶ Boussac, Robert, *Boules de Moulins*, Supplement to Feuilles Marcophiles No 253 (2^e Trimestre 1988).

⁴⁷ *Dépêche-Ballon* newsletter #4.

⁴⁸ The franking is a 20 centimes stamp of the 1870 "Siège de Paris" Issue, which was printed in Paris during the siege from plates of the old 1849 Issue.

⁴⁹ The census in Appendix C includes only 36 known covers from the November 28 – December 19 period.

⁵⁰ The payeur for the Armée du Rhin Bureau AM had also marked all of his letters with a "P.P.", suggesting that the same payeur was assigned to Bureau D.

⁵¹ This December 18 battle is described in Chapter Nine.

⁵² Ducrot, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 95.

⁵³ The 35th Garde Mobile Regiment lost 1,050 men (625 killed or wounded and 425 captured) out of 3,500 engaged at Champigny. Vinoy, Joseph, *Siege de Paris, Operations du 13e Corps et de la Troisième Armée*, (Henri Plon: Paris, 1872), page 284.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Volume III, page 148.

⁵⁵ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 467.

⁵⁶ Ducrot, *Op. Cit.*, Volume III, page 164.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Volume III, page 216.

⁵⁸ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 477.

⁵⁹ Ducrot, *Op. Cit.*, Volume IV, page 72.

⁶⁰ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 482.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Volume I, page 501.

⁶² German demands at the end of October were only for the cession of Alsace and war reparations of two billion francs. Prolonging the war by three months was costly to the French.

⁶³ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 505.

⁶⁴ Ten centimes and two 20 centimes stamps of the 1870 "Siege of Paris" Issue.

⁶⁵ Robinet de Cléry published an account of his experiences in the war entitled *Les Avant-Postes pendant le Siège de Paris*, (Palmé: Paris, 1887).

⁶⁶ Ducrot, *Op. Cit.*, Volume IV, page 450.

⁶⁷ Modified from a map in Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 316.

⁶⁸ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 380.

⁶⁹ This battalion was part of the 3rd Brigade, which took part in the November 30 – December 2 Marne battles.

⁷⁰ Moltke, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 195.

⁷¹ Grand État-Major Prussien, Section Historique, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume I: Depuis l'Investissement de Paris jusqu'à la Reprise d'Orléans par les Allemandes*, (J. Dumaine: Paris, 1878), page 172.

⁷² Ducrot, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 412.

⁷³ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, page 188.

⁷⁴ Grand État-Major Prussien, Section Historique, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume III: Les Événements dans le Sud-Est de la France depuis le Milieu de Janvier jusqu'à la Cessation des Hostilités. Les Communications avec l'Arrière, l'Armistice. Marche Rétrograde et Occupation. Coup d'Œil Rétrospectif*, (J. Dumaine : Paris, 1882), pages 1342-1344.

⁷⁵ Ducrot, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 427.

⁷⁶ État-Major, *Op. Cit.*, page 289.

⁷⁷ Ducrot, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, pages 88-101.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Volume II, page 95.

⁷⁹ The Reille Brigade of mobiles, previously part of the 3rd Corps, was transferred on December 20 to Admiral Saisset for less rigorous service in the eastern forts. Ducrot, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 95.

⁸⁰ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, Supplément XCV, page 184*.

Non-Fieldpost Mail from the Siege of Paris

Chapter Five described the campaign for Paris and the fieldposts that serviced the French and German armies during that campaign. All German soldiers around Paris were served by their fieldpost bureaus, but nearly three-fourths of the French soldiers and sailors defending their capital were not provided with access to the military fieldpost. Instead, they used the Parisian civilian posts to send their letters. This chapter describes this type of French mail, and begins with a sampling of regular army correspondence that was not mailed at the fieldpost bureaus. After that, the principal groups without access to the military fieldpost, the Garde Mobile and the Garde Nationale, are covered. The chapter concludes with a discussion of mail from Parisian-based naval personnel, who also had no access to fieldpost bureaus.

This map illustrates the military situation around Paris during the Franco-Prussian War. The city of Paris is depicted in orange, with its fortifications and internal streets shown. The Seine river flows through the city, with several bridges and fortifications marked. The map shows the positions of various military corps, including the IV Corps, XII Corps, VI Corps, and the Bavarian Corps. Key locations and fortifications are labeled, such as Fort Mont-Valérien, Fort de Vincennes, and various towns like St. Denis, Le Bourget, and Vincennes. The map also shows the positions of the Prussian army, with various corps and divisions marked. The map is a detailed representation of the military situation in the Paris region during the war.

Regular Army non-Fieldpost Mail

The commander of the 13th Corps, Général Joseph Vinoy, had access to the official government dispatch bag carried on each balloon. That bag received the most expedited handling, both for departure and after landing. Figure 6-2 shows an extraordinary letter carried in one of those bags.



Figure 6-2. September 22, 1870 letter from the 13th Corps commander

This letter was datelined “Quartier Générale le 22 7bre 1870” and prepaid 20 centimes on the reverse.¹ Vinoy took his personal note to the War Ministry, where it received the red official cursive marking “Ministre de la Guerre (1).” It was then carried in the official dispatch bag of the first balloon to leave Paris, the *Neptune*, which left on September 23 and landed in unoccupied France west of Paris. The official bag was expedited from there to the provisional capital at Tours, where this letter was placed in the mails. Upon its arrival in Nantes on September 25, the letter was postmarked and the franking was cancelled by Nantes’ “2602” lozenge of dots. This is the only “Ministre de la Guerre” marking known on balloon mail.

Général Vinoy naturally preferred using the expedited handling mail services in Paris. Figure 6-3 shows another letter carried in an official bag.

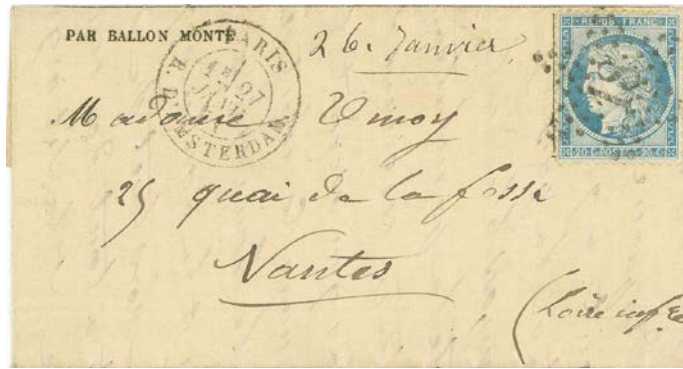


Figure 6-3. September 25, 1870 letter from the 13th Corps commander

Franked with 20 centimes postage on the reverse, this letter was datelined “25 7bre 1870.” Vinoy wrote that, “I am writing in haste because they tell me that a balloon is about to leave, all is well here, the enemy does not dare anything, we are the ones who attack him.” His letter received the blue official cursive marking “Gouvernement de la défense Nationale” but missed the departure of the balloon *Ville de Florence* on September 25 at 11am. Instead, it was carried out of Paris by the next balloon, the *États Unis*, which left on September 29 and landed in occupied territory west of Paris. The official dispatches were taken to Tours on September 30. This letter was posted there on the next day, and arrived in western France on October 2.

Général Vinoy was named commander of the 3^e Armée on November 8, and then commander of all Parisian military forces on January 22.² Four days later, he wrote the letter in Figure 6-4.

**Figure 6-4. January 26, 1871
letter from the commander
of the Armée de Paris**



This *Gazette des Absents* newsletter #32 was datelined “26 janvier 1871” and posted the following day at the rue d’Amsterdam post office³ in Paris. Vinoy wrote that, “The critical moment arrives, as I said in my order to the army, the provisions diminish and the chances of rescue have totally disappeared. We are negotiating at this moment: at what price will we obtain peace? I don’t know, but it will be impossible to refuse any price unless we want to see the entire population of Paris dead from hunger...” His letter was carried on the last balloon to leave Paris, the *Général Cambronne*, which left on January 28 at 6am and landed in occupied territory west of Paris. The mail was taken to unoccupied France on January 31, and this letter arrived that day in Nantes.

The regular army fieldpost service was somewhat slow to develop. Prior to the establishment of the fieldpost bureaus, soldiers were obliged to take their mail to civilian post offices. Figure 6-5 shows a letter from the 2nd Division of the 13th Corps that was processed through Paris on September 18.



**Figure 6-5. September 18,
1870 letter from the 2nd
Division of the 13th Corps**

Endorsed from the 9^e Régiment de Marche at Vincennes, this letter was postmarked at the rue des Feuillantines Paris post office on September 18 (6th collection period) and rated for 30 centimes due⁴ per the “30c” in the postmark. This was crossed out and a red “P.P.” was added to reflect a military free frank. The Germans had just cut the last rail line from Paris,⁵ but Parisian postmen continued to carry a small amount of post office mail by foot across the lines during the first twelve days of the siege. This letter was taken by two postmen (Brare and Gême) on the third of five post office trips through the lines. They left on September 24 in the morning, and deposited about 3,000 letters at Triel (west of Paris) that evening.⁶ This letter arrived near Tours on September 27.

Figure 6-6 shows a 14th Corps letter sent before that fieldpost was operational.



Figure 6-6. September 26, 1870 letter from the 14th Corps' 3rd Division

This letter was datelined “Boulogne-sur-Seine 25 7bre 1870” and marked with the private unit cachet of the 3rd Division of the 14th Corps. Since that division’s fieldpost had not yet begun operations, the sender mailed the letter with a military free frank at the central Paris post office on September 26. He wrote that, “My division took a small part on the 19th at the battle of Châtillon ...we battled in retreat to Paris that night and then we were posted elsewhere – now at Boulogne in the woods...Headquarters of the Maussion Division (3rd Don of the 14th Corps).” The letter was carried out of Paris by the balloon *États Unis*, which left on September 29 and landed in occupied territory west of Paris. Its mail was processed that day at Mantes, so this letter arrived in northwest France on October 3.

The Paris (SC) bureau was a section of the central Paris post office that was used by a small group of prominent people, who could leave mail there for expedited handling. Figure 6-7 shows a letter posted there by an officer in the 2nd Division of the 14th Corps.⁷



Figure 6-7. October 6, 1870 letter from the 14th Corps' 2nd Division

Datelined “Courbevoie le 6 Octobre 1870” (west of Paris, near Neuilly), this letter was prepaid 20 centimes for the balloon post. As described in Chapter Five, the 2nd Division of the 14th Corps was never provided with a dedicated fieldpost, so the sender arranged to have his letter taken into Paris for posting at the Paris (SC) bureau on October 12. It was carried out of Paris on the balloon *Godefroy Cavaignac*, which left on October 14 and landed in occupied territory near Bar-le-Duc. The mail was smuggled south to Chaumont, where it was processed on October 15 in the evening. This letter arrived near Lyon on October 16. The Paris (SC) postmark was typically only used to cancel the franking, so a double strike of the postmark is rare.

Another special section of the central post office was the Recette Centrale, which used a red double-ring “RC Paris RC (60)” postmark and a red star cancel. Figure 6-8 shows an example posted there by an officer in the 2^e Armée.



Figure 6-8. January 9, 1871 letter from the 2nd Division of the 2nd Corps

Dateline at Vincennes on January 8 by a lieutenant in Mattat's 2nd Division⁸ of the 2nd Corps (which used fieldpost Bureau H), this letter was posted the next day at the Recette Centrale, where the 20 centimes franking⁹ was cancelled by a red star. The letter was carried out of Paris on the balloon *Kepler*, which left on January 11 and landed in unoccupied territory southwest of Paris near Laval. Only two letters from the siege are known with this red Paris RC postmark.

Mail from Military Units not provided with Fieldpost Services

The Corps de St. Denis, under Admiral La Roncière Le Noury,¹⁰ was formed on October 28 to defend the northern sector of Paris. It consisted of three brigades and was an independent command until the end of the siege. Its order of battle is shown at the end of this chapter. This corps was not provided with fieldpost services, probably since St. Denis had a functioning post office. Figure 6-9 shows a letter from this corps.



Figure 6-9. January 2, 1871 letter from the Corps de St. Denis

Dateline "St Denis 1er Janvier" and endorsed "armée de St. Denis," this letter was written by a captain in the 138th regiment, and franked with 20 centimes postage. It was postmarked in St. Denis-s-Seine on January 2, and then carried by the balloon *Newton*, which left on January 4 and landed in occupied territory northeast of Le Mans. The *Newton's* mail was hidden near the landing point for five days and then taken to unoccupied Normandy, so this letter arrived in southwest France on January 12.

As described in Chapter Five, a September 27 postal notice eliminated military free franks on balloon mail,¹¹ although a few examples of accepted free franks are known after that date. Figure 6-10 shows an interesting late free franked letter from the Corps de St. Denis.



Figure 6-10. November 14, 1870 letter from the Corps de St. Denis

This letter was datelined “Redoute de Noisy Paris 15 9bre” (earthen fortification near Noisy fort, east of Paris) and endorsed from the 138^e Régiment de Ligne. The sender, Colonel Martin, arranged to have his letter carried into Paris to the Paris (SC) bureau, where it was postmarked on November 14, and received a very unusual military free frank. It was carried out of Paris on the next balloon, the *Général Ubrich*, which left on the evening of November 18, and landed the next day near Luzarches, in occupied territory north of Paris. The Paris (SC) mail received expedited handling upon landing, so it was postmarked at Luzarches on November 20 and smuggled to unoccupied France two days later. This letter arrived in southern France on November 28. There are fewer than five Paris (SC) letters known with free franks.

The 28^e Régiment de Marche was formed on September 11 from 25 Paris-based Garde Impériale depot companies,¹² but was not provided with access to fieldpost facilities. It was initially sent to defend St. Denis, but was soon transferred to Mont Valérien (west of Paris) to defend that key fortification. Figure 6-11 shows a letter from a lieutenant in the 28^e Régiment de Marche.



Figure 6-11. October 19, 1870 letter from the 28^e Régiment de Marche at Mont Valérien

Datelined “Mont Valérien le 19 8bre 70,” this letter was franked with 20 centimes for carriage by balloon. The lieutenant gave his letter to Antonin Dubost, a passenger on the *République Universelle* who was leaving with messages from Général Trochu to Léon Gambetta concerning the plans for the break-out of the Parisian army.¹³ The *République Universelle* left Paris on October 19 and landed in occupied territory in the north of France. After reaching unoccupied France, Dubost passed through Rocroi where the letter was postmarked on October 19. It arrived in western France on October 26, after traveling around the German occupation area.

Letters that were given directly to the pilot or a passenger on a balloon are known as “plis confiés.” They were guaranteed to depart on that balloon and only entered the postal system after landing. Consequently, they bear no Paris postmarks.

Mail from the Garde Nationale Mobile and the 3^e Armée

As described in Chapter Five, the Garde Nationale Mobile (“Garde Mobile”) was a second line reserve of over 500,000 men that was mobilized on July 17 by the Interior Ministry. From August 17 to September 17, over 100,000 Gardes Mobiles in 93 battalions were called to Paris to strengthen the city’s defenses. It was expected that the Garde Mobile would be used principally to garrison the forts around Paris, but some battalions proved their combat effectiveness in early actions around Paris. In particular, battalions from the departments of Ain, Côte d’Or, Ille-et-Vilaine, Loiret, Seine-et-Oise, Tarn and Vendée were deployed in support of the 13th and 14th Corps. These battalions were attached to regular army units and were consequently given access to fieldpost services. The remaining battalions used the civilian postal service for their mail.

To better facilitate their organization, 87 of the battalions in Paris were formed into 28 regiments of 2,500 to 4,500 men each.¹⁴ Nine of these regiments were formally incorporated into the 2^e Armée on November 8.¹⁵ The list of Garde Mobile regiments that operated in Paris is included at the end of this chapter.

Garde Mobile mail can typically be identified only by private markings or manuscript endorsements that identify the particular unit. Figure 6-12 shows a letter from a mobile from the department of Aube.



Figure 6-12. September 30, 1870 letter from the Garde Mobile de l’Aube

This letter was datelined on September 29, and posted the next day with an unauthorized military free frank at the St. Mandé-Paris post office. The mobile added the “Garde N^{le} Mobile de l’Aube 1^{er} Baton 6^e Comp^{ie} Le Capitaine” private unit cachet to justify the free frank. He reported that, “Letters have not been getting out. Finally, I think that they will pass because there is a balloon which leaves Paris...we are camped on the Place du Trône in front of the St. Mandé gate.” The small early Paris balloons could only carry a portion of the post office mail, so much it had to be carried out by the larger later balloons. This letter was accordingly delayed from the *Armand Barbès* to the *Louis Blanc*, which left on October 12. Two balloons were launched on that day to clear up the mail backlog, and the *Louis Blanc* landed in Belgium. Its mail was left in northern France at Lille, and this letter arrived in central France on October 18.

Some battalions of the Garde Mobile de la Vienne were also initially based near St. Mandé. Figure 6-13 shows an interesting postcard that was mailed at St. Mandé with an “Armée de Paris” endorsement.



Figure 6-13. October 10, 1870 card from the Garde Mobile de la Vienne

Dated "10 Octobre," this card was prepaid ten centimes for the postcard rate by balloon.¹⁶ It was posted that day at the St. Mandé-Paris post office, where the stamp was unusually cancelled by the small-number "3739" lozenge of dots.¹⁷ The writer noted that, "we are still at 13, rue de Lagny" (in St. Mandé). The card was carried out of Paris on the balloon *Jean Bart No. 2*, which left on October 16 toward the northeast. After encountering enemy gunfire near Soissons, the pilot jettisoned mailbags to gain altitude. Those mailbags were recovered over the next few weeks and processed through local post offices. This card received the classic October 17 transit marking from Crécy-sur-Serre (in occupied territory northeast of Soissons), and was smuggled three days later to unoccupied northern France.

Some mobiles created special envelopes for their mail. The envelope illustrated in Figure 6-14 bears the printed inscription "Garde Nationale Mobile de la Côte d'Or 10^e Régiment 3^{me} Bataillon 1^{re} Compagnie."



Figure 6-14. September 20, 1870 letter from the Garde Mobile de la Côte d'Or

This letter was posted on September 20 at the central Paris post office with a military free frank, per the black "P.P." marking. The German siege line had closed off all communications a day and a half earlier, but some Parisian postmen were still able to carry small amounts of mail across the lines on foot. This letter was taken by Brare and Gême on the fourth of five post office trips through the lines. They left Paris on the morning of September 27 and left their mail at Triel that evening.¹⁸ This letter was postmarked in transit at Dijon on September 30.

The envelope in Figure 6-14 demonstrates that many of the Garde Mobile battalions were formed into regiments in August-September. As shown in Appendix D, Regiments #7 through #60 were all formed by

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September 7, while three more Parisian regiments (#61, #62 and #64) were formed during the siege. The 62^e Régiment was formed from the 3rd and 6th battalions of Ille-et-Vilaine mobiles, along with the 1st battalion of Finistère mobiles.¹⁹ Figure 6-15 shows a striking letter with that regiment's private unit marking.



Figure 6-15. October 23, 1870 letter from the 62^e Régiment de Garde Mobile

Dateline "23 8bre 6 heures du soir," this letter was franked by a 20 centimes stamp that was cancelled by the unit marking for the 62^e Régiment. The sender wrote, "It has been fifteen days since M. Delapierre was supposed to leave by balloon...and he is very willing to carry letters for me...he has just told me that he will leave tomorrow morning." Colonel Eugene de la Pierre, a retired cavalry lieutenant, had been named commander of the 62^e Régiment de Garde Mobile, but was promoted to commander of the training camp at St. Omer. He left Paris to assume his new post aboard the balloon *Montgolfier*, which left Paris on October 25. The balloon headed east and was attempting to land near besieged Verdun when it came under fire from German cavalry. After jettisoning two bags of mail, the *Montgolfier* rapidly headed farther east, and landed in occupied territory near Strasbourg. The passengers escaped just before the arrival of German troops, but the post office mail bags remaining with the balloon were captured.²⁰ Most of that mail was destroyed, but the mail carried personally by the passengers escaped with them. This letter went southwest with de la Pierre and arrived in Brittany on November 5.



"Balloon Chase" by Louis Braun (1872)

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The other passenger on the *Montgolfier* was Colonel Le Bouedec, commander of the 3rd Battalion of the Garde Mobile des Côtes-du-Nord. He was also departing to take a senior command at the Conlie training camp near Le Mans. One of the letters that he carried is illustrated in Figure 6-16.



Figure 6-16. October 18, 1870 letter from the Garde Mobile des Côtes-du-Nord

A soldier in the 3rd Battalion of Côtes-du-Nord mobiles datelined this letter "Camp de Rosny 18 8bre 1870." He wrote that, "Mr. le Boedec, ex-commander of the 3rd battalion leaves in a balloon for the west. He will take this letter." After escaping from the Germans at the *Montgolfier's* landing point, Le Bouedec travelled southwest across the Vosges mountains and reached a French outpost at Giromagny on October 27. He continued south and finally mailed this letter with a military free frank at the Pontarlier train station on October 30. It arrived in Brittany on November 2.

A special mail-handling service for mobiles from the department of Ille-et-Vilaine was provided by Jules Léveillé, cabinet head in the Department of Telegraphs, and originally from Ille-et-Vilaine. In his position, Léveillé was able to provide special mail handling and free franking privileges for the mobiles.²¹ Letters forwarded by Léveillé were endorsed with some variant of "aux soins de M. Jules Léveillé du Conseil d'Etat" and grouped together in a packet that Léveillé placed directly on a balloon. Accordingly, they did not pass through the Paris post office, and have no postal markings from within the siege. Figure 6-17 shows a letter carried by this service that was datelined "14 9bre 1870" and franked 20 centimes for carriage by balloon.



Figure 6-17. November 14, 1870 letter from the Garde Mobile d'Ille-et-Vilaine

The franking on this letter was unnecessary, since the "aux soins de M Léveillé du Conseil d'Etat" manuscript endorsement entitled the letter to a free frank. The Garde Mobile officer added the "Garde N^{le} Mobile (ile-et-Vilaine) 2^{me} B^{on} Le Commandant" private unit cachet and wrote that, "we are actually at Neuilly...I am still with the Battalion to which I have been attached as payeur officer." His letter was placed in Léveillé's special mail bag and carried out of Paris on the balloon *Général Ubrich*, which left on November 18 in the evening. It landed in occupied territory north of Paris, so one of the passengers took

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Léveillé's bag to Rennes on November 23. This letter was postmarked there on that day, and the stamp was cancelled with the "3112" lozenge of Rennes.

The Léveillé mail system had been worked out with Étienne Cuzon, sub-prefect at Redon (Ille-et-Vilaine), who left Paris on October 7 in the balloon *George Sand*. Before leaving, he made arrangements with Léveillé to distribute the Ille-et-Vilaine mail. Figure 6-18 shows a letter handled by Cuzon.



Figure 6-18. January 13, 1871 letter from the Garde Mobile du Finistère

This letter was datelined south of Paris at Villejuif on January 13 by Colonel de la Villesbret, commander of the 23^e Régiment des Mobiles du Finistère. By this time, Léveillé had apparently extended his mail privilege to at least one other regiment of mobiles from Brittany. De la Villesbret's letter was endorsed "garde mobile" and "aux soins de M Jules Léveillé" in another hand and placed in the Léveillé mail bag. It was then carried out of Paris on the balloon *Poste de Paris*, which left on January 18 and landed in Holland. Its mail entered France at Lille, and was taken by boat around the German occupation area to St. Malo. The packet of mail was then taken to Cuzon at Redon. He added his private sub-prefect cachet to this letter, and sent it to Morlaix with a military free frank, per the "P.P." mark. It arrived on January 26.

Cuzon's brother in Paris made arrangements to pilot a privately-owned balloon, *La Bretagne*, which he named after his home region of Brittany. A brief item in the October 29 Paris *Siècle* reported that, "This balloon carries much news from our Brittany militiamen for their families. M. Léveillé of the Conseil d'Etat presided at its launching, together with other authorized persons." The *Bretagne* left on October 27, and flew rapidly toward the East. Three hours later, it descended under enemy fire near besieged Verdun. Three passengers, including René Cuzon, jumped out and were captured. Lightened, the balloon raced off with one passenger, Manceau, still on board. He managed to save the mail, which was smuggled to a nearby post office.²² Figure 6-19 shows a letter carried on this flight.



Figure 6-19. October 20, 1870 letter from the Garde Mobile d'Ille-et-Vilaine

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This letter was datelined on October 20 and endorsed “Garde mobile d’Ille et Vilaine” and “Confiée aux soins de Mr. Léveillé.” It was postmarked near the *Bretagne’s* landing point at Fresnes-en-Voëvre on October 29, and finally arrived in Brittany on November 10. Since this balloon carried no post office mail, surviving letters are rare.

On December 1, some Garde Mobile battalions were sent to the southeast of Paris to cover the St. Maur peninsula and Joinville-le-Pont, under the command of General Ribourt at Vincennes. Figure 6-20 shows a letter from the 40th Regiment of the Garde Mobile de l’Ain at Joinville-le-Pont with a remarkable tête-bêche franking.



Figure 6-20. December 12, 1870 letter from the Garde Mobile de l’Ain

Dateline at Poulangis (near Joinville-le-Pont) on December 12, this letter was franked with a ten centimes tête-bêche pair from the 1870 Siege of Paris Issue. It was marked with a “Garde Nat^{le} Mobile de l’Ain 40^{ème} Reg^t Provisoire/4^e B^{on} Le Commandant” private blue cachet, and posted at the rue d’Enghien post office in Paris²³ on December 15. The sender noted that, “we have not yet fought...we are on the guard tomorrow and for eight days we have been at the most advanced post. At night, there are forward sentinels who are no more than one hundred meters from the enemy.” The letter was carried out of Paris on the balloon *Parmentier*, which left on December 17 and landed in occupied territory east of Paris. Its mail was smuggled south to unoccupied Nevers around December 26. This letter arrived near Lyon on December 28. Fewer than five balloon mail covers are known with tête-bêche frankings.²⁴

Garde Mobile cachets were typically made for battalion commanders or for regimental commanders. Figure 6-21 shows a clear example of a regimental marking.



Figure 6-21. January 1, 1871 letter from the Garde Mobile du Tarn

This letter was datelined northeast of Paris at Bondy on December 25. It was franked with 20 centimes and marked with the “7^{ème} Régiment Mobile (Tarn) Le Lieutenant Colonel Commandant” private unit

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cachet. After considerable front-line duty, the 7th Tarn Regiment had been re-assigned on December 20 from the 2^e Armée to less strenuous duty defending the northeast forts. This letter was posted in Paris at the Sénat post office on January 1, and carried out of Paris by the balloon *Newton*. The *Newton* left on January 4 and landed in occupied territory north of Le Mans. The mail was hidden for five days until it could be smuggled out, so this letter arrived in southern France on January 11.

The 7^e Régiment du Tarn had previously been assigned to the 2^e Armée, but most regiments of mobiles were incorporated into the 3^e Armée. As described in Chapter Five, the 2^e Armée was designated to break out of Paris, while the 3^e Armée stayed behind to carry on the defense of Paris. Even so, the 3^e Armée was not provided with fieldpost services. Its order of battle is shown at the end of this chapter.

The 1st Brigade of the 2nd Division in the 3^e Armée contained three regiments of mobiles: the 20^e Régiment de Garde Mobile des Côtes-du-Nord, the 45^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de l'Hérault and the 62^e Régiment de Garde Mobile d'Ille-et-Vilaine/Finistère. The brigade commander was Colonel Armand de Camas, former commander of the 31^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Morbihan.²⁵ Upon his promotion to brigade command on November 10, he had special unit cachets prepared, as shown in Figure 6-22 (unfolded to show markings on the reverse).



Figure 6-22. November 13, 1870 letter from the 3^e Armée

This letter was datelined “Paris 11 9bre” and franked with 20 centimes. Colonel de Camas added his “3^eme Armée 2^eme Division 1^{ere} Brigade/Le Colonel Comm” private unit cachet on the reverse and posted his letter at the Ministère des Finances post office on November 13. It was carried out of Paris on the balloon *Général Ubrich*, which left on November 18 and landed in occupied territory north of Paris. The mail was held for several days before being smuggled out, so this letter arrived in Brittany on November 28.

Mail from the Garde Nationale and the 1^{re} Armée

The Garde Nationale was a civilian militia that played a significant role in defending France in 1813. It fell into disuse after that, and was disbanded in 1852, except for a skeleton force in Paris. This changed in 1870, when an August 12 law re-established the Garde Nationale in all departments of the country.²⁶ There were two parts to the Garde Nationale: the Garde Nationale Mobilisée, which was intended for combat; and the Garde Nationale Sédentaire, which was restricted to local defense.

There were 51 Garde Nationale battalions (1,500 men each) in Paris at the start of the war. The August 12 law increased this to 60 battalions, but there were not enough rifles to fully arm them. Even so, the Interior Ministry authorized the creation of 60 more battalions on September 6 but, in the enthusiasm

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over the one franc 50 centimes daily pay, 194 new battalions were formed before the process was halted on October 1.²⁷ All of these 254 battalions were initially classified as “sédentaires,” and their assignment was to guard Paris and the city walls.

On October 16, the Government of National Defense decreed the formation of a volunteer company of “mobilisées” from each battalion. Of the 344,000 men in the Parisian Garde Nationale, only 6,500 volunteered, so the idea was scrapped.²⁸ On November 9, the Government issued a new decree which forced the partition of each Garde Nationale battalion into four war companies and four sedentary companies. The complicated rules ensured that the war companies would be filled to around 100 men each. These war companies then formed 59 regiments (of four battalions each) containing about 100,000 men in the 1^{re} Armée.²⁹ They were not, however, provided with fieldpost services, and used the civilian post to send their letters. Figure 6-23 illustrates a letter from a war company in the 1^{re} Armée.

Figure 6-23. December 21, 1870 letter from a Garde Nationale Mobilisée



Addressed within besieged Paris, this letter was posted with a military free frank at the central Paris post office on December 21.³⁰ The sender applied his “Garde Nationale de Paris 116^e B^{on} 1^{re} Comp^{ie} de Guerre” private unit cachet. As is typical with mail sent within Paris, there are no arrival markings.

Figure 6-24 shows a letter from a sedentary company.



Figure 6-24. December 8, 1870 letter from a Garde Nationale Sédentaire

This letter was posted with a military free frank at the Paris Villette post office on December 8. It bears a “Garde Nationale Sédentaire de la Seine 189^{eme} Bataillon” private unit cachet.

Many unit endorsements on Garde Nationale mail were in manuscript. Figure 6-25 shows an example written in pencil from a mobilized unit at the front lines.

Figure 6-25. December 24, 1870 letter from a Garde Nationale Mobilisée



This *Gazette des Absents* newsletter #17 was datelined at “Château de Montreau près Rosny-sous-Bois” on December 24. It was endorsed “2^e Régim^t de Paris 6^e Bataillon 2^e C^{ie}” to justify an unauthorized military free frank, and was posted at the rue Taitbout post office on December 25. This regiment was temporarily assigned to the 3^e Armée on December 18 and ordered to the front lines at the Chateau de Montreau (east of Paris) on December 20.³¹ This letter was carried out of Paris on the balloon *Tourville*, which left on December 27 and landed safely in central France. The letter arrived in southeast France on January 1.

Much Garde Nationale mail was not endorsed, and can only be identified through letter contents. Some of this mail received expedited handling, such as through the “Aérostiers” companies that manufactured some of the balloons and managed their departures. A letter given to one of these companies received expedited handling on the company’s next departure, and entered the mails only after landing. The Nadar-Dartois-Duruof company made a special cachet (“République-Française 1 Aérostiers Nadar-Dartois-Duruof”) for the mail that they handled. Figure 6-26 shows an example (unfolded to show the reverse) on a letter from a soldier in the sedentary Garde Nationale.



Figure 6-26. October 18, 1870 letter from a Garde Nationale Sédentaire

This letter was datelined “Paris 18 Octobre” and prepaid 20 centimes. The writer noted that, “At six in the morning we rise and go to exercise from 7 until 9...unless we are on guard duty at the gates or on the fortifications in which case we spend 24 hours.” He gave his letter to Nadar-Dartois-Duruof, which added their red cachet on the reverse of the letter. It was put on their next balloon, the *Garibaldi*, which left on

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October 22 and landed in occupied territory east of Paris. The pilot took some of the confided mail north and deposited his letters with the Paris-Le Havre railway bureau, which cancelled the stamp on this letter with the “HP2” (Havre-Paris No. 2) lozenge. The letter arrived in Brittany on November 2.

Duruof left Paris as pilot of the first balloon and Nadar withdrew over a disagreement with the government, so their former company became “Dartois & Yon Aéronautes.” They prepared a new company cachet (“République Française Dartois & Yon Aéronautes du Gouvernement”) which came into use in mid-November. Figure 6-27 shows an extraordinary example (unfolded to show the reverse) carried out of Paris by an officer in the Garde Nationale.



Figure 6-27. December 23, 1870 letter carried by a Garde Nationale officer

Dated “Vendredi 23 Xbre,” this *Dépêche-Ballon* newsletter #17 was given to the Dartois & Yon balloon-builder company, which added its blue cachet on the reverse. They had just finished construction of a balloon which was privately financed by the newspaper *Le Gaulois*. The brother of the newspaper’s director was a lieutenant in the Garde Nationale Sédentaire, and the balloon was purchased to carry him to Bordeaux. The pilot of the balloon, Captain Grizeaut (of the Francs-Tireurs) and passenger Lieutenant Eugene Tarbé des Sablons created a special straight-line “Ballon Merlin de Douai/Cap. Grizeaut, Lieut. Tarbé” cachet which they applied to the few letters that they carried.³² The balloon *Merlin de Douai* left Paris on December 27 and landed uneventfully in unoccupied central France. Grizeaut and Tarbé travelled to Bordeaux, and mailed their letters there on December 30.³³ After a detour by sea around the German occupation area, this letter arrived in northern France on January 4. This balloon carried no post office mail, so very few letters carried by it are known.

Mail from the Naval Forces in Paris

On August 7, the Navy Minister, Admiral Rigault de Genouilly, sent all naval personnel not at sea to help man the forts around Paris. By early September, four marine infantry battalions (formed from the depots of the four marine infantry regiments that had been incorporated into the 12th Corps) and twelve battalions of sailors from ship crews (“équipages de la flotte”) had arrived to help garrison Montmartre

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and six forts to the east and south of Paris.³⁴ The list of the battalions sent to Paris is included at the end of this chapter.

In total, there were about 13,900 naval personnel in Paris. They were not provided with access to fieldpost services for their mail, and typically used the nearest civilian post office. Their mail can generally be identified by private unit markings. For example, the 2nd battalion of marine infantry used the classic boxed “Marins de Lorient” marking. Figure 6-28 shows an example of this marking.



Figure 6-28. October 21, 1870 letter from a naval marine

This letter was datelined “Fort de Bicêtre 22 8bre 1870” and prepaid 20 centimes. The sender endorsed his letter “Armée du Rhin” and added the boxed “Marins de Lorient” private unit marking. It was postmarked on October 21 at the nearby intramuros (inside the city walls) La Maison-Blanche Paris post office, which unusually cancelled the stamp with its small-number “2170” lozenge of dots. It was carried out of Paris by the balloon *Garibaldi*, which left on October 22 and landed in occupied territory east of Paris. The mail was smuggled south to Nogent on October 29, so this letter arrived south of Lyon on November 1. The letter is addressed to Monsieur de Montgolfier, a descendant of the manned balloon inventor.

The ship crews brought “Marine Impériale” markings with them. Figures 6-29 and 6-30 show different examples.



Figure 6-29. November 2, 1870 letter from a sailor at Montrouge fort

This letter was datelined at Montrouge fort on November 2, and prepaid 20 centimes. The sender, Naval Lieutenant Edgard de Courville, was commander of the 8th company of the 12th Battalion,³⁵ and he applied the “Marine Impériale/Equipages de la Flotte/Commandant du 2^e Bataillon” private unit marking that he had brought from Toulon. He mailed his letter on November 2 at the nearby intramuros Montrouge-Paris post office, which cancelled the stamp with its “2523” lozenge of dots. It was then

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carried out of Paris on the balloon *Galilée*, which left on November 4 under the guidance of a sailor from Noisy fort. The *Galilée* landed in occupied territory southwest of Paris, where most of the mail was captured. This letter was part of the captured mail, so it was never delivered.

The postcard in Figure 6-30 was datelined “Fort d’Ivry le 31 8bre 1870” and prepaid ten centimes for the balloon postcard rate.



Figure 6-30. November 1, 1870 postcard from a sailor at Ivry fort

This card was sent by a member of the 6th or 7th battalion of sailors, who marked it with the “Marine Impériale/Service à la Mer” private unit cachet. He mailed it the next day at the intramuros La Maison-Blanche Paris post office, which cancelled the stamp with the normal large-numeral “2170” lozenge. It was then carried out of Paris on the balloon *Fulton*, which left on November 2 and landed in unoccupied territory near Angers. The mail was rapidly processed from there, so this card arrived in southern France on November 5.

The 11th battalion of cannoneers, from the ship *Louis XIV*, was distributed among the forts. Two of its companies were assigned to Rosny fort. Figure 6-31 shows a postcard from this unit.

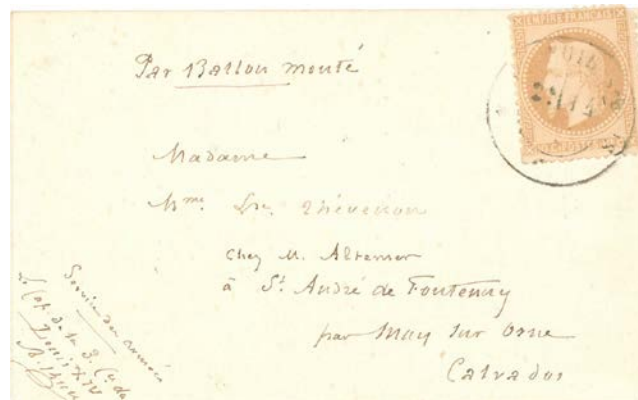


Figure 6-31. November 14, 1870 letter from a sailor at Rosny fort

Dated on November 14 by a cannoneer at Rosny fort, this card was franked ten centimes for the balloon post. It was endorsed “Service des armées Le Cap.de la 3. Cie du Louis XIV” and counter-signed at lower left by Captain Krantz, commander of the 11th Battalion. The card was postmarked that day at the extramuros (outside the city walls) Montreuil-sous-Bois post office, which was next to Rosny fort. The balloon *Archimède* left Paris on November 21 and landed in Holland. Its mail was processed through

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Belgium on November 22. Postmarks from the post office at Montreuil-sous-Bois are rare, and the use of the datestamp as a cancel is particularly unusual.

On November 3, the French mounted naval guns on armored trains that could approach the enemy. Sailors manned these trains, and Figure 6-32 shows a letter from one of them.



Figure 6-32.
November 10, 1870
letter from a sailor
on an armored train

This *Gazette des Absents* newsletter #6 was datelined in southern Paris at the Ivry train station on November 10 and prepaid 20 centimes. The sender wrote that, “since last Friday I have been attached to the armored trains which will operate on the train tracks (around Paris). We have one naval cannon on each wagon.” He posted his letter on November 10 at the intramuros Gare d’Ivry post office, which cancelled the stamp with its “1625” lozenge of dots. The letter was then carried out of Paris on the balloon *Daguerre*, which left on November 12. Most of the *Daguerre*’s mail was captured upon landing, so this letter shows no arrival marks. Very little balloon mail is known from the Gare d’Ivry post office.

A flotilla of small boats on the Seine River was manned by 500 sailors. Figure 6-33 shows a letter to the captain of one of the boats.



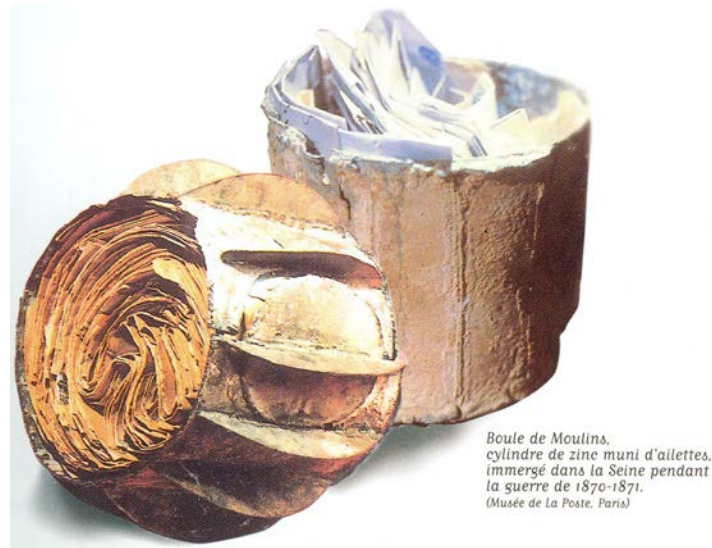
Figure 6-33. January 13,
1871 letter to a captain in
the Flotille de la Seine

This letter was posted in Étapes (in northern France, south of Boulogne) on January 13 and prepaid one frank³⁶ for the Boules de Moulins service (described under Figure 5-18) to Paris. It was addressed to Captain de Rosamel of the Flotille de la Seine at Auteuil (southwest of Paris). Rosamel was captain of floating battery no. 2.³⁷ This letter shows a Paris arrival on February 12, with further delivery to Auteuil on February 13.

When the Boules de Moulins service was discontinued on January 31, there were 14,600 letters at Moulins-sur-Allier that had not yet been loaded into boules. The letter in Figure 6-33 was part of that group. This premium-franked mail was discovered by postal authorities on February 10, and they felt

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obliged to expedite it to Paris. However, postal routes were not yet fully open into the capital, so a postal employee smuggled this mail into Paris on February 12, hidden in sacks of rice. The so-called “Sac de Riz” mail was delivered to the central post office in Paris, where it was postmarked on February 12.³⁸



Boule de Moulins (Musée de la Poste, Paris)

The Orders of Battle Referenced in this Chapter

Corps de St. Denis November 12 Order of Battle³⁹

Commandant: Admiral La Roncière Le Noury

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Lavoignet)

134^e Régiment de Ligne

14^e-18^e Bataillons de Garde Mobile de la Seine

2^e Brigade (Colonel Hanrion)

135^e Régiment de Ligne

1^{er}, 2^e, 10^e et 11^e Bataillons de Garde Mobile de la Seine

3^e Brigade (Colonel Martin)

138^e Régiment de Ligne

12^e et 13^e Bataillons de Garde Mobile de la Seine

Corps Détachés

13^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Saône-et-Loire

45^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de l'Hérault

Garde Mobile Regiments in Paris⁴⁰

Regiment	Department	Battalions	Army Assignment
#1	Seine (Paris)	1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd	Corps de St. Denis
#2	Seine (Paris)	4 th , 5 th and 6 th	
#3	Seine (Paris)	7 th , 8 th and 9 th	3 ^e Armée 5 ^e Division
#4	Seine (Paris)	10 th , 11 th and 12 th	Corps de St. Denis
#5	Seine (Paris)	13 th , 14 th and 15 th	Corps de St. Denis
#6	Seine (Paris)	16 th , 17 th and 18 th	Corps de St. Denis
#7	Tarn	1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd	2 ^e Armée 3 ^e Corps
#10	Côte-d'Or	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd and 4 th	2 ^e Armée 1 ^{er} Corps
#13	Saône-et-Loire	1 st , 2 nd and 5 th	3 ^e Armée 3 ^e Division
#20	Côtes-du-Nord	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd and 4 th	3 ^e Armée 2 ^e Division
#23	Finistère	2 nd , 4 th and 5 th	Maud'huy Division
#26	Ille-et-Vilaine	1 st , 2 nd and 4 th	2 ^e Armée 1 ^{er} Corps
#28	Loire-Inférieure	3 rd , 4 th and 5 th	3 ^e Armée 4 ^e Division
#31	Morbihan	1 st , 2 nd and 5 th	2 ^e Armée 3 ^e Corps
#35	Vendée	1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd	2 ^e Armée 1 ^{er} Corps
#36	Vienne	1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd	3 ^e Armée 2 ^e Division
#37	Loiret	2 nd , 3 rd and 4 th	2 ^e Armée 3 ^e Corps
#38	Seine-et-Marne	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd and 4 th	2 ^e Armée 3 ^e Corps
#40	Ain	2 nd , 3 rd and 4 th	3 ^e Armée 3 ^e Division
#45	Hérault	1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd	3 ^e Armée 2 ^e Division
#50	Seine-Inférieure	1 st , 4 th and 5 th	2 ^e Armée 2 ^e Corps
#51	Seine-et-Oise	4 th , 5 th and 6 th	3 ^e Armée 2 ^e Division
#52	Somme	1 st , 2 nd and 5 th	3 ^e Armée 4 ^e Division
#59	Aube	1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd	3 ^e Armée 3 ^e Division
#60	Seine-et-Oise	1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd	3 ^e Armée 2 ^e Division
#61	Somme/Marne	3 rd and 6 th and 1 st (Marne)	3 ^e Armée 2 ^e Division
#62	Ille-et-Vilaine/Finistère	3 rd and 6 th and 1 st (Finistère)	3 ^e Armée 4 ^e Division
#64	Aisne/Indre/Puy-de-Dôme	1 st of each Department	3 ^e Armée 4 ^e Division

Six additional battalions were not grouped into regiments: 5th of Côtes-du-Nord; 2nd of Drôme; 3rd of Finistère (protected the Hôtel de Ville from October 31 to the end of the siege); 5th of Loiret; 3rd of Seine-Inférieure; and 4th of Vendée (assigned to the 3^e Armée 4^e Division).

3^e Armée de Paris November 8 Order of Battle⁴¹

Commandant: Général Vinoy

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie – never formed

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Liniers) – 15,200 men

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Filhol de Camas)

20^e Régiment de la Garde Mobile des Côtes-du-Nord

45^e Régiment de la Garde Mobile de l'Hérault

62^e Régiment de la Garde Mobile de l'Ille-et-Vilaine/Finistère

2^e Brigade (Colonel de Chamberet)

51^e Régiment de la Garde Mobile de la Seine-et-Oise

60^e Régiment de la Garde Mobile de la Seine-et-Oise

3^e Armée de Paris November 8 Order of Battle (continued)

- 3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Beaufort-d'Hautpoul) – 14,400 men
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Dumoulin)
 - 59^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de l'Aube
 - 13^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Saône-et-Loire
 - 2^e Brigade (Frigate Captain d'André)
 - 40^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de l'Ain
 - 36^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Vienne
- 4^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Corréard) – 12,000 men
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Lt.-Colonel Champion)
 - 28^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Loire-Inférieure
 - 64^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de l'Ain/Indre/Puy
 - 2^e Brigade (Colonel Porion)
 - 52^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Somme
 - 61^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Somme/Marne
- 5^e Division d'Infanterie (Général d'Hughes) – 9,000 men
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Valette)
 - 5^e Bataillon de Garde Mobile de l'Ille-et-Vilaine
 - 6^e-8^e Bataillons de Garde Mobile de la Seine
 - 2^e Brigade (Frigate Captain de Bray)
 - 137^e Régiment de Ligne
 - 4^e Bataillon de Garde Mobile de la Vendée
 - 1^{er} Bataillon de Garde Mobile du Finistère
- 6^e Division d'Infanterie (Admiral Pothuaud) – 7,500 men
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Lt.-Colonel Le Mains)
 - 128^e Régiment de Ligne
 - 2^e Brigade (Ship Captain Salmon)
 - 1^e-4^e Bataillons d'Infanterie de la Marine
- Division de Cavalerie (Général Bertin de Vaux)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général de Bernis)
 - 12^e Régiment de Cuirassiers – previously the 2^e Régiment de Marche de Cuirassiers
 - 16^e Régiment de Dragons – previously the 1^{er} Régiment de Marche de Cavalerie Mixte
 - 9^e Régiment de Lanciers – previously the 1^{er} Régiment de Marche de Lanciers
 - 2^e Brigade (Lt.-Colonel Blondel)
 - 2^e Régiment de Gendarmes à Cheval

The 1st Division of the 3^e Armée was never formed. On November 26, the 2nd Infantry Division (Maud'huy) of the 1st Corps of the 2^e Armée was attached to the 3^e Armée south of Paris.

- Division Maud'huy – 16,900 men
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Valentin)
 - 109^e Régiment de Ligne
 - 110^e Régiment de Ligne
 - 23^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Finistère
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Blaise – killed on December 21 at Ville-Évrard)
 - 111^e Régiment de Ligne
 - 112^e Régiment de Ligne

On December 4, the 3^e Armée grouped the 4th Division, 6th Division and the Maud'huy Division in a new Corps de la Rive Gauche, under the command of Général Blanchard (former commander of the 1st Corps of the 2^e Armée, which had been dissolved after suffering great losses in the November 30 – December 2 Marne battles).

Naval Battalions in Paris⁴²

Naval Infantry		Paris Fort	Battalion Size
1 ^e Infanterie		Rosny	836 men
2 ^e Infanterie		Bicêtre	812 men
3 ^e Infanterie		Romainville	813 men
4 ^e Infanterie		Noisy	797 men

Ship Crews	Home Port	Paris Fort	Battalion Size
2 ^e Marins	Cherbourg	Romainville	871 men
3 ^e Marins	Brest	Noisy	680 men
4 ^e Marins	Rochefort	Noisy	639 men
5 ^e Marins	Toulon	Rosny	729 men
6 ^e Marins	Brest	Ivry	694 men
7 ^e Marins	Rochefort	Ivry	740 men
8 ^e Marins	Brest	Bicêtre	680 men
9 ^e Marins	Lorient	Bicêtre	604 men
10 ^e Marins	Cherbourg	Montrouge	614 men
11 ^e Marins	Toulon	(6 different)	722 men
12 ^e Marins	Toulon	Montrouge	710 men
13 ^e Marins	Brest	Montmartre	552 men

The 722 cannoneers (from the training ship *Louis XIV*) in the 11th battalion were spread throughout the six forts. In addition, 1,800 sailors in the 27th Artillery Battery and the Marine Artillery Regiment were also spread throughout the forts. Finally, 500 sailors made up a “Flotille de la Seine,” composed of twenty-one small armed boats.



“Les Marins au Bourget 21 décembre 1870” by Charles Castellani (1879)

Endnotes

- ¹ The franking is a 20 centimes stamp of the 1863-70 “Empire Lauré” Issue.
- ² Rousset, Léonce, *Histoire Générale de la Guerre Franco-Allemande (1870-1871)*, (Librairie Illustrée: Paris, 1911), Vol. I, page 494.
- ³ This post office used the star 18 as a cancel.
- ⁴ The French domestic rate was 20 centimes, but unpaid mail was subject to a 50% surcharge.
- ⁵ The last mail train from Paris left for Granville on September 18 at 7pm, with mail to the 4th collection period (2pm). Starting with the 5th collection period (4pm), all September 18 mail was trapped in the siege. Brown, Gardner & Ruth, “Detoured Mail during the Franco-Prussian War, 1870-71,” *France & Colonies Philatelist*, (November 1975), page 357.
- ⁶ Cohn, Ernst, *Unusual Mail in Occupied France, 1870-1871*, (James Bendon: Cyprus, 2000), page 56.
- ⁷ The census in Appendix C shows two letters from the same correspondence postmarked November 7 and November 9 at the fieldpost bureau for the headquarters of the 14th Corps.
- ⁸ The census in Appendix C shows two letters from the same correspondence postmarked October 28 and November 15 at the Armée du Rhin Bureau AL, which serviced Mattar’s division in the 13th Corps.
- ⁹ The franking is a 20 centimes stamp of the 1870 “Siège de Paris” Issue, which was printed in Paris during the siege.
- ¹⁰ The initial commander of the Corps de St. Denis was Général Carrey de Bellemare, who was transferred on November 12.
- ¹¹ The governmental decree authorizing this notice was passed on September 26. Le Pileur, Jacques, *La Poste par Ballons Montés 1870-1871*, (Yvert & Tellier: Amiens, 1943), page 23.
- ¹² État-Major de l’Armée, Section Historique, *La Guerre de 1870-71, l’Investissement de Paris, I Organisation de la Place*, (R. Chapelot et Cie.: Paris, 1908), page 245.
- ¹³ Chaintrier, Louis A., *Balloon Post of the Siege of Paris, 1870-71*, (American Air Mail Society: Washington, D.C., 1976), page 31.
- ¹⁴ Martinien, Aristide, *Corps Auxiliaires Créés Pendant la Guerre 1870-1871 : Garde Nationale Mobile, Volume 1*, (Librairie Militaire Edmond Dubois: Paris, 1897).
- ¹⁵ 7^e Régiment du Tarn, 10^e Régiment de la Côte d’Or, 23^e Régiment du Finistère, 26^e Régiment d’Ille-et-Vilaine, 31^e Régiment du Morbihan, 35^e Régiment de la Vendée, 37^e Régiment du Loiret, 38^e Régiment de la Seine-et-Marne and 50^e Régiment de la Seine-Inférieure. The 23^e Régiment du Finistère was later transferred to the 3^e Armée.
- ¹⁶ The September 27 postal notice set a postcard rate of 10 centimes per three grams. Le Pileur, *Op. Cit.*, page 23.
- ¹⁷ The small-numeral cancels were typically used on registered mail.
- ¹⁸ Cohn, *Op. Cit.*, page 56.
- ¹⁹ Martinien, *Op. Cit.*
- ²⁰ Chaintrier, *Op. Cit.*, page 40.
- ²¹ Fromaigeat, Jacques, “Correspondances par ballons montés dites JULES LÉVEILLÉ,” *Relais No. 39, Revue de la Société des Amis du Musée de la Poste*, (1972), page 80.
- ²² Dollfus, Charles and Maincent, Paul, *Les Ballons du Siège, La Poste Aérienne*, (Icare No. 56: Paris, 1971), page 114.
- ²³ The rue d’Enghien post office used a star “4” cancel.
- ²⁴ The two plates used to print the 1850 ten centimes stamp were used to print 34.1 million perforated stamps in 1870-71. One of those plates contained tête-bêche clichés at positions 27, 58 and 145, so only about 340,000 errors were printed.
- ²⁵ See Figure 5-31 for a letter from this unit.
- ²⁶ Shann, Stephen and Delperier, Louis, *Osprey Men-at-Arms #237: French Army 1870-71 Franco-Prussian War (2): Republican Troops*, (Osprey Publishing: Oxford, 1991).
- ²⁷ État-Major, *Op. Cit.*, page 353.
- ²⁸ Shann and Delperier, *Op. Cit.*
- ²⁹ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page xii.
- ³⁰ Internal mail within the Paris siege was eligible for a military free frank.
- ³¹ Vinoy, Joseph, *Siège de Paris, Operations du 13^e Corps et de la Troisième Armée*, 2nd Edition, (Henri Plon: Paris, 1872), page 490. The 2^e Régiment de Paris later returned to the 1^{re} Armée and participated in the January 19 attack on Buzenval.
- ³² Only eight letters are known with the “Merlin de Douai” marking; three also have “Dartois & Yon Aéroliers” markings.
- ³³ The postmark on this letter is “Bordeaux Dec 30” from the 7th collection period, and the cancel is the “532” lozenge.
- ³⁴ La Roncière-le Noury, Camille, *La Marine au Siège de Paris*, (Henri Plon: Paris, 1872), page 4.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, page 537.
- ³⁶ The franking is a strip of five 20 centimes type II, report 2 stamps of the 1870 Bordeaux Issue (positions 11-15).
- ³⁷ La Roncière le Noury, *Op. Cit.*, page 542.
- ³⁸ Boussac, Robert, *Boules de Moulins*, Supplement to Feuilles Marcophiles No 253 (2^e Trimestre 1988), page 21.
- ³⁹ La Roncière le Noury, *Op. Cit.*, page 146.
- ⁴⁰ Martinien, *Op. Cit.*
- ⁴¹ Vinoy, *Op. Cit.*, page 468.
- ⁴² La Roncière le Noury, *Op. Cit.*, page 4.

Chapter Seven

Campaign on the Loire: September 14 to March 7

Introduction

The surrender of Emperor Napoléon III at Sedan on September 1 brought the imperial period of the war to a close. Virtually all of France's professional army had been neutralized in just six weeks, so the German high command turned their attention to the capture of Paris. Realizing this, the newly formed republican Government of National Defense pulled most of the remaining military resources into Paris, stripping the rest of the country of significant defensive forces. Nonetheless, a provincial delegation from the Government of National Defense set about forming a defensive force along the Loire River that could also threaten the German siege armies around Paris from the south. Figure 7-1 shows that area of operations.



Figure 7-1. Theater for the Campaign along the Loire River¹

This chapter examines the military activities along the Loire River, as documented by letters handled by the fieldpost services of the contending armies. The German fieldpost service continued as it had since the start of the war, but the French developed a makeshift fieldpost service for its newly formed armies.

The Formation of the Armée de la Loire

In anticipation of a siege, the Parisian Government of National Defense sent a delegation to Tours on September 12. The delegation was to represent the interests of the government in the provinces and to organize further resistance to the German invasion. To inject more energy into that effort, the Minister of the Interior, Léon Gambetta, flew in a balloon from besieged Paris to Tours. Upon his October 9 arrival, he assumed the War Ministry in addition to his regular duties, and galvanized the formation of new republican armies. He did not have much to work with, since over 500,000 of the best soldiers were unavailable to him. The table below shows the losses incurred during the first two months of the war.

	Regular Army	Garde Mobile
Casualties in August	40,000	
Captured at Sedan	110,000	
Enclosed in Metz ²	170,000	
Enclosed in Paris	<u>80,000</u>	<u>110,000</u>
Total	400,000	110,000

Only five line infantry regiments remained in the field, all recently arrived from foreign stations.³ With respect to cavalry, only ten line regiments and part of a eleventh were available. This represented a total of about 20,000 trained soldiers in the field.⁴

Gambetta did not, however, lack for untrained manpower. The infantry depots continued to collect new troops, equip them and train them. There were still 91 operational depots which contained about 47,000 partially trained men.⁵ Along with the 20,000 soldiers already in the field, these 67,000 men formed a reasonably solid core for the new provincial republican armies.

On August 10, the government had called men aged 25 to 35 years to the colors, which added another 170,000 men to the depots over time. In addition, the conscription class of 1869 was called to duty in mid-August, and 80,000 more men began to fill the depots. Finally, the conscription class of 1870 was called on October 29 and added another 100,000 men to the depots.⁶ In total, Gambetta had approximately 250,000 army recruits available outside of Paris.

In addition to that, as described in Appendix D, 321 battalions of the Garde National Mobile (“Garde Mobile”) were forming as of September 4. Of these, 93 were sent to Paris, 25 were trapped in other besieged cities, and 203 were available to the republican armies outside of Paris. These were joined by 76 battalions formed later in the war, and contributed a total of 81 regiments (two to three battalions each) and 54 unregimented battalions to Gambetta’s armies.⁷ This represented about 250,000 men who would contribute significantly during the republican phase of the war.

Finally, the Garde Nationale, which was only intended for local defense, was mobilized by Gambetta on September 29. Unmarried men between the ages of 21 and 40 were formed into war companies of “mobilisées” and sent to eleven special training camps. However, their lack of training, equipment and leadership meant that they would not play an important role in the war.

Général de la Motte-Rouge arrived in Tours on September 14 to take command of the newly designated 15th Corps. Initial units included some light infantry battalions, the 12th Regiment of the Garde Mobile de la Nièvre, and the Reyau Cavalry Division from the regular army. The Germans had not yet penetrated as far as Orléans, so these troops were placed north of Orléans in a defensive posture. Meanwhile, additional 15th Corps units were being formed at Nevers, Bourges and Vierzon.

Ultimately, the infantry in the 15th Corps was constructed from four line infantry regiments and eight newly formed march infantry regiments. However, only two of its march regiments were formed from depot battalions that had been left in regimental depots after the July mobilization.⁸ As detailed in Appendix D, the Armée de Châlons and the Armée de Paris had previously absorbed 78 depot battalions and 12 were employed as garrisons, leaving only ten for the provincial armies.⁹ Even so, when a depot battalion was sent into the field, it left two companies behind in the depot to organize new recruits into additional companies. After all of the depot battalions had been mobilized, these additional companies were mobilized into new march regiments. In total, 66 new march regiments were created by Gambetta for his three provincial armies; most after all of the depot battalions had been fully deployed. Accordingly, 63 of the new march regiments were assembled from six to 25 companies drawn from many different depots.¹⁰ This lack of homogeneity degraded the combat worthiness of these regiments, and the acute shortage of officers was an impediment to their readiness.

The 16th Corps was formed during October, and was even less homogeneous than the 15th Corps. Its infantry included six march regiments and six Garde Mobile regiments.

The Initial actions North of Orléans

The 15th Corps was ready for action on October 7.¹¹ Two days earlier, the Reyau Cavalry Division had attacked the German 4th Cavalry Division north of Orléans and driven them back toward Fontainebleau. This alarmed the German high command, which detached an army group from the Paris siege on October 6. Bavarian General von der Tann was given command over his own I Bavarian Corps, the 22nd Division (XI Corps), and the 2nd and 4th Cavalry Divisions. This force of 28,000 men was ordered to move south and remove any French threats to the German army around Paris.

Both the French 15th Corps and the von der Tann Detachment began movements toward Orléans on October 7. Only a portion of the 15th Corps had reached positions north of Orléans when von der Tann attacked on October 10-11. The result was a French defeat. The disorganized French fell back south of the Loire River and the Germans occupied Orléans on October 11. French postal officials also vacated the city with the army, so the German fieldpost was the only operating postal system in Orléans. It handled some civilian mail, an example of which is shown in Figure 7-2.



Figure 7-2. October 19, 1870 letter from the I Bavarian Corps

This letter from a French civilian was datelined “15 8bre” and postmarked “K.BAYER FELDPPOST III” at the Bavarian 2nd Division’s Bureau III on October 19. It was censored per the blue “Königlich Preussische Commandantur/Orleans” straight-line marking. A Prussian exchange office debited France for one and 7/12 silbergroschen (equivalent to 20 centimes)¹² and the letter was received in Tours on January 6. The French government had vacated Tours on December 8, so the letter was forwarded to the new seat of government at Bordeaux, where no additional French postage was assessed. Very little mail is known from the von der Tann Detachment, which was in existence for only a month.

Fortunately for the French, von der Tann did not feel strong enough to pursue the 15th Corps beyond Orléans and settled into occupation there. Accordingly, the German 22nd Infantry Division and the 4th Cavalry Division were ordered back to Paris on October 17, but were instructed to eliminate French resistance southwest of Paris as they returned. Their most notable action was a small encounter at Châteaudun on October 18, where Count Lipowski’s Francs-Tireurs de Paris held off the 22nd Division for a day. Unfortunately for the city, the Germans burned it in reprisal after Lipowski left.

On November 6, von der Tann’s Detachment was enlarged and placed under the orders of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg. The 22nd Division and the 4th Cavalry Division were restored to the Detachment, which was also strengthened by the additions of the 17th Division (XIII Corps), the 5th Cavalry Division, and the 6th Cavalry Division. The Detachment was ordered to protect the area southwest of Paris between Chartres and Châteaudun. A small detachment was left in occupation of Orléans, and the 5th Cavalry Division was sent to cover the region west of Paris. The Mecklenburg Detachment’s order of battle is shown at the end of this chapter.

Meanwhile, the French used the much-needed month-long respite to re-organize and strengthen their forces south of the Loire River. On October 11, Général d'Aurelle de Paladines was placed in command of the 15th Corps and the still-forming 16th Corps, thus creating the Armée de la Loire. Its order of battle in mid-November is shown at the end of this chapter.

Figure 7-3 shows a letter addressed to the recently-formed Armée de la Loire.

Figure 7-3. October 29, 1870 letter from Paris to the Armée de la Loire



This unfranked letter was postmarked in besieged Paris on October 29. The military free frank for balloon letters had been revoked on September 27, so this letter was charged 30 centimes due¹³ by the rare rue de Strasbourg postmark with integral “30c.” It was carried out of Paris on the balloon *Fulton*, which left on November 2 and landed in unoccupied territory near Angers. The mail was processed at Angers on November 3, so this letter arrived in Tours on the next day. The addressee was an officer in the 6^e Régiment de Dragons in the 15th Corps’ Cavalry Division. Accordingly, the letter was forwarded out of the mails from Tours to the 6^e Régiment, which was covering the left flank of the army west of Orléans.

The Fieldpost Service for the Armée de la Loire

As Général d'Aurelle was re-organizing the 15th Corps and completing the formation of the 16th Corps during October, he instituted a fieldpost service for his army. Without access to the postal materials of the Armée du Rhin, new fieldpost markings had to be improvised. For the 15th Corps, these took the form of an undated two-line marking with “15^e CORPS D’ARMÉE” on the top line, and the particular bureau on the bottom line. Figure 7-4 shows an unusual example from the headquarters bureau.



Figure 7-4. September 30, 1870 letter from Paris via the 15th Corps’ HQ

This letter was posted in besieged Paris on September 30, 1870 and prepaid 20 centimes for transport by balloon out of Paris. It was carried by the *Louis Blanc*, which left on October 12 and landed in Belgium. Its mail was processed through Lille in the evening of October 12, so this letter reached eastern France on October 17. It was addressed to Captain Gustave de Boissieu at the depot for the 16^e Bataillon de Chasseurs at Besançon. The captain had mobilized with the battalion on July 19,¹⁴ and had been incorporated into the 2nd Division of the 1st Corps at Strasbourg. De Boissieu saw his first action on August 6 at Wörth, and retreated to the camp at Châlons as described in Chapter Three. Along with the rest of the 1st Corps, his battalion was incorporated into the Armée de Châlons, and was captured at Sedan on September 1. From this point forward, his experience was similar to many other soldiers. He refused to take an officer's parole at Sedan, and was being transported to a prison camp in Germany when he was able to make his escape on September 12. He travelled via Belgium to Paris, where he was unable to obtain a suitable position with the Armée de Paris. Accordingly, he left on September 15 to return to his depot at Besançon, where he was given a company command in the 5^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs in the 15th Corps' 2nd Division at Bourges. His unit was assigned defensive duties north of Orléans, and was heavily involved in defending against the German attack at Aydes on October 11. Captain de Boissieu was killed in action there, and the rest of his battalion fell back with the 15th Corps.

Since the captain was no longer at Besançon, the letter in Figure 7-4 was forwarded to Bourges on October 20. The Bourges post office delivered it to the nearby 15th Corps headquarters bureau, which applied its “15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE/QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL” fieldpost postmark, and forwarded the letter to de Boissieu's family home at Pont d'Ain with a cryptic note on the back, “Prisoner of war without wounds.”

This headquarters postmark was part of a family of two-line 15th Corps fieldpost markings. The other four types had different lower lines: “1^{RE} DIVISION” (known in black or red), “2^{ME} DIVISION” (in black), “3^{ME} DIVISION” (in red) and “DIVISION DE CAVALERIE” (in black). The fieldpost bureau listing for the Armée de la Loire is included in Appendix A. Figure 7-5 shows an example from the 2nd Division.

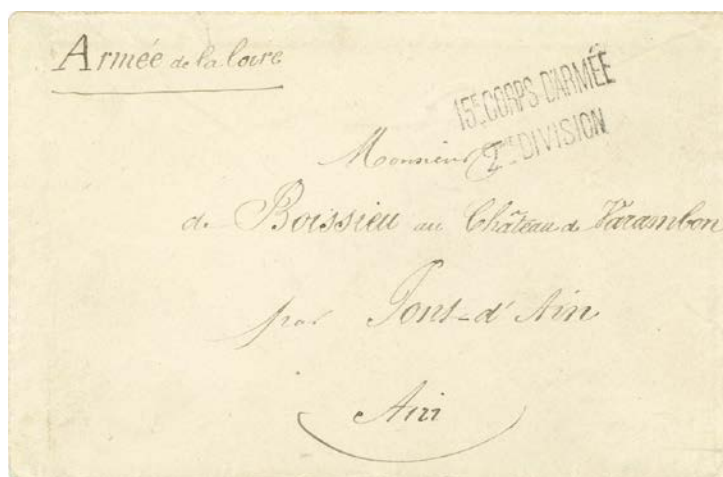


Figure 7-5. November 1870 letter from the 2nd Division of the 15th Corps

This letter was postmarked during the first week of November at the 2nd Division's fieldpost bureau, which applied its undated two-line “15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE/2^{ME} DIVISION” postmark. It was received by Captain de Boissieu's parents in Pont d'Ain on November 10.

The 16th Corps was also provided with a fieldpost service at this time. Their postal markings were quite different from those of the 15th Corps, and consisted of a family of undated circular markings with “16^E

CORPS” at the top and the bureau identification at the bottom, as described and illustrated in Appendix A. The 1st Division used “B.A,” the 2nd Division was assigned “B.B” and the 3rd Division employed “B.C.” The Cavalry Division used “B.D.” Figure 7-6 shows an example from the 1st Division’s Bureau A.



Figure 7-6. November 1870 letter from Bureau A of the 16th Corps’ 1st Division

This letter was written during the first week of November and postmarked at the 1st Division’s Bureau A, which was located west of Orléans. They applied their “16^E CORPS B.A” undated postmark, and routed it south to Bordeaux because of the presence of the Germans at Orléans. The letter followed a circuitous path via southern France to Lyon, where it arrived on November 4.

A Rare French Victory

At this time, the French were under considerable pressure to attack Orléans, since the formidable German II Army was marching toward the Loire following the October 27 surrender of Bazaine’s army at Metz. Figure 7-7 shows a detailed map of the region and the plan of attack.

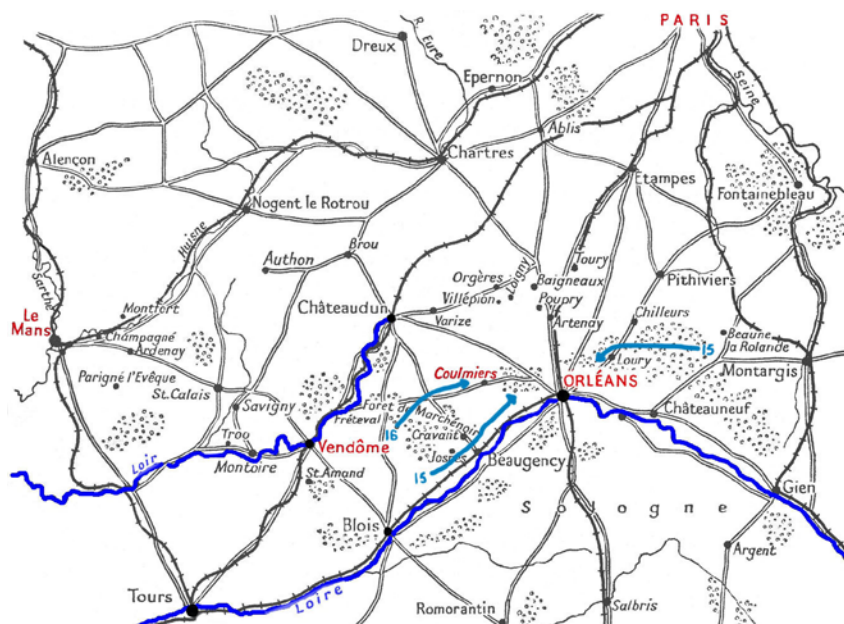


Figure 7-7. Map of the region around Orléans and the French attack¹⁵

The plan, shown in light blue arrows in Figure 7-7, was a pincer movement on Orléans, with 1st and 2nd Divisions of the 16th Corps attacking from the west through the Marchenoir forest, the 2nd and 3rd Divisions of the 15th Corps attacking from the southwest through Beaugency, and the 1st Division of the 15th Corps attacking from the northeast of Orléans. General von der Tann sensed this attack, however, and moved his I Bavarian Corps and 2nd Cavalry Division out of the trap at Orléans to Coulmiers. The advancing 16th Corps ran into his troops there on November 9. The result was a convincing French victory and the recapture of Orléans. Von der Tann retreated north to Toury to wait for reinforcements.



“Battle Scene from the Franco-Prussian War” by Wilfrid Beauquesne (1896)

The Armée de la Loire at Orléans from November 9 to December 4

News of the victory at Coulmiers lifted the morale of the French everywhere. As seen in Chapter Five, the news caused a change in the planned breakout of the Armée de Paris, with unfortunate results. Meanwhile, the Armée de la Loire spread out in defensive positions north of Orléans to await the arrival of the German II Army. The 15th Corps took positions between Chilleurs and Artenay, while the 16th Corps occupied the line between Coulmiers and the left flank of the 15th Corps.

The fieldpost bureaus also moved to the new locations. Meanwhile, the army headquarters fieldpost introduced a little-known two-ring circular postmark during this period, which is illustrated in Figure 7-8.



Figure 7-8. Nov. 1870
letter from the Army
Headquarters

This letter was endorsed “Franc-Tireur Girondin” (which was serving as a headquarters escort) and postmarked “ARMÉE DE LA LOIRE/TRÉSOR ET POSTES/G^d Quartier G^b” in late November. This postmark was applied at Saint Péréavy (north of Coulmiers on the Orléans-Châteaudun road) by payeur officers at the headquarters of the Armée de la Loire. The letter arrived in central France on December 3.

The straight-line 15th Corps fieldpost markings continued to be used during this period. They were normally marked in black, but a few were applied with red ink. Figure 7-9 shows a red 15th Corps postmark from the 3rd Division.

Figure 7-9. November 1870 letter from the 15th Corps’ 3rd Division



Written in late November¹⁶ by a soldier in the 69^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de l’Ariège, this letter was posted at the 3rd Division’s fieldpost bureau, which was located southwest of Artenay. They added their red straight-line “15^E CORPS D’ARMÉE/3^{ME} DIVISION” postmark, and sent the letter with a military free frank to southern France, where it arrived on December 1.

Figure 7-10 was posted at the 15th Corps Cavalry Division fieldpost bureau.



Figure 7-10. Letter from the 15th Corps’ Cavalry Division

This letter was endorsed “Armée de la Loire” and postmarked “15^E CORPS D’ARMÉE/DIVISION DE CAVALERIE,” which is the rarest of the 15th Corps postmarks. There is no Aurignac arrival postmark.

The 16th Corps' headquarters used a single-ring postmark with "16^E CORPS" at the top and "QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL" at the bottom. Figure 7-11 shows an example.

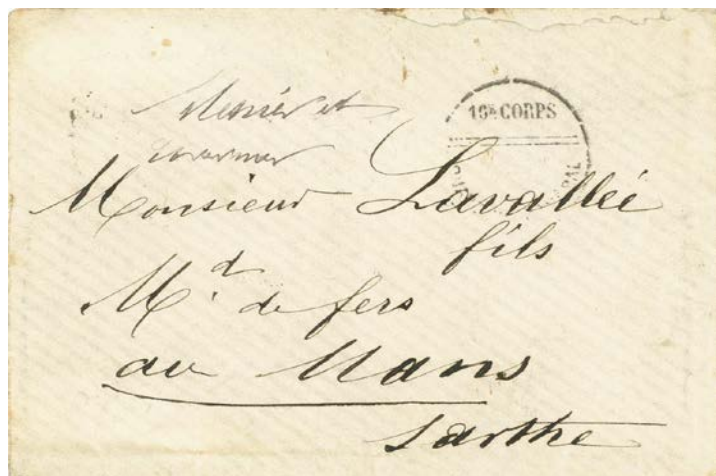


Figure 7-11. November 15, 1870 letter from the 16th Corps' HQ

This letter was datelined at St. Pérvay-la-Colombe (north of Coulmiers on the Orléans-Châteaudun road) on November 15 by a corporal in the 38^e Régiment de Marche in the 2nd Division of the 16th Corps. He reported that, "Tavernier and I were under fire at Colmier and we have no wounds. We fought from 8am to the night in true French fashion and we pushed the Prussians back...we took 10 cannon, 2 mitrailleuses and convoys of powder and food and took 600 prisoners. If the day had lasted one hour longer we would have captured them all." He took his letter to the headquarters bureau at St. Pérvay¹⁷ where it received the "16^E CORPS/QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL" postmark. It arrived in Le Mans on November 17.

The divisional 16th Corps fieldpost markings continued as before. Figure 7-12 shows an example from the Cavalry Division of the 16th Corps.

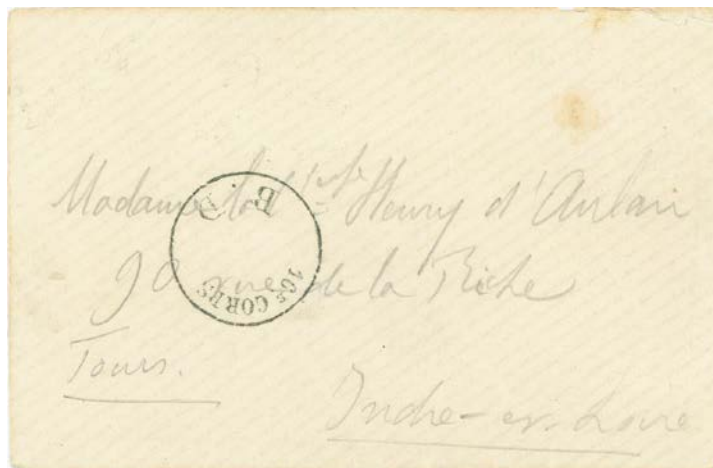


Figure 7-12. November 26, 1870 letter from Bureau D of the 16th Corps' Cavalry Division

Datelined "Samedi 26 nov," this unfranked letter was postmarked at the Cavalry Division's Bureau D, which was located at Coulemelle (north of Coulmiers on the Orléans-Châteaudun road).¹⁸ They applied their "16^E CORPS B.D" undated postmark and sent the letter to Tours on November 28.

The 17th Corps was formed around Beaugency, and was placed under Général d'Aurelle's command on November 13.¹⁹ At this time, initial units of the forming 18th and 21st Corps were also placed under d'Aurelle. These three corps were not provided with fieldpost services until later in the war.

The German Army Movements from November 9 to December 5

The French victory at Coulmiers prompted a strategic re-assessment by the German high command at Versailles. They encouraged the II Army to speed up its movement toward Orléans, and directed the Mecklenburg Detachment to push forward southwest of Paris. Accordingly, the Mecklenburg Detachment occupied Dreux on November 17 but discovered no significant organized French resistance in the region.²⁰ After detaching the 5th Cavalry Division to protect the west side of Paris, Mecklenburg began a movement toward Le Mans via Nogent-le-Rotrou. Just before that, the letter in Figure 7-13 was written.



Figure 7-13. November 14, 1870 letter from the German 17th Division

This letter was posted at the 17th Division's fieldpost bureau on November 14. It was marked with the blue "GR. HERZOG MECKLENB. FUSILIER REGIMENT N° 90 3. BATAILLON" private unit marking, and arrived in Rostock on November 21.

At this time, the 22nd Division became part of Mecklenburg's XIII Corps,²¹ and the re-constituted corps (17th and 22nd Divisions) led the advance on Nogent-le-Rotrou. The French "Armée de l'Ouest," consisting of about 17,000 gardes mobiles, took a defensive position northeast of Nogent, but retreated toward Alençon on November 21.²² This opened the way to Le Mans and Tours, causing further alarm to the Tours-based Government of National Defense. On November 22, they ordered the newly-formed 17th Corps to Châteaudun,²³ and intensified the planning for an attack on Beaune-la-Rolande (northeast of Orléans) to divert Mecklenburg from his advance toward Tours. To strengthen that attack, they moved the new 20th Corps by rail from the East to a position southeast of Orléans on November 19.²⁴ The appearance of these French reinforcements caused the German high command to re-direct the Mecklenburg Detachment from Le Mans to Orléans, in support of the II Army. Mecklenburg accordingly changed the direction of his march toward Châteaudun on November 24, and was placed under the orders of the II Army on the following day.²⁵ Figure 7-14 shows a XIII Corps fieldpost card sent at this time.



Figure 7-14. Nov. 28, 1870 card from the XIII Corps

Dateline at Authon (south of Nogent-le-Rotrou) on November 25, this fieldpost card was postmarked at the XIII Corps' fieldpost bureau on November 28. It was written by a soldier in the 83rd Infantry Regiment of the 22nd Division, and arrived in Gemunden on December 5.

The III Corps, IX Corps and X Corps of the II Army reached a line northeast of Orléans on November 22, and held their positions there. Figure 7-15 shows the German and French army positions.

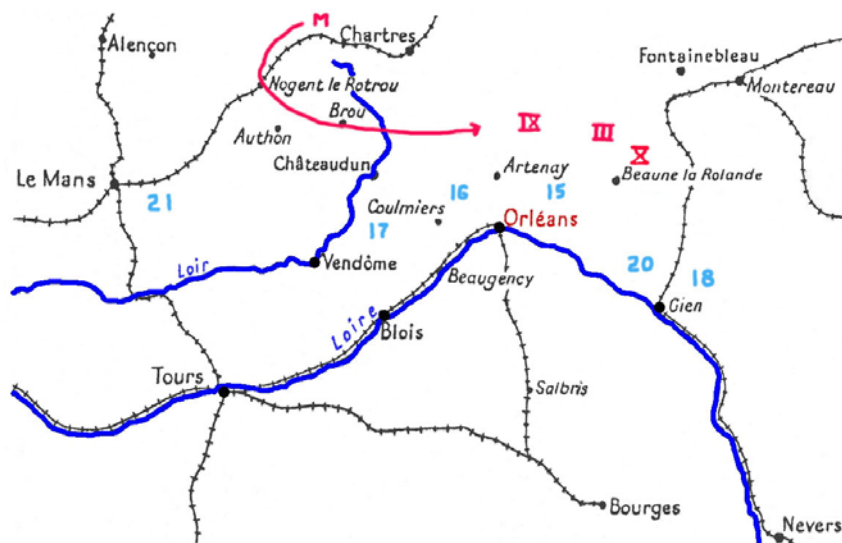


Figure 7-15. German (red) and French (light blue) armies around Orléans in late November

German corps positions are designated by red roman numerals, and the red "M" shows the re-direction of the Mecklenburg Detachment. The French defensive positions are indicated by light blue numbers.

Figure 7-16 shows a III Corps letter mailed at this time.



Figure 7-16. November 21, 1870 letter from the German 6th Division

This letter was posted on November 21 at the 6th Division's fieldpost bureau near Pithiviers. It was marked with the 24th Infantry Regiment's blue "KONIGL. PREUSS. 4T^{ES} BRANDENB. INFTER. REGMT. N° 24 (GROSSHERZOG v. MECKLENB. SCHW.)" private unit marking.

On November 28, the French 20th and 18th Corps launched their diversionary attack on the X Corps at Beaune-la-Rolande. Despite a strong effort, the French were unable to dislodge the Germans, so they retreated toward Gien.²⁶ Just after this, the Government of National Defense learned that the Parisian 2nd Army breakout was scheduled for November 29, so the Armée de la Loire was ordered to advance and link up with the Paris army. Accordingly, the 16th Corps attacked the Mecklenburg Detachment on December 1-2 at Villepion and Loigny (northwest of Artenay), but were repulsed after initial gains.²⁷



"Bataille de Loigny" by Charles Castellani (1879)

The Mecklenburg Detachment linked up with the IX Corps northwest of Artenay on November 29,²⁸ so the II Army was ready for its attack on Orléans. On December 3, the IX Corps and the Mecklenburg Detachment advanced down the Artenay-Orléans road, while the III Corps attacked from the northeast.²⁹ The next day, the French right wing retreated in great disorder south of the Loire River, while the left wing retreated compactly to the Marchenoir forest. Figure 7-17³⁰ shows the results of the German attack.

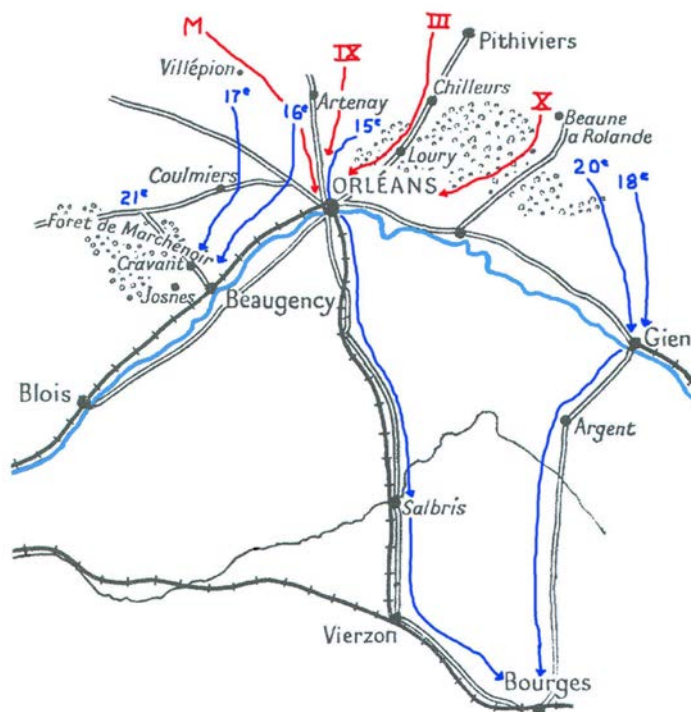


Figure 7-17. German (red) attack on French (dark blue) positions on December 3-4

The Armée de la Loire was divided in two by the German attack. The 15th, 18th and 20th Corps retreated southeast to Bourges to re-group and re-fit, while the 16th and 17th Corps retreated to a defensive line southwest of Orléans. The II Army occupied Orléans on December 5, and made new arrangements to pursue the French.³¹ After a rest of two days, the Mecklenburg Detachment was to advance toward Beaugency, supported by the IX Corps movement along the south bank of the Loire toward Blois. The III Corps was to advance east from Orléans while the X Corps remained at Orléans. The 6th Cavalry Division was assigned the task of pursuing the retreating 15th Corps to Salbris and Vierzon.

The Formation of the 2^e Armée de la Loire

On December 6, Gambetta relieved Général d'Aurelle of his command, and divided the Armée de la Loire into two armies. The 15th Corps, 18th Corps and 20th Corps were placed under the command of Général Bourbaki at Bourges. These troops became known as the 1^e Armée (described in Chapter Nine), and played no further role in the campaign along the Loire River.

Général Chanzy was placed in command of the 2^e Armée de la Loire, which initially consisted of the 16th Corps, 17th Corps, 21st Corps and the Camô Division. Its order of battle is shown at the end of this chapter.

The 17th Corps was not provided with dedicated fieldpost services until much later in the war. Before that, only private unit cachets were used, as shown in Figure 7-18.

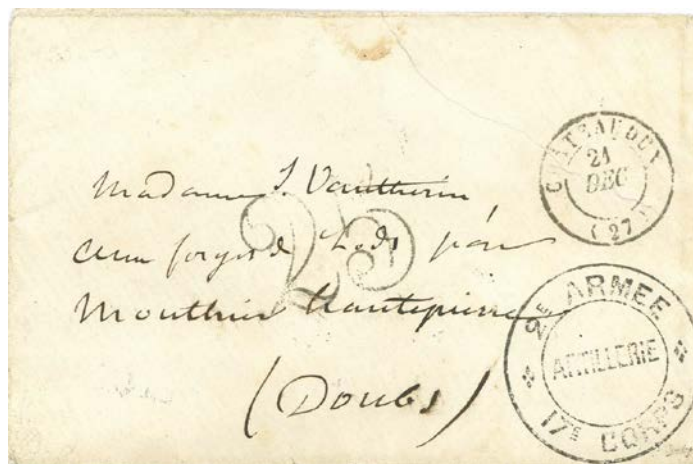


Figure 7-18. December 21, 1870 letter from the 17th Corps

Endorsed with a private “2^E ARMEE/ARTILLERIE/17^E CORPS” marking, this letter was posted at Châteaudun on December 21. Although eligible for a military free frank, it was rated for 25 centimes due, and arrived in eastern France on December 23.

The 21st Corps had its origins in two formations known as the “Armée de l’Ouest” and the “Armée de Bretagne.” On October 14, Count Émile de Kératry stepped down as Prefect of Police in the Government of National Defense at Paris, and left in the balloon *Godefroy Cavaignac*.³² As an ardent republican and former colleague, he convinced Gambetta to form a new republican army that would not be tainted by the imperial residue of the regular army. On October 22, Gambetta decreed that Général de Kératry was to form the Armée de Bretagne at Le Mans, with troops drawn from Gardes Nationales Mobilisées in Brittany.³³ This overlapped with the activities of Général Fiéreck, who had already assembled about 17,000 men into the Armée de l’Ouest at Le Mans. The order of battle for the Armée de l’Ouest is shown at the end of this chapter.

On November 24, most of the Armée de l’Ouest was absorbed into the 21st Corps,³⁴ so the 21st Corps headquarters used an undated 2-ring “ARMEE DE L’OUEST” fieldpost postmark. Figure 7-19 shows an unusual letter with that postmark.



Figure 7-19. December 1870 letter from the Armée de l’Ouest

This letter was endorsed from the “Légion des Volontaires de l’Ouest” and posted at the 21st Corps’ headquarters bureau near Vendôme. The Volontaires de l’Ouest, formerly the Papal Zouaves guarding the Pope in Rome,³⁵ formed part of the 21st Corps reserve and were used as a headquarters escort. Unnecessarily franked with 20 centimes postage,³⁶ this letter arrived in Nantes on December 19.

To avoid conflict with Général Fiéreck, Général de Kératry moved to the Conlie camp (northeast of Le Mans), but the 14,000 troops assembled by him there were absorbed into the 4th Division of the 21st Corps on November 24.³⁷ They had a dedicated payeur officer, who used a special “ARMÉE DE BRETAGNE PAYEUR” fieldpost marking. Figure 7-20 shows an example.



Figure 7-20. Dec. 1870
letter from the Armée
de Bretagne

Posted at the Armée de Bretagne fieldpost bureau near Le Mans, this letter was granted a free frank per the black “P.P.” postmark. It arrived in nearby Rennes on December 8.

The Movements of the Armies from December 7 to January 28

On December 7, the Mecklenburg Detachment began its westward advance from Orléans toward Blois, and ran into unexpectedly strong resistance from the 2^e Armée de la Loire between the Marchenoir forest and Beaugency. This began a brutal series of battles on December 7-9, during which the 2^e Armée de la Loire held its position and exhausted the I Bavarian Corps.³⁸ During this period, the Government of National Defense evacuated nearby Tours on December 8 and moved the government to Bordeaux.

The German high command moved the 13th Division (VII Corps) from Metz to Châtillon (northeast of Auxerre) on December 13 to help contain any threat from Bourbaki’s army at Bourges.³⁹ This freed the II Army to concentrate on the destruction of Chanzy’s 2^e Armée.⁴⁰ Accordingly, Prince Frederick-Charles accelerated the IX Corps’ advance along the south bank of the Loire, hoping to turn Chanzy’s right flank at Blois. In addition, the depleted I Bavarian Corps took over the garrison duties at Orléans on December 12, freeing both the III and X Corps to pursue Chanzy along the north bank of the Loire.⁴¹ Figure 7-21 shows a fieldpost card posted at the II Army headquarters at this time.



Figure 7-21. Dec. 10, 1870 card from the II Army's headquarters

Dated east of Orléans on December 9 by a soldier in the 79th Regiment of the X Corps, this fieldpost card was posted on the next day at the II Army's fieldpost bureau. It arrived in Dresden on December 16.

Chanzy did not wait for the German attack. With the prospect of being flanked by the IX Corps, he pulled out of his defensive positions on December 11 and retreated behind the Loir River at Vendôme.⁴² The German III Corps, X Corps and XIII Corps followed closely and engaged the 2^e Armée at Vendôme on December 15. The French right wing was forced to fall back during that battle, so the entire army retreated in great disorder to Le Mans, where they arrived on December 21.⁴³



“Combat sur la Voie Ferrée (Armée de la Loire)” by Alphonse de Neuville (1874)

The III Corps and IX Corps returned to Orléans on December 18, leaving only the X Corps and the 1st Cavalry Division to observe Chanzy's shattered army from Vendôme and Blois.⁴⁴ A day later, the Mecklenburg Detachment (except for the I Bavarian Corps, which remained at Orléans) was ordered to Chartres, where they arrived on December 24 and came again under the orders of the III Army.⁴⁵

This dispersal of the II Army provided a welcome respite for Chanzy's forces at Le Mans, where they took the time to rest, re-fit and re-organize. The 16th Corps fieldpost bureaus had retreated with the army and continued to use the postal materials supplied in October. Figure 7-22 shows a remarkable example.



Figure 7-22. January 2, 1871 letter from Bureau D of the 16th Corps' Cavalry Division

This letter was sent by Lieutenant-Colonel Dijon, commander of the 2^e Régiment de Cavalerie Mixte at Le Mans. Addressed to Great Britain, it required 30 centimes postage,⁴⁶ which was cancelled by the Cavalry Division's "16^E CORPS B. D" postmark on January 2. It also received a blue "P.P." marking, and reached Jersey on January 11.

Chanzy's respite came to an end on January 1, when the German high command ordered the III Corps, X Corps and XIII Corps, along with the 18th Infantry Division (IX Corps) and the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 6th Cavalry Divisions to advance on the 2^e Armée de la Loire at Le Mans.⁴⁷ To protect the rear of the II Army during this operation, the 25th Infantry Division (IX Corps) was left at Orléans, and the II Corps was moved from the Paris siege line to Montargis (east of Orléans).⁴⁸ At this time, the Mecklenburg Detachment again came under the orders of the II Army. The II Corps was also under the orders of the II Army until they were detached to the Sud Army (described in Chapter Nine) on January 11.⁴⁹

Chanzy took note of the renewed German offensive and concentrated his forces around Le Mans in strong defensive positions. To reinforce them, he called 6,700 Gardes Nationales Mobilisées under Général Le Bouëdec⁵⁰ from Conlie camp and placed them in the defensive line.⁵¹

The Germans attacked Le Mans on January 11-12, but the French initially held stubbornly to their positions. Finally, an attack directed at Le Bouëdec's mobilisées broke the line, and the 2^e Armée was forced to retreat west to Laval, where they arrived on January 17. The III Corps and X Corps, along with the 2nd and 6th Cavalry Divisions, occupied Le Mans, and stayed there to observe the 2^e Armée de la Loire.

Figure 7-23 shows a fieldpost card from the III Corps at Le Mans. Datelined "Le Mans 12.1.71" this fieldpost card was postmarked at the III Corps fieldpost bureau on January 13. The postmark was struck unusually in green, and the card arrived in Lüneburg on January 23.



Figure 7-23. Jan. 13, 1871 postcard from the III Corps

On January 19, Mecklenburg's XIII Corps was again detached from the II Army, and was sent from Alençon (north of Le Mans) to Rouen⁵² to reinforce the I Army in the north of France (described in Chapter Eight). The German 4th Cavalry Division stayed behind to occupy Alençon. Figure 7-24 shows a French civilian letter posted at that fieldpost bureau.



Figure 7-24. February 3, 1871 letter from the 4th Cavalry Division

Dated on February 3 at Alençon, this French civilian's letter was postmarked "K:PR:FELD-POST-EXP:D: AVANTGARDE 5. ARMEE-CPS" at the 4th Cavalry Division's fieldpost bureau on February 4. Addressed to Paris, it was franked with 20 centimes postage and endorsed "par Versailles." A manuscript censor's note on the back identifies the German army unit as the "Thuring. Ulanen Regt. Nr. 6." The letter arrived in Paris on February 7, where 20 centimes postage due was assessed.

The 2^e Armée de la Loire once again re-organized and re-fitted for further resistance at Laval. The newly-formed 19th Corps was moved from Cherbourg to strengthen Chanzy's northern flank, and the 1st Division of the 17th Corps was transferred to the depleted 16th Corps. Finally, the newly-formed 1st Division of the 25th Corps advanced from Vierzon to Clamecy on January 28, and its 2nd Division attacked Blois.⁵³

The 19th Corps was provided with a fieldpost service during this period. They used a black or blue boxed two-line “POSTES/19^E CORPS” postmark, as shown in Figure 7-25.⁵⁴

**Figure 7-25. January 1871
letter from the 19th Corps**



This registered letter was prepaid the required 60 centimes⁵⁵ and postmarked at the 19th Corps fieldpost bureau near Laval, although the postmark on the envelope was retouched later.⁵⁶ It was forwarded west from Laval to avoid the Germans at Le Mans, and received a January 29 “Paris a Granville” railroad transit marking. It then followed a circuitous path to eastern France.

During the retreat from Le Mans to Laval, the fieldpost bureau for the headquarters of the 16th Corps evidently lost its postal materials, since it began using a new two-line postmark that reads “POSTES. – 16^e CORPS./Quartier-Général.” Figure 7-26 shows an example.



**Figure 7-26. January 25,
1871 letter from the 16th
Corps' headquarters**

Sent by Lt.-Colonel Dijon (Figure 7-22 is also from this correspondence), this letter was prepaid the required 30 centimes postage⁵⁷ to Great Britain and postmarked on January 25 at the headquarters' fieldpost bureau. That bureau did not cancel the stamps, so they were cancelled in transit by Laval's “1987” lozenge of dots. The letter arrived in Jersey on February 1.

The headquarters of the 21st Corps continued to use the “ARMÉE DE L'OUEST” postmark at Laval. Figure 7-27 shows an example. This letter was handstamped with the blue “21^E Corps d'Armée Le Général Commandant” private cachet of the 21st Corps commander, Admiral Jaurès. It was then postmarked “ARMÉE DE L'OUEST” at the headquarters' bureau near Laval, and was received in Bordeaux on January 27.



Figure 7-27. January 1871
letter from the 21st Corps

Paris surrendered on January 28 and signed a 21-day armistice. News of this was received at Laval on January 29, and hostilities in the region ceased at noon on January 31.

The Movements of the French Armies during the Armistice, January 29 to March 7

While at Laval, Chanzy re-organized his army, and distributed his 150,000 men into four army corps as of January 29.⁵⁸ He could also count on 85,000 mobilisées from Brittany and the new 25th and 26th Corps south of the Loire River. His was the only remaining viable French army, so it needed to be in a strong defensive position should the armistice not turn into a lasting peace.⁵⁹ On February 11, he ordered the bulk of his army to move south of the Loire River, and left the new “2^e Armée de Bretagne” under Général de Colomb in defensive positions at Laval.⁶⁰ The movements of the 2^e Armée de la Loire are summarized below.

2 ^e Armée de la Loire	Old Position	New Position	Notes
Headquarters	Laval	Poitiers	Arrived February 19
16 th Corps	Laval	south of Tours	Arrived February 20
17 th Corps 1 st Division	Laval	south of Tours	Absorbed by 16 th Corps
19 th Corps 1 st Division	south of Falaise	west of Tours	Arrived February 23
19 th Corps 2 nd Division	south of Falaise	west of Tours	Arrived February 23
19 th Corps Cavalry Division	south of Falaise	west of Tours	Arrived February 23
21 st Corps 1 st Division	north of Laval	southwest of Tours	Arrived February 22
21 st Corps 2 nd Division	north of Laval	southwest of Tours	Arrived February 22
21 st Corps 3 rd Division	north of Laval	southwest of Tours	Arrived February 22
25 th Corps 1 st Division	Vierzon	south of Vierzon	
25 th Corps 2 nd Division	Vierzon	south of Vierzon	
26 th Corps	Poitiers	northeast of Poitiers	Still forming

Three divisions of the 17th Corps, the 3rd Division of the 19th Corps and the 4th Division of the 21st Corps were transferred from the 2^e Armée de la Loire to the 2^e Armée de Bretagne. The rest of that army consisted mostly of untrained mobilisées, but its forces were considered sufficient to prevent any German incursions into Brittany or Normandy. They were reinforced on February 26 by the 22nd Corps, which was transferred from the Armée du Nord to a position southwest of Caen.⁶¹ Figure 7-28 illustrates the new French army positions.⁶²

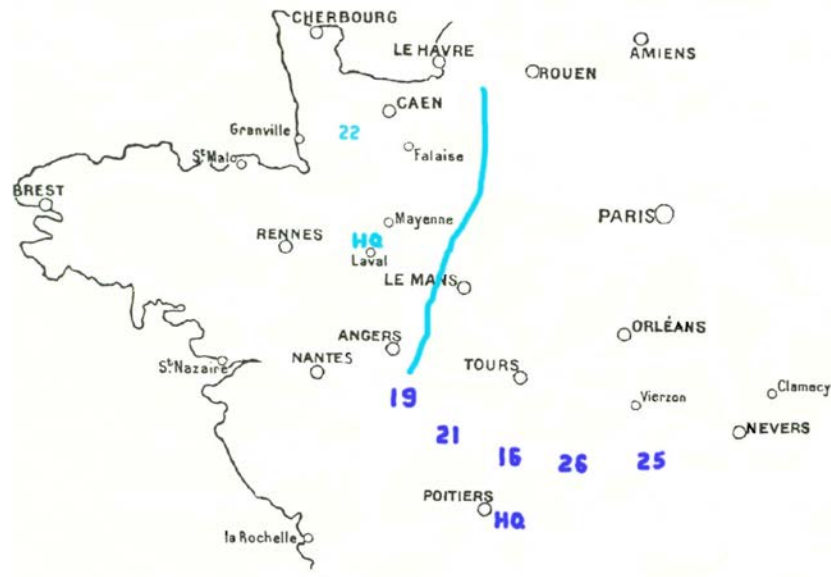


Figure 7-28. 2^e Armée de Bretagne (light blue) and 2^e Armée de la Loire (blue)
February 19-26 positions

The table below describes the positions of the 2^e Armée de Bretagne in mid-February.

2 ^e Armée de Bretagne	Position
Headquarters	Laval
17 th Corps 2 nd Division	Laval
17 th Corps 3 rd Division	Laval
17 th Corps Cavalry Division	Laval
19 th Corps 3 rd Division	east of Caen
21 st Corps 4 th Division	southeast of Falaise
22 nd Corps	southwest of Caen
Corps Cathelineau	south of Laval
Corps de Charette	north of Laval
Corps Lipowski	east of Caen

The French army introduced uniform fieldpost markings at the beginning of the armistice period. The 2^e Armée de Bretagne was not provided with fieldpost markings, except for the 17th and 22nd Corps, which retained postmarks already in use. These new postmarks were provided to the 16th, 17th, 19th, 21st and 25th Corps. The fieldpost bureau for the headquarters of the 2^e Armée de la Loire was also provided with a new postmark.

These markings, which are illustrated and listed in Appendix A, consisted of undated two-ring postmarks with the army or corps designation at the top and the divisional identification at the bottom. Generally, “POSTES” appears in the middle of the postmark.

Figure 7-29 shows a remarkable example from the 2^e Armée headquarters bureau.



Figure 7-29. March 1871 letter from the HQ of the 2^e Armée

Struck with a blue “2^e Armée de la Loire Etat-Major General” private cachet, this letter was postmarked “2^e ARMÉE/POSTES/GRAND QUARTIER G^{AL}” in early March at the headquarters bureau in Poitiers. It was franked 20 centimes⁶³ for the postage to Bordeaux, where it arrived on March 6.

Figure 7-30 shows an example from the 16th Corps.



Figure 7-30. February 1871 letter from the 16^e Corps' 3^e Division

This letter was postmarked at the fieldpost bureau for the 3rd Division south of Tours. It arrived in eastern France on February 22.

The 1st Division of the 17th Corps was transferred to the severely-depleted 16th Corps on February 11, and then moved with the rest of the 16th Corps to the new defensive positions south of the Loire River. The 1st Division payeur also moved to the 16th Corps, but continued to use his 17th Corps postal materials.

Figure 7-31 shows an unusual letter posted at the fieldpost bureau for the 1st Division of the 17th Corps during the armistice period.

Figure 7-31. February 1871 letter from the 17^e Corps' 1^e Division



This letter was franked with the required 50 centimes postage⁶⁴ to Rome, and posted at the 1st Division's fieldpost bureau as it was leaving Laval for a new position south of Tours. The letter arrived in Rome on February 15.

The 2nd, 3rd and Cavalry Divisions of the 17th Corps stayed with the 2^e Armée de Bretagne at Laval. They continued to use the fieldpost materials that had been supplied at the beginning of February. Figure 7-32 illustrates a March 5 letter from the 2nd Division.

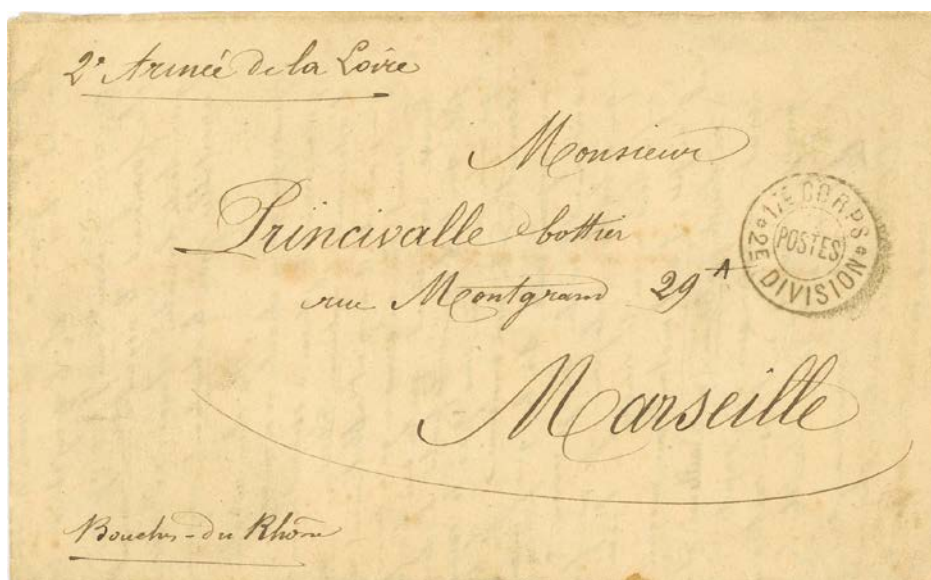


Figure 7-32. March 5, 1871 letter from the 17^e Corps' 2^e Division

Datelined at Laval on March 5, this letter was posted at the 2nd Division's fieldpost bureau. It has no Marseille arrival markings.

The 19th Corps' 1st and 2nd Infantry Divisions were transferred on February 16 from Normandy to new defensive positions south of the Loire River, where they arrived around February 23. Figure 7-33 shows a registered letter sent from the 1st Division in their new position.

Figure 7-33. March 1871 letter from the 19^e Corps' 1^e Division



Prepaid the required 60 centimes for the double-weight class,⁶⁵ this registered letter was postmarked at the 1st Division's fieldpost bureau southwest of Tours. It was processed through nearby Thouars on March 3, and was received in Lyon on March 6.

The 3rd Division of the 19th Corps, which was located east of Caen, was transferred to the 2^e Armée de Bretagne, and apparently did not receive the new style of fieldpost markings. Figure 7-34 shows a letter from that division.

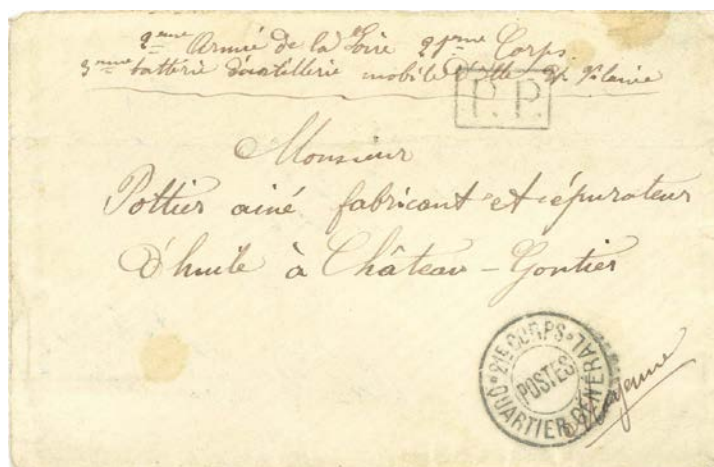


Figure 7-34. February 18, 1871 letter from the 19^e Corps' 3^e Division

In conformity with the July 1870 military free frank law, the 3rd Division's military postmaster took this letter to the nearby Mézidon post office on February 18, where it was posted with a military free frank. The sender added a blue "19^{ème} Corps 3^{ème} Division 1^{ère} Brigade" handstamp to justify the free frank. The letter arrived in nearby Caen on February 19.

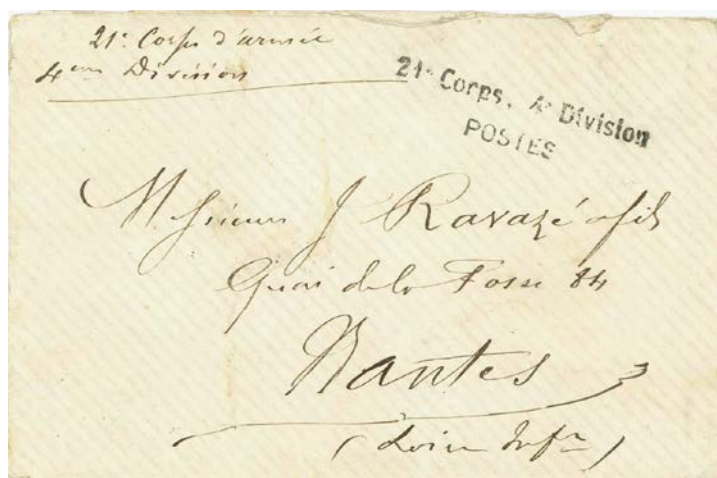
Four of the five 21st Corps divisions were also transferred south of the Loire, where they arrived around February 22. Figure 7-35 illustrates a letter from the headquarters' fieldpost bureau.

**Figure 7-35. February 1871
letter from the 21^e Corps**



This letter was endorsed from the 21st Corps and postmarked at the headquarters bureau. It was unusually marked with a “P.P.” to indicate a military free frank.

The 4th Infantry Division of the 21st Corps was left in Normandy to strengthen the line of defense there. As a part of the 2^e Armée de Bretagne, it was apparently not provided with the new type of uniform fieldpost marking, so the payeur improvised with a straight-line marking, as shown in Figure 7-36.



**Figure 7-36. February
1871 letter from the 21^e
Corps' 4^e Division**

Endorsed from the “21^e Corps d’armée 4^{me} Division,” this letter was postmarked with the straight-line “21^e Corps, 4^e Division/POSTES” near Falaise. It arrived in Nantes on February 13.

The 25th Corps was formed in January around Vierzon and had just begun military operations when the armistice was signed. During the armistice period, they used blue two-ring fieldpost postmarks which do not include “POSTES” at the center.

Figure 7-37 shows an example from the 2nd Division. Datelined at Mehun (southeast of Vierzon) on February 7, this letter from a soldier in the 7^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied was postmarked “*25^E CORPS D’ARMÉE * 2^E DIVISION” at the 2nd Division’s fieldpost bureau. His letter arrived in central France on February 9.



Figure 7-37. February 7, 1871 letter from the 25^e Corps' 2^e Division

The 22nd Corps was transferred from the Armée du Nord at Cambrai to strengthen the northern flank of the 2^e Armée de Bretagne's defensive line west of Caen on February 26. They brought the fieldpost markings that they had been using with the Armée du Nord since the beginning of February. The 2nd Division's postmark consisted on an undated blue two-ring postmark with "22^E CORPS" at the top, "2^E DIVISION" at the bottom and "POSTES" in the center. They also used a blue "P.P." marking to designate the military free frank. Figure 7-38 shows a letter from that unit.

Figure 7-38. March 1871 letter from the 22^e Corps' 2^e Division



This letter was endorsed from the "1^{er} Bat^{on} de Chasseurs a pied" and postmarked at the 2nd Division's fieldpost bureau southwest of Caen. It arrived in Normandy on March 3.

The Lipowski Corps of the 2^e Armée de Bretagne was not provided with fieldpost materials. A crude "INCONNU/LIPOWSKI" straight-line marking was used on mail whose addressee could not be found. Figure 7-39 illustrates the only known example of this marking. This letter was posted in German-occupied Rouen, and received the red provisional "ROUEN *1871*" occupation postmark. It was addressed to a soldier in the Chasseurs du Havre at Beuzeville in Normandy. In a futile search for the addressee, the post office sent it to Beuvron-en-Auge (east of Caen) on February 22 where it was marked "INCONNU LIPOWSKI", and then to St. Hilaire-du-Harcouët (near Avranches) on March 12. At St. Hilaire, it was marked "RETOUR A L'ENVOYEUR 3661" (St Hilaire's return to sender marking). It was finally re-addressed to Rouen with the blue manuscript note "Corps licencié" (corps disbanded), since the preliminary peace had necessitated the dissolution of the Lipowski Corps on March 7. The letter was finally returned to Rouen on March 22.



Figure 7-39. February 1871 letter addressed to the Lipowski Corps

The Movements of the German Army during the Armistice, January 29 to March 7

The Germans also re-positioned their forces during the armistice. The V Corps was detached on February 9 from the Paris siege and was sent to Orléans, where they relieved the IX Corps. The IX Corps then moved to the region between Blois and Vendôme, while keeping contact with the X Corps at Tours.⁶⁶ The IV Corps was also detached from Paris on February 9 and sent to Nogent-le-Rotrou, where it reinforced the II Army's northern flank.⁶⁷ The III Corps and the 2nd Cavalry Division remained at Le Mans, connecting on the left with the X Corps and on the right with the IV Corps and 4th Cavalry Division.

Figure 7-40 shows a fieldpost card sent from the X Corps during the armistice period.



Figure 7-40. Feb. 6, 1871 card from the X Corps

Dated “Tours Februar 1871,” this card was posted at the X Corps fieldpost bureau on February 6. It was addressed locally to the 20th Division of the X Corps.

The End of the Campaign along the Loire

Ratifications for a preliminary peace treaty were exchanged on March 2, ending the armistice. A March 4 military convention prescribed the withdrawal of the II Army to new positions north of the Seine River. The five corps staggered their marches, so as to not interfere with the other corps. The IV Corps and 4th Cavalry Division were detached from the II Army and returned to the Paris siege. The III Corps and the 2nd Cavalry Division left Le Mans and crossed to Nogent-s-Seine. The IX Corps and 6th Cavalry Division passed through Orléans and, along with the V Corps, crossed the Seine near Troyes. The X Corps and the 1st Cavalry Division had the furthest to travel. They moved south of Orléans and crossed southeast of Troyes at Châtillon-s-Seine on March 31.⁶⁸ Figure 7-41 shows the withdrawal of the II Army.

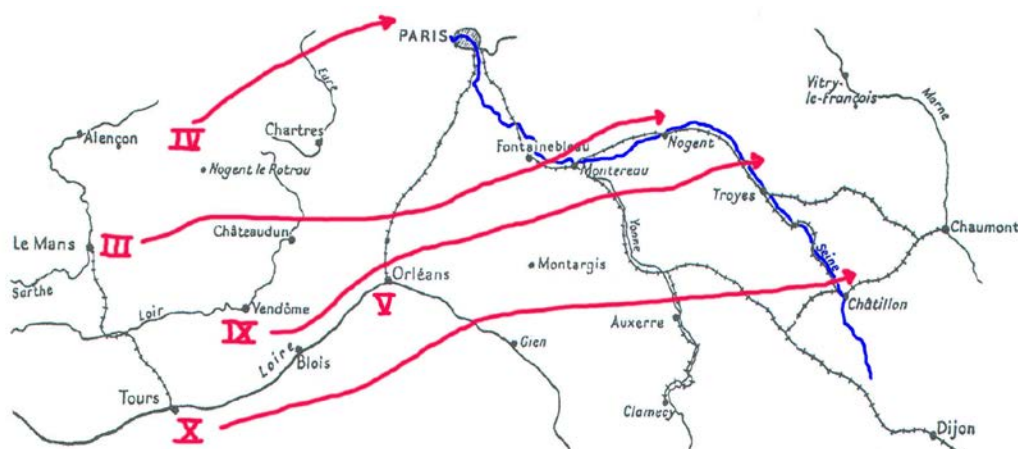


Figure 7-41. Map of the German Withdrawal from the Loire

On March 7, the 2^e Armée de la Loire and the 2^e Armée de Bretagne were dissolved,⁶⁹ ending the campaign along the Loire.



“Bataille du Mans-Champagné 11 Janvier 1871” by G. Koch

The Orders of Battle Referenced in this Chapter

Armée de la Loire mid-November Order of Battle⁷⁰

Commandant: Général d'Aurelle de Paladines

15^e Corps d'Armée (Général Martin des Pallières)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général de Chabron)

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Minot)

5^e Bataillon du 2^e Régiment de Marche d'Infanterie de Marine (Cmdt. Laurent)

38^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Lt. Colonel Courtot)

1^{er} Régiment de Zouaves de Marche (Lt. Colonel Chaulan)

12^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Nièvre (Lt. Colonel de Bourgoing)

1^{er} Bataillon de Mobiles de la Savoie (Commandant de Costa de Beauregard)

2^e Brigade (Lt. Colonel Choppin-Merey)

4^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant de Sicco)

Régiment de Marche de Tirailleurs Algériens (Lt. Colonel Capdepon)

29^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Carré)

18^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Charente (Lt. Colonel d'Angelys)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Martineau des Chenez)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Dariès)

5^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Chamard Boudet)

39^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de Jouffroy d'Abbans)

Légion Étrangère (Colonel de Curten)

25^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Gironde (Lt. Colonel d'Artigolles)

2^e Brigade (Général Rébillard)

2^e Régiment de Zouaves de Marche (Lt. Colonel Logerot)

30^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel de Bernard de Seigneurens)

29^e Régiment de Mobiles du Maine-et-Loire (Lt. Colonel de Paillot)

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Peytavin)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Bressolles)

6^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Regain)

16^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Colonel de la Cottière)

33^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Thiéry)

32^e Régiment de Mobiles du Puy-de-Dôme (Lt. Colonel de Mollens)

2^e Brigade (Général Martinez)

27^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Peregallo)

34^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Mesny)

69^e Régiment de Mobiles de l'Ariège (Lt. Colonel Acloque)

Division de Cavalerie (Général Reyau)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Galand de Longerue)

6^e Régiment de Dragons (Colonel Fombert de Villers)

6^e Régiment de Hussards (Lt. Colonel Polinière)

11^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel de Baillencourt)

2^e Brigade (Général de Boério)

2^e Régiment de Lanciers (Chef d'Escadron de Sonis)

5^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel Gayraud)

3^e Régiment de Marche de Dragons (Lt. Colonel d'Audiffred)

3^e Brigade (Général Tillion)

1^{er} Régiment de Marche de Chasseurs (Colonel Rouher)

9^e Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel de Vouges de Chanteclair)

1^{er} Régiment de Marche de Cuirassiers (Colonel Renusson d'Hauteville)

Armée de la Loire mid-November Order of Battle (continued)

16^e Corps d'Armée (Général Chanzy)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Amiral Jauréguiberry)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Bourdillon)

3^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Labrune)

39^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Pereira)

75^e Régiment de Mobiles du Loir-et-Cher/Maine-et-Loire (Lt. Col. De Villardi de Montlaur)

2^e Brigade (Général Deplanque)

37^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Mallat)

33^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Sarthe (Lt. Colonel de la Touanne)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Barry)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Desmaisons)

7^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Gallimard)

31^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Couderc de Fonlongue)

22^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Dordogne (Lt. Colonel de Chadois)

2^e Brigade (Colonel Bérard)

38^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Baille)

66^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Mayenne (Lt. Colonel de la Charce)

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Maurandy)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Maurandy)

8^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Bertrand)

36^e Régiment de Marche (Colonel Marty)

8^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Charente-Inférieure (Lt. Colonel Vast-Vimeux)

2^e Brigade (Général Séatelli)

40^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Bonnet)

71^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Haute Vienne (Lt. Colonel Pinelli)

Division de Cavalerie (Général Michel)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Tripart)

1^{er} Régiment de Marche de Hussards (Lt. Colonel Guyon-Vernier)

2^e Régiment de Marche Mixte (Lt. Colonel Dijon)

2^e Brigade (Général Digard)

6^e Régiment de Lanciers (Lt. Colonel de Lanauze)

3^e Régiment de Marche Mixte (Lt. Colonel Bonie)

3^e Brigade (Général Abdelal)

3^e Régiment de Marche de Cuirassiers (Lt. Colonel Tréboute)

4^e Régiment de Marche de Dragons (Lt. Colonel Roze)

4^e Régiment de Marche Mixte (Lt. Colonel ?)



“Battle of Châteaudun”

Armée de l'Ouest mid-November Order of Battle⁷¹

Commandant: Général Fiéreck

1^{re} Division (Général Fiéreck)

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Paris)

43^e Régiment de Marche (Colonel Fariau) – later 17^e Corps 1^{re} Division

4^e Bataillon de Mobiles des Deux-Sèvres (Commandant Chirac) – later 21^e Corps 1^{re} Division

1^{er} Bataillon de Mobiles du Gard (Commandant Froment) – later 21^e Corps 3^e Division

Bataillon de Mobiles du Gers – later 17^e Corps 2^e Division

2^e Brigade (Colonel Sautereau)

46^e Régiment de Marche (Colonel Sautereau) – later 17^e Corps 3^e Division

1^e Bataillon de Volontaires de l'Ouest (Lt. Colonel de Charrette) – later 17^e Corps 3^e Division

6^e Bataillon de Mobiles des Côtes-du-Nord (Commandant Radenac) – later 21^e Corps 3^e Division

Bataillon d'Infanterie de Marine

2^e Division (Colonel Rousseau)

1^{re} Brigade (Commandant de la Ferronnays)

8^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Bertrand) – later 16^e Corps

4^e Bataillon de Mobiles du Calvados (Capitaine de Petitville) – later 21^e Corps 3^e Division

1^{er} Bataillon de Mobiles de l'Orne (Commandant de Montaigu) – later 21^e Corps 2^e Division

4^e Bataillon de Mobiles de l'Orne (Commandant de la Ferronnays) – later 21^e Corps 2^e Division

4^e Bataillon de Mobiles du Morbihan (Capitaine Regaleau)

2^e Brigade (Colonel Tartrat)

41^e Régiment de Marche (Colonel Tartrat) – later 17^e Corps 1^{re} Division

3^e Brigade (Colonel de Moutis)

2^e Bataillon de Mobiles de l'Orne (Commandant des Moutis) – later 21^e Corps 2^e Division

3^e Bataillon de Mobiles de l'Orne (Commandant Boudonnet) – later 21^e Corps 2^e Division

2^e Bataillon de Mobiles de la Loire-Inférieure (Commandant de Candeau) – later 21^e Corps 3^e Don.

4^e Brigade (Colonel Lemoine des Mares)

1^{er} Bataillon de Mobiles de la Manche (Commandant de Grainville) – later 21^e Corps 3^e Division

2^e Bataillon de Mobiles de la Manche (Commandant de Clinchant) – later 21^e Corps 3^e Division

3^e Bataillon de Mobiles de la Manche (Commandant de Renouf de Vains) – later 21^e Corps 3^e Division

3^e Division (Général de Malherbe)

1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel Marty)

1^e Bataillon de Mobiles du Calvados – later 21^e Corps 3^e Division

2^e Bataillon de Mobiles du Calvados – later 21^e Corps 3^e Division

2^e et 3^e Bataillons du 36^e Régiment de Marche – later 16^e Corps

Bataillon de Mobiles de la Mayenne

2^e Brigade (Lt. Colonel de la Marlière)

3^e Bataillon de Mobiles de l'Eure-et-Loir – later 21^e Corps 2^e Division

3^e Bataillon de Mobiles du Calvados – later 21^e Corps 3^e Division

3^e Brigade (Lt. Colonel du Temple)

1^{er} Bataillon de Mobiles de la Corrèze – later 21^e Corps 1^{re} Division

2^e Bataillon de Mobiles de la Corrèze – later 21^e Corps 1^{re} Division

3^e Bataillon de Mobiles du Calvados – later 21^e Corps 3^e Division

4^e Brigade (Lt. Colonel Castillon)

2^e Bataillon de Mobiles de l'Eure-et-Loir – later 21^e Corps 2^e Division

4^e Bataillon de Mobiles de l'Eure-et-Loir – later 21^e Corps 2^e Division

4^e Division (Général Kersalaün)

41^e Régiment de Garde Nationale Mobile de l'Ardèche (Lt. Colonel Thomas) – later 19^e Corps 3^e Don.

39^e Régiment de Garde Nationale Mobile de l'Eure (Lt. Colonel Powel) – later 19^e Corps 3^e Division

6^e Bataillon de Mobiles de la Loire-Inférieure (Commandant Monot) – later 19^e Corps 3^e Division

2^e Armée de la Loire December 6 Order of Battle⁷²

Commandant: Général Chanzy

16^e Corps d'Armée (Amiral Jauréguiberry)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Deplanque)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Bourdillon)

3^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Labrune)

39^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Pereira)

75^e Rég. de Mobiles du Loir-et-Cher/Maine-et-Loire (Lt. Col. de Villardi de Montlaur)

Bataillon de la Garde Nationale Mobilisée de Maine-et-Loire (Cdt. Bounhoure)

2^e Brigade (Général Deplanque)

37^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Mallat)

33^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Sarthe (Lt. Colonel de la Touanne)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Barry)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Desmaisons)

7^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Gallimard)

31^e Régiment de Marche (Colonel Leclaire)

22^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Dordogne (Lt. Colonel de Chadois)

2^e Brigade (Colonel Bérard)

38^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Baille)

66^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Mayenne (Lt. Colonel de la Charce)

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Maurandy)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Le Bouëdec)

8^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Bertrand)

36^e Régiment de Marche (Colonel Marty)

8^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Charente-Inférieure (Lt. Colonel Vast-Vimeux)

2^e Brigade (Colonel Thierry)

40^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Bonnet)

71^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Haute Vienne (Lt. Colonel Pinelli)

Division de Cavalerie (Général Michel)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Tripart)

1^{er} Régiment de Marche de Hussards (Lt. Colonel Guyon-Vernier)

2^e Régiment de Marche Mixte (Lt. Colonel Dijon)

2^e Brigade (Général Digard)

6^e Régiment de Lanciers (Lt. Colonel de Lanauze)

3^e Régiment de Marche Mixte (Lt. Colonel Bonie)

3^e Brigade (Général Abdelal)

3^e Régiment de Marche de Cuirassiers (Lt. Colonel Tréboute)

4^e Régiment de Marche de Dragons (Lt. Colonel Roze)

4^e Régiment de Marche Mixte (Lt. Colonel ?)

17^e Corps d'Armée (Général Guépratte)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général de Vaisse-Roquebrune)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Bérard)

41^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Tartrat)

74^e Régiment de Mobiles du Lot-et-Garonne/Sarthe (Lt. Colonel Falcon)

2^e Brigade (Colonel Faussemagne)

11^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Commandant Goetchy)

43^e Régiment de Marche (Colonel Fariau)

72^e Régiment de Mobiles du Cantal/Yonne (Lt. Colonel Cournier)

2^e Armée de la Loire December 6 Order of Battle (continued)

17^e Corps d'Armée (continued)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Paris)

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Koch)

10^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Commandant Tarrillon)

48^e Régiment de Marche (Commandant Bourrel)

6^e Bataillon du 80^e Régiment de Mobiles de l'Isère (Cdt. de Quisonnas)

1^{er} Bataillon du 64^e Régiment de Marche (Commandant Jollivet)

2^e Brigade (Lt. Colonel Thibouville)

51^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Thibouville)

85^e Régiment de Mobiles du Gers/Vienne (Lt. Colonel Taberne)

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Deflandre)

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel de Jouffroy d'Abbans)

1^{er} Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Commandant Rodde)

45^e Régiment de Marche (Colonel Didier)

70^e Régiment de Mobiles du Lot (Commandant Feuillade)

2^e Brigade (Colonel Sautereau)

46^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Sautereau)

76^e Régiment de Mobiles de l'Ain/Aude/Isère (Lt. Colonel d'Haussonville)

1^{er} Bataillon de Volontaires de l'Ouest (Lt. Colonel de Charrette)

Division de Cavalerie (Général Galland de Longuerue)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Maillard de Landreville)

5^e Régiment de Marche Mixte (Lt. Colonel Bouligny)

6^e Régiment de Marche Mixte (Lt. Colonel Vasta)

4^e Régiment de Marche de Lanciers (Lt. Colonel de Rouot)

2^e Brigade (Général Guépratte)

4^e Régiment de Marche Mixte (Lt. Colonel de Joybert)

4^e Régiment de Marche de Cuirassiers (Lt. Colonel de Tinseau)

7^e Régiment de Marche de Cuirassiers (Lt. Colonel Bergeron)

21^e Corps d'Armée (Général Jaurès)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Rousseau)

1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel Roux)

13^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Commandant Lombard)

58^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Roux)

3^e Bataillon de Mobiles de l'Aube (Commandant Allègre)

4^e Bataillon de Mobiles des Deux-Sèvres (Commandant Chirac)

2^e Bataillon de Mobiles de la Loire-Inférieure (Commandant Hériveau)

5^e Bataillon de Mobilisés de la Sarthe (Commandant Lamblin)

2^e Brigade (Lt. Colonel de Tillet de Villars)

4^e, 7^e et 8^e Compagnies du 26^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Capitaine Barafort)

2^e, 3^e et 4^e Compagnies du 94^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Capitaine de Verdilhac)

90^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Sarthe/Corrèze (Lt. Colonel de Feugas)

1 bataillon de Mobilisés de la Sarthe (Commandant Vollioume)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Colin)

1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel de la Marlière)

56^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel de la Vieleuse)

63^e Régiment de Mobiles d'Eure-et-Loir (Lt. Colonel de la Marlière)

10^e Bataillon de Marche d'Infanterie de Marine (Commandant Herbillon)

6^e Bataillon de Mobiles d'Ille-et-Vilaine (Commandant Sisson)

4^e Bataillon de Mobiles d'Indre-et-Loire (Commandant Castillon)

3^e Bataillon de Mobilisés de la Sarthe (Commandant Lamblin)

2^e Armée de la Loire December 6 Order of Battle (continued)

21^e Corps d'Armée (continued)

- 2^e Brigade (Lt. Colonel des Moutis)
 - 59^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Barille)
 - 49^e Régiment de Mobiles de l'Orne (Lt. Colonel des Moutis)
 - 9^e Bataillon de Marche d'Infanterie de Marine (Capitaine Campy)
 - 5^e Bataillon du 41^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Capitaine Lévy)
 - 2^e et 3^e Compagnies de Dépôt du 94^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Capitaine Pessé)
- 3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Guillon)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel Stéphanie)
 - 15^e Régiment de Mobiles du Calvados (Lt. Colonel de la Barthe)
 - 78^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Vendée/Gironde/Lot-et-Gar. (Lt. Colonel de Lautrec)
 - 6^e Bataillon de Marche de Fusiliers Marins (Capitaine de Frégate Michaut)
 - 4^e Bataillon de Mobiles du Calvados (Lt. Colonel Fournès)
 - 4^e Bataillon de Mobiles du Finistère (Commandant Rigullan)
 - 2^e Bataillon de Mobiles de la Loire-Inférieure (Commandant de Candeau)
 - 2^e Brigade (Capitaine de Frégate du Temple)
 - 30^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Manche (Lt. Colonel Lemoine des Mares)
 - 92^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Manche/Calvados (Lt. Colonel de Tocqueville)
 - 3^e Bataillon de Marche de Fusiliers Marins (Lieutenant de Vaisseau Picot)
 - 6^e Bataillon de Mobiles des Côtes-du-Nord (Commandant Radenac)
 - 1^{er} Bataillon de Mobiles du Gard (Commandant Froment)
- 4^e Division d'Infanterie (Capitaine de Frégate Gougeard) – after December 21 re-organization
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Bel)
 - 3^e Bataillon de Mobilisés de la Loire-Inférieure (Commandant Trégomin)
 - 5^e bataillon du 62^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Capitaine Germain)
 - 5^e bataillon du 97^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Capitaine Darmoise)
 - 1 bataillon de Mobilisés d'Ille-et-Vilaine
 - Détachement des 25^e et 86^e Régiments d'Infanterie (Capitaine Sallé)
 - 2^e Brigade (Colonel de Pineau)
 - 5^e bataillon du 19^e Régiment d'Infanterie (Capitaine Cavallié)
 - 5^e et 6^e Bataillons de Mobilisés de la Mayenne
 - 1 bataillon de Mobiles de la Loire-Inférieure
 - 1 bataillon de Mobilisés du Morbihan
 - 1 compagnie de la Légion Étrangère
- Division de Cavalerie (Général Guillon)
 - 8^e Régiment de Hussards (Colonel Lacombe)
 - 1^{er} Régiment de Marche de Hussards (Lt. Colonel de Bonne)
 - 3^e Régiment de Marche Mixte (Lt. Colonel de Bonie)
 - 8^e Régiment de Marche de Cuirassiers (Lt. Colonel Humblot)
 - 6^e Régiment de Marche de Dragons (Lt. Colonel Dutillet de Villars)
 - 8^e Régiment de Marche Mixte (Lt. Colonel Palanque)

Colonne Mobile de Tours (Général Camô)

- 1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel Millot)
 - 16^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Commandant Béchet)
 - 59^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Isnard de Sainte-Lorette) – later 21^e Corps 2^e Division
 - 72^e Régiment de Mobiles du Cantal/Yonne (Lt. Colonel Cambefort) – later 17^e Corps 1^{re} Division
 - 88^e Régiment de Mobiles de l'Indre-et-Loire (Lt. Colonel de Cools) – later 16^e Corps

2^e Armée de la Loire December 6 Order of Battle (continued)

Colonne Mobile de Tours (continued)

- 2^e Brigade (Lt. Colonel de Morgan)
 - Régiment de Marche de Gendarmerie à Pied (Lt. Colonel de Morgan)
 - 27^e Régiment de Mobiles de l'Isère (Lt. Colonel Gustin) – later 16^e Corps
 - Francs-Tireurs de l'Ain
- Brigade de Cavalerie (Général Tripart)
 - 4^e Régiment de Marche de Lanciers (Lt. Colonel de Rouot) – later 17^e Corps Cavalerie
 - 3^e Régiment de Marche de Hussards (Lt. Colonel de Noirtin)
 - 2^e Régiment de Marche de Chasseurs (Lt. Colonel Bohin)
 - 7^e Régiment de Marche de Cuirassiers (Lt. Colonel Bergeron) – later 17^e Corps Cavalerie
 - 1^{er} Régiment de Gendarmes à Cheval (Lt. Colonel Geille) – later 2^e Armée Quartier Général

19^e Corps d'Armée (Général Dargent)

- 1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Bardin)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel Fischer)
 - 55^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Fischer)
 - 66^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Lecorbeiller)
 - 96^e Régiment de Garde Nationale Mobile de la Gironde/Charente (Lt. Colonel Gautereau)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Luzeux)
 - 71^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Alexandre)
 - 1^{re} Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée de la Gironde (Lt. Colonel Coulon)
 - 2^e Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée de la Gironde (Lt. Colonel Baril)
- 2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Girard)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Laperrine)
 - 22^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Gathe)
 - 64^e Régiment de Marche (Commandant Jacques)
 - 1^{re} Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée de la Seine-Inférieure (Colonel Laperrine)
 - 2^e Brigade (Lt. Colonel de Brême)
 - 65^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel de Brême)
 - 70^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Feyfant)
 - Bataillon de Garde Nationale Mobile de la Charente-Inférieure
- 3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Saussier) – attached later to 2^e Armée de Bretagne
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Roy)
 - 41^e Régiment de Garde Nationale Mobile de l'Ardèche (Lt. Colonel Thomas)
 - 39^e Régiment de Garde Nationale Mobile de l'Eure (Lt. Colonel Powel)
 - 3^e Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée du Calvados (Lt. Colonel Labbé)
 - 2^e Brigade (Colonel Gouyon de Beau-Corps)
 - 6^e Bataillon de Garde Nationale Mobile de la Loire-Inférieure (Commandant Monot)
 - 1^{er} Bataillon de Garde Nationale Mobile des Landes (Commandant Condamy)
 - 3^e Bataillon de Garde Nationale Mobile des Landes (Commandant Bétat)
 - 1^{re} Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée du Calvados (Lt. Colonel Saal)
 - 2^e Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée du Calvados (Lt. Colonel Latouche)
- Division de Cavalerie (Général Abdelal)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Colonel de Kerhué)
 - 3^e Régiment de Hussards (Lt. Colonel Kerhué) – formerly 1^{er} Corps
 - 4^e Régiment de Marche de Hussards (Lt. Colonel Bauvieux)
 - 2^e Brigade (Général de Vouges de Chanteclair)
 - 8^e Régiment de Marche de Dragons (Lt. Colonel Loizillon)
 - 9^e Régiment de Marche de Cuirassiers (Lt. Colonel Grandin)

2^e Armée de la Loire December 6 Order of Battle (continued)

25^e Corps d'Armée (Général Pourcet)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Bruat)

1^{er} Brigade (Général de Bernard de Seigneurs)

74^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Laurence)

2 bataillons d'infanterie de marine (Lt. Colonel Flize) – joined January 13

2^e Brigade (Général de Mordan de Langourian)

75^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Guichard) – joined January 7

2 bataillons de fusiliers-marins (Capt. de Frégate Ansart) – joined January 22

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Chabron)

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Chaulan)

7^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant Dubois) – joined January 8

6^e Bataillon de Mobiles du Puy-de-Dôme (Cdt. Pignol) – joined January 23

Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée de l'Isère (Lt. Colonel Gaubert) – joined January 23

2^e Brigade (Colonel Leclaire)

77^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Duval) – joined January 10

Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée du Cher (Lt. Colonel Vermeil) – joined January 23

3^e Brigade (Colonel ?) – joined February 20

3^e Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée de la Gironde (Lt. Colonel Raingot)

4^e Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée de la Gironde (Lt. Colonel Pellias)

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Ferri-Pisani Jourdan)

1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel Laurens)

78^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Barbier) – joined January 15

Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée de la Dordogne – joined January 24

2^e Brigade (Lt. Colonel Blot)

79^e Régiment de Marche (Commandant Blanc) – arrived January 16

1 bataillon de Garde Nationale Mobilisée de la Côte d'Or (Cdt. Grimblot) – joined January 25

3^e Brigade (Général Bourgeade) – joined January 26 – February 9

1^{re} Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée des Landes (Colonel de Montgaillard)

2^e Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée des Landes (Colonel de Boëto)

3^e Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée des Landes (Lt. Colonel Casters)

Division de Cavalerie (Général Tripart)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Delhorme)

9^e Régiment de Marche Mixte (Lt. Colonel Masson) – joined January 8

9^e Régiment de Marche de Dragons (Lt. Colonel Castanier) – joined February 1

2^e Brigade (Général de Bruchard)

10^e Régiment de Marche Mixte (Lt. Colonel de Barbançois) – joined January 31

Régiment de Garde Nationale Mobile de la Dordogne (Lt. Col. de Bourgoing) – ready February 1

26^e Corps d'Armée (Général Billot)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général d'Ariès)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Hue de la Colombe)

27^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Commandant Fauquignon)

80^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Grémion)

1^{re} Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée des Basses-Pyrénées (Lt. Col. Michel-Renaud)

2^e Brigade (Colonel Delatouche)

81^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Marié)

2^e Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée des Basses-Pyrénées (Lt. Col. de St-Gaudens)

2^e Armée de la Loire December 6 Order of Battle (continued)

26^e Corps d'Armée (continued)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Formy de la Blanchetée)

1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel Villain)

28^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Commandant Vandenputten)

82^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Chevreuil)

1^{re} Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée du Gers (Lt. Colonel Kéva)

2^e Brigade (Colonel Collin)

85^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Thomas)

2^e Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée du Gers (Lt. Colonel Dufau)

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Bouillé)

1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel ?)

29^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Commandant Defaucamberge)

86^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Gerder)

1^{re} Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée d'Indre-et-Loire (Lt. Colonel Fescheux)

2^e Brigade (Colonel ?)

87^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Lesur)

2^e Légion de Garde Nationale Mobilisée d'Indre-et-Loire

Division de Cavalerie (Général Boërio) – did not join the Corps

1^{re} Brigade (Général Létuvé)

10^e Régiment de Marche de Cuirassiers (Lt. Colonel Baillo)

11^e Régiment de Marche de Cuirassiers (Lt. Colonel Tondon)

2^e Brigade (Général Pollard)

10^e Régiment de Marche de Dragons (Lt. Colonel Simard de Pitray)

6^e Régiment de Marche de Lanciers (Lt. Colonel Pierre)



“Attack at Dusk” by Alphonse de Neuville (1877)

German Mecklenburg Detachment November 15 Order of Battle⁷³

Commandantur: General Grossherzog von Mecklenburg-Schwerin

I Bayern Armee-Korps (General von der Tann-Rathsamhausen)

1. Bayern Infanterie Division (General von Stephan)
 1. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General Dietl)
 - Korps Infanterie Regiment (Colonel von Täuffenbach)
 - 1 Infanterie Regiment (Colonel von Heckel)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 2 (Major Wirthmann)
 2. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General von Orff)
 - 2 Infanterie Regiment (2 battalions) (Colonel von der Tann)
 - 11 Infanterie Regiment (2 battalions) (Colonel Schmidt)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 4 (Captain Woehr)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 9 (Lt. Colonel von Massenbach)
2. Bayern Infanterie Division (General von Maillinger)
 3. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General Roth)
 - 3 Infanterie Regiment (Colonel Schuch)
 - 12 Infanterie Regiment (Colonel Narciss)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 1 (Major Wirthmann)
 4. Bayern Infanterie Brigade (General von der Tann-Rathsamhausen II)
 - 10 Infanterie Regiment (Lt. Colonel von Joner-Tettenweiss)
 - 13 Infanterie Regiment (Colonel von Ysenbourg-Philippseich)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 7 (Captain Hoderlein)
- Chevauleger Regiment Nr. 4 (Colonel von Leonrod)
- Kürassier Kavallerie Brigade (General von Tauch)
 - Kürassier Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel Feichtmayr)
 - Kürassier Kavallerie Regiment Nr. 2 (Colonel Baumüller)

17. Infanterie Division (General von Treskow II)

33. Infanterie Brigade (General von Kottwitz)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 75 (Lt. Colonel von der Osten)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 76 (Colonel von Neumann)
34. Infanterie (Mecklenburg) Brigade (Colonel von Manteuffel)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 89 (Colonel von Kleist)
 - Füsilier Regiment Nr. 90 (Colonel von Gliszczynski)
 - Mecklenburg Jäger Bataillon Nr. 14 Major von Gaza)
17. Kavallerie (Mecklenburg) Brigade (General von Rauch)
 1. Mecklenburg Dragoner Regiment Nr. 17 (Colonel von Kahlden)
 2. Mecklenburg Dragoner Regiment Nr. 18 (Lt. Colonel von Rathenow)
 2. Brandenburg Ulanen Regiment Nr. 11 (Colonel von Solms-Wildenfels)

22. Infanterie Division (General von Wittich)

43. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Kontzki)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 32 (Colonel von Foerster)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 95 (Colonel von Beckedorff)
44. Infanterie Brigade (General von Schkopp)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 83 (Colonel von Bieberstein)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 94 (Lt. Colonel von Pallmenstein)
- Hessen Husar Regiment Nr. 13 (Lt. Colonel von Heuduck)

2. Kavallerie Division (General von Stolberg)

3. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Colomb)
 - Lieb.-Kürassier Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel von Oppen)
 - Schleswig Ulanen Regiment Nr. 2 (Lt. Colonel Rode)

Mecklenburg Detachment November 15 Order of Battle (continued)

2. Kavallerie Division (continued)

- 4. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Barnekow)
 - Lieb.-Husar Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel von Hanstein)
 - Pommern Husar Regiment Nr. 5 (Lt. Colonel von Salmuth)
- 5. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Baumbach)
 - Schleswig Husar Regiment Nr. 4 (Major von Krieger)
 - Schleswig Husar Regiment Nr. 6 (Lt. Colonel von Graevenitz)

4. Kavallerie Division (General Prinz Albrecht von Preussen)

- 8. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Hontheim)
 - Westpreussen Kürassier Regiment Nr. 5 (Lt. Colonel von Atrentschildt)
 - Posen. Ulanen Regiment Nr. 10 (Colonel von Barnekow)
- 9. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Bernhardt)
 - Westpreussen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel von Reckow)
 - Thüringen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 6 (Major von Knobloch)
- 10. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Krosigk)
 - Lieb.-Husar Regiment Nr. 2 (Colonel von Schauroth)
 - Rheintal Dragoner Regiment Nr. 5 (Colonel Wright)

5. Kavallerie Division (General von Rheinbaben)

- 11. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Barby)
 - Westfalia Kürassier Regiment Nr. 4 (Colonel von Arnim)
 - 1. Hannover Ulanen Regiment Nr. 13 (Major von Rosenberg)
 - Oldenburg Dragoner Regiment Nr. 19 (Colonel von Trotha)
- 12. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Bredow)
 - Magdeburg Kürassier Regiment Nr. 7 (Lt. Colonel von Larisch)
 - Altmark. Ulanen Regiment Nr. 16 (Major von der Dollen)
 - Schleswig-Holstein Dragoner Regiment Nr. 13 (Colonel von Brauchitsch)
- 13. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Redern)
 - Magdeburg Husar Regiment Nr. 10 (Colonel von Weise)
 - 2. Westfalia Husar Regiment Nr. 11 (Lt. Colonel von Eller-Eberstein)
 - Braunschweig Husar Regiment Nr. 17 (Lt. Colonel von Rauch)

6. Kavallerie Division (General Herzog Wilhelm von Mecklenburg-Schwerin)

- 14. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Schmidt)
 - Brandenburg Kürassier Regiment Nr. 6 (Lt. Colonel von Lynar)
 - Brandenburg Ulanen Regiment Nr. 3 (Colonel von der Groeben)
 - Schleswig-Holstein Ulanen Regiment Nr. 15 (Colonel von Alvensleben)
- 15. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Rauch)
 - Brandenburg Husar Regiment Nr. 3 (Major von Haenlein)
 - Schleswig-Holstein Husar Regiment Nr. 16 (Major von Heintze)

German II Armee November 15 Order of Battle⁷⁴

Commandantur: General Prinz Friederich von Preussen

III Armee-Korps (General von Alvensleben II)

- 5. Infanterie Division (General von Stülpnagel)
 - 9. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Conta)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 8 (Lt. Colonel von Estocq)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 48 (Lt. Colonel von Ende)
 - 10. Infanterie Brigade (General von Schwerin)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 12 (Lt. Colonel von Kalinowski)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 52 (Colonel von Wulffen)
 - Brandenburg Jäger Bataillon Nr. 3 (Major von Jena)
 - Brandenburg Dragonen Regiment Nr. 12 (Major von Salmon)
- 6. Infanterie Division (General Hann von Büddenbrock)
 - 11. Infanterie Brigade (General von Rothmaler)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 20 (Colonel von Flatow)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 35 (Colonel von Plessis)
 - 12. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Bismarck)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 24 (Colonel von Dohna)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 64 (Colonel von Büttlar-Brandenfels)
 - Brandenburg Dragonen Regiment Nr. 2 (Colonel von Drigalski)

IX Armee-Korps (General von Manstein)

- 18. Infanterie Division (General von Wrangel)
 - 35. Infanterie Brigade (General von Blumenthal)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 36 (Lt. Colonel von Schramm)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 84 (Lt. Colonel von Kittlitz)
 - 36. Infanterie Brigade (General von Falkenhausen)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 11 (Lt. Colonel von Klein)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 85 (Lt. Colonel Koeppen)
 - Jäger Bataillon Nr. 9 (Major von Minckwitz)
 - Magdeburg Dragonen Regiment Nr. 6 (Colonel von Houwald)
- 25. (Hessen) Infanterie Division (Prinz Ludwig von Hessen)
 - 49. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Winckler)
 - Hessen Infanterie Regiment Nr. 1 (Lt. Colonel Coulmann)
 - Hessen Infanterie Regiment Nr. 2 (Colonel Kraus)
 - 1. Hessen Jäger Bataillon (Major Gerlach)
 - 50. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Lynker)
 - Hessen Infanterie Regiment Nr. 3 (Major Winter)
 - Hessen Infanterie Regiment Nr. 4 (Lt. Colonel von Gründler)
 - 2. Hessen Jäger Bataillon (Major Daudistel)
- Hessen Kavallerie Brigade (General von Rantzau)
 - Hessen Kavallerie Regiments Nrs. 1 & 2 (Lt. Colonel von Grolman)

X Armee-Korps (General von Voigts-Rhetz)

- 19. Infanterie Division (General von Schwartzkoppen)
 - 37. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel Lehmann)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 78 (Colonel von Lyncker)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 91 (Colonel von Hagen)
 - 38. Infanterie Brigade (General von Wedell)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 16 (Colonel von Dorsche)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 57 (Colonel von Cranach)
- Hannover Dragoner Regiment Nr. 9 (Lt. Colonel von Hardenberg)

German II Armee November 15 Order of Battle (continued)

X Armee-Korps (continued)

- 20. Infanterie Division (General von Kraatz-Koschlau)
 - 39. Infanterie Brigade (General von Woyna)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 56 (Colonel von Block)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 79 (Colonel von Valentini)
 - 40. Infanterie Brigade (General von Diringshofen)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 17 (Colonel von Ehrenberg)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 92 (Colonel Haberland)
- Hannover Jäger Bataillon Nr. 10 (Major von Przychowski)
- Hannover Dragoner Regiment Nr. 16 (Lt. Colonel von Waldow)

1. Kavallerie Division (General von Hartmann)

- 1. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Lüderitz)
 - Kürassier Königen Regiment Nr. 2 (Colonel von Pfuhl)
 - Pommern Ulanen Regiment Nr. 4 (Lt. Colonel von Radecke)
 - Pommern Ulanen Regiment Nr. 9 (Lt. Colonel von Kleist)
- 2. Kavallerie Brigade (General Baumgarth)
 - Ostpreussen Kürassier Regiment Nr. 3 (Colonel von Winterfeld)
 - Ostpreussen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 8 (Colonel von Below)
 - Litthauen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 12 (Colonel von Rosenberg)

Endnotes

¹ Modified from a map in Howard, Michael, *The Franco-Prussian War*, (Methuen: London, 1981), end pages.

² This number includes the wounded from the August 14-18 battles around Metz.

³ Lehautcourt, Pierre, *Campagne de la Loire en 1870-1871 – Coulmiers et Orléans*, (Berger-Levrault: Paris, 1893), page 5.

⁴ Rousset, Léonce, *Histoire Générale de la Guerre Franco-Allemande (1870-1871)*, (Librairie Illustrée: Paris, 1911), Vol. II, page 2.

⁵ Martin des Pallières, Charles, *Campagne de 1870-1871: Orléans*, (Henri Plon: Paris, 1872), page 12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, page 12.

⁷ Martinien, Aristide, *Corps Auxiliaires Créés Pendant la Guerre 1870-1871: Garde Nationale Mobile, Volume 1*, (Dubois: Paris, 1897).

⁸ The 27th and 34th March Infantry Regiments were composed of the depot battalions from the 17th, 52nd, 53rd, 4th, 36th and 77th Line Infantry Regiments.

⁹ Martinien, Aristide, *La Guerre de 1870-1871, La Mobilisation de l'Armée*, (L. Fournier: Paris, 1911).

¹⁰ Genevois, Henri, *Les Premières Campagnes dans l'Est*, (Librairie Charpentier et Fasquelle: Paris, 1909), pages 46-48.

¹¹ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 10.

¹² The author possesses an October 16 letter from the same Bavarian military bureau with the same blue manuscript debit marking that is addressed to the Cher. It has a November 18 “Prusse Lille” French entry postmark and a French 5 décimes due marking. Thus, the Prussian debit of 20 centimes was added to the 30 centimes domestic postage due for an unpaid letter.

¹³ 20 centimes domestic single-rate postage plus a 50% premium for unpaid mail.

¹⁴ Chauveau, Émile, *Souvenirs d'un Officier de Chasseurs à Pied, Gustave de Boissieu*, (Mame et Fils: Tours, 1878), page 160.

¹⁵ Derived from a map in Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 286.

¹⁶ A later endorsement in a different hand on the front of the envelope reads, “lettre du 5 10bre 1870” but the December 1 arrival mark shows that the letter must have been written in late November.

¹⁷ Chanzy, Antoine, *Campagne de 1870-1871: La Deuxième Armée de la Loire*, (Henri Plon: Paris, 1871), page 41.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, page 42.

¹⁹ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 43.

²⁰ Lehautcourt, *Op. Cit.*, page 186.

²¹ The 17th Division replaced the 2nd Landwehr Division in the XIII Corps.

²² *Ibid.*, page 198.

²³ Ortholan, Henri, *L'Armée de la Loire 1870-1871*, (Giovanangeli, 2005), page 94.

²⁴ The formation of the 20th Corps is described in Chapter Nine. Lehautcourt, *Op. Cit.*, page 205.

²⁵ Grand État-Major Prussien, Section Historique, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume I: Depuis l'Investissement de Paris jusqu'à la Reprise d'Orléans par les Allemandes*, (J. Dumaine: Paris, 1878), page 436.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, page 462.

- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, page 475.
- ²⁸ Lehautcourt, *Op. Cit.*, page 272.
- ²⁹ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, pages 495-520.
- ³⁰ Modified from a map in Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 286.
- ³¹ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, page 610.
- ³² A letter that de Kératry carried out of Paris is illustrated in Figure 3-5.
- ³³ Jaÿ, Aimé, *L'Armée de Bretagne 22 Octobre – 27 Novembre*, (Henri Plon: Paris, 1873), page 15.
- ³⁴ Jaurès, Benjamin, “Le 21e Corps (Novembre-Décembre 1870),” in *La Revue de Paris* No. 5, (1 Mars 1901), page 2.
- ³⁵ The Papal Zouaves left Rome on September 21. Their incorporation into the Volontaires de l'Ouest is described in detail in Bittard des Portes, René, *Histoire des Zouaves Pontificaux*, (Librairie Bloud et Barral: Paris, 1894).
- ³⁶ The stamp is a 20c type II, report 1, position 15 of the 1870 “Bordeaux” Issue.
- ³⁷ Jaÿ, *Op. Cit.*, page 40.
- ³⁸ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, pages 614-628.
- ³⁹ Moltke, Helmuth von, *The Franco-German War of 1870-71*, (Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.: London, 1891), Volume II, page 56.
- ⁴⁰ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, page 628.
- ⁴¹ Ortholan, *Op. Cit.*, page 171.
- ⁴² Chanzy, *Op. Cit.*, page 171.
- ⁴³ Jaurès, *Op. Cit.*, page 33.
- ⁴⁴ Moltke, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 58.
- ⁴⁵ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, page 669.
- ⁴⁶ Mail to foreign destinations was not eligible for a military free frank per the July 24, 1870 Law. This franking was made up by a 10c report 1, position 6 stamp of the 1870 “Bordeaux” Issue, and a 20c stamp of the 1863 Issue.
- ⁴⁷ At this time, the Mecklenburg Detachment (except for the I Bavarian Corps, which was still re-fitting at Étampes) came again under the orders of the II Army.
- ⁴⁸ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, page 749.
- ⁴⁹ Grand État-Major Prussien, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume II: Événements dans le Nord de la France depuis la fin de Novembre, dans le Nord-Ouest depuis le Commencement de Décembre et Siège de Paris depuis le Commencement de Décembre jusqu'à l'Armistice. Opérations dans le Sud-Est du Milieu de Décembre au Milieu de Janvier*, (J. Dumaine: Paris, 1880), page 392.
- ⁵⁰ Colonel Le Bouëdec of the Garde Mobile des Côtes-du-Nord left Paris aboard the *Montgolfier* on October 25, and became a senior commander in the Armée de la Loire. A letter that he carried from Paris is shown in Figure 6-16.
- ⁵¹ Lehautcourt, Pierre, *Campagne de la Loire en 1870-1871 – Josnes, Vendôme, Le Mans*, (Berger-Levrault: Paris, 1895), page 183.
- ⁵² Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume II, page 877.
- ⁵³ Pourcet, Joseph, *Campagne sur la Loire (1870-1871)*, (Moniteur Universelle: Paris, 1874), page 109.
- ⁵⁴ Lot 1961 in the March 20, 1987 Au Comptoir des Timbres (S.A.) 138^e Vente sur Offres
- ⁵⁵ All three stamps are 20 centimes type III of the 1870 “Bordeaux” Issue.
- ⁵⁶ In particular, the “e” in 19^e Corps has been altered from an uppercase to lowercase letter.
- ⁵⁷ A 10c report 1, position 1 stamp and a 20c type III report 1, position 2 stamp of the 1870 “Bordeaux” Issue.
- ⁵⁸ Chanzy, *Op. Cit.*, page 396.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, page 434.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, page 400.
- ⁶¹ Grand État-Major Prussien, Section Historique, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume III: Les Événements dans le Sud-Est de la France depuis le Milieu de Janvier jusqu'à la Cessation des Hostilités. Les Communications avec l'Arrière, l'Armistice. Marche Rétrograde et Occupation. Coup d'Œil Rétrospectif*, (J. Dumaine: Paris, 1882), page 1328.
- ⁶² Chanzy, *Op. Cit.*, page 440.
- ⁶³ The stamp is a 20c type III, report 2, position 1 of the 1870 “Bordeaux” Issue.
- ⁶⁴ A 10c report 1, position 1 stamp of the 1870 “Bordeaux” Issue, and a pair of 20c stamps of the 1863 Issue.
- ⁶⁵ The strip of three is made up of 20 centimes type III, report 1, positions 13-15 stamps of the 1870 “Bordeaux” Issue.
- ⁶⁶ Tours was occupied on January 19. Moltke, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 139.
- ⁶⁷ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1329.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, pages 1339-1342.
- ⁶⁹ Ortholan, *Op. Cit.*, page 243.
- ⁷⁰ Martin, *Op. Cit.*, page 370 and Chanzy, *Op. Cit.*, page 42.
- ⁷¹ Website www.loire1870.fr accessed May 2016.
- ⁷² Chanzy, *Op. Cit.*, pages 640-651.
- ⁷³ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, Supplement XCII.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, Supplement XCII.

Chapter Eight

Campaign in the North: October 17 to March 7

Introduction

The German siege closed around Paris on September 19, 1870. Although the German high command expected a short siege and a speedy end to the war, they were concerned about protecting and feeding their large armies around Paris. The vulnerable supply lines were long and passed through hostile territory, so a priority was placed on obtaining supplies locally. In addition, besieging armies are most vulnerable to attack from behind, so the Germans constantly scouted for organized French resistance around Paris. Consequently, they sent supply requisition parties and cavalry patrols into the regions north of Paris, starting in late September. Figure 8-1 shows that area of operations.

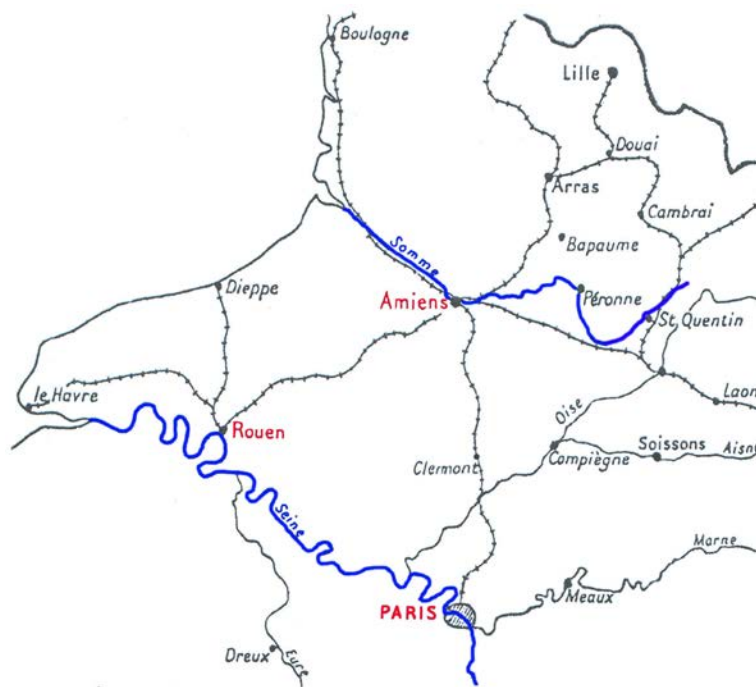


Figure 8-1. Theater for the Campaign in the North¹

After the August 1870 defeats on the frontier, the French focused their efforts on strengthening the forces defending Paris and establishing a line of defense along the Loire River, as described in Chapter Seven. As a result, virtually all of the French military forces in the regions to the north and northwest of Paris were sent to Paris or to the Loire until mid-October. This changed dramatically when Léon Gambetta became the provincial War Minister, and invigorated the French defenses throughout the country. On October 17, the country was divided into regional military commands. In the North, Général Bourbaki was placed in charge of the region from the north bank of the Seine River to northern France, and supervised the formation of new French republican armies that could threaten the German siege of Paris.

This chapter examines the activities of the contending armies in northern and northwestern France, as illustrated by letters handled by their fieldpost services. The German fieldpost service continued as it had since the start of the war, but the French had to create a new fieldpost service for its Armée du Nord.

The Formation of New French Armies in the North

There were eight regimental infantry depots in northern France that continued to collect, train and equip soldiers throughout the war.² For example, the 75^e Régiment de Ligne depot at Lille processed 7,071 men and 162 officers throughout the war, including about 5,000 men after the initial mobilization in July.³ The continuing flow of men into these depots was fueled by the arrival of the conscription class of 1869 on August 8-12, the conscription class of 1870 on October 29, and various decrees that recalled men aged 26-40 to the colors. In addition, a large number of escaped French soldiers and officers from the Sedan and Metz disasters flooded into the northern depots. Those depots accordingly contributed about 20,000 soldiers to the forces in the North. In addition, the mobilization of the Garde Nationale Mobile (“Garde Mobile”) from northern departments contributed another 25,000 men.⁴

Ultimately, the Armée du Nord was formed mostly from forces developed in the region. Gambetta’s October 17 decree started the formal organization of these troops into the “Corps d’Armée du Nord” at Lille.⁵ On November 20, this corps was designated the 22nd Corps, and was sent to defend Amiens against the approaching Germans.⁶ Its November 21 order of battle is shown at the end of this chapter. At the same time, additional French forces were forming around Rouen. These 22,000 men consisted mostly of Gardes Mobiles and two line cavalry regiments (the 3^e Hussards and the 12^e Chasseurs) that had escaped from Sedan.⁷ By December 3, the Corps de Rouen had moved to defensive positions around Rouen.

The Movement of German Forces into the North

The German high command considered the presence of organized French forces at Rouen a greater threat than those at Amiens. To mitigate threats from either direction, a combined infantry and cavalry brigade from the Garde Corps and the IV Corps under the command of Prince Albert of Prussia was sent from Paris toward Rouen.⁸ At the same time, the 12th Cavalry Division, supported by the 2nd Garde Fusilier Regiment, was detached from the XII Corps at Paris on September 26 and sent north to occupy Clermont and to protect requisitions columns sent out from Paris.⁹ Figure 8-2 shows a fieldpost card mailed at the 12th Cavalry Division fieldpost bureau.



Figure 8-2. Oct. 31, 1870 card from the 12th Cavalry Division

Postmarked “FELD-POST-EXP.D.AVANTGARDE 12. ARMEE-CPS” on October 31, this card was datelined at Clermont by a soldier in the 2nd Garde Fusilier Regiment. It arrived in Düsseldorf on November 5.

This cavalry screen was not strong enough to stop organized French infantry, so the October 27 surrender of Bazaine’s army at Metz released the additional German infantry needed to keep the French neutralized in the North. On November 7, the 42,000-man German I Army (I Corps, VIII Corps and the 3rd Cavalry Division) advanced from Metz toward a position northeast of Paris. Their order of battle, augmented by the 3rd Reserve Division and the two cavalry detachments from Paris, is shown at the end of this chapter. They reached the Oise River between Compiègne and St. Quentin on November 19-20, but left three of the four brigades in the I Corps to conduct sieges at Mézières and La Fère. The commander of the I Army, General von Manteuffel, received orders at that time to advance toward Rouen and to eliminate any French forces in that region.¹⁰ Along the way, he was to occupy Amiens and establish a defensive line north of Paris.

On November 23, von Manteuffel set his army in motion toward Amiens. Four days later, the I Army, reinforced by the return of the 1st Division of the I Corps,¹¹ attacked the 25,000-man French 22nd Corps east of Amiens. The French were easily pushed back, and retreated north to Arras. The Germans occupied Amiens and then continued their advance to Rouen on December 1. The 12th Cavalry Division was attached to the I Army for this operation.¹² Figure 8-3 shows a postcard mailed at the I Army headquarters bureau just after the capture of Amiens.

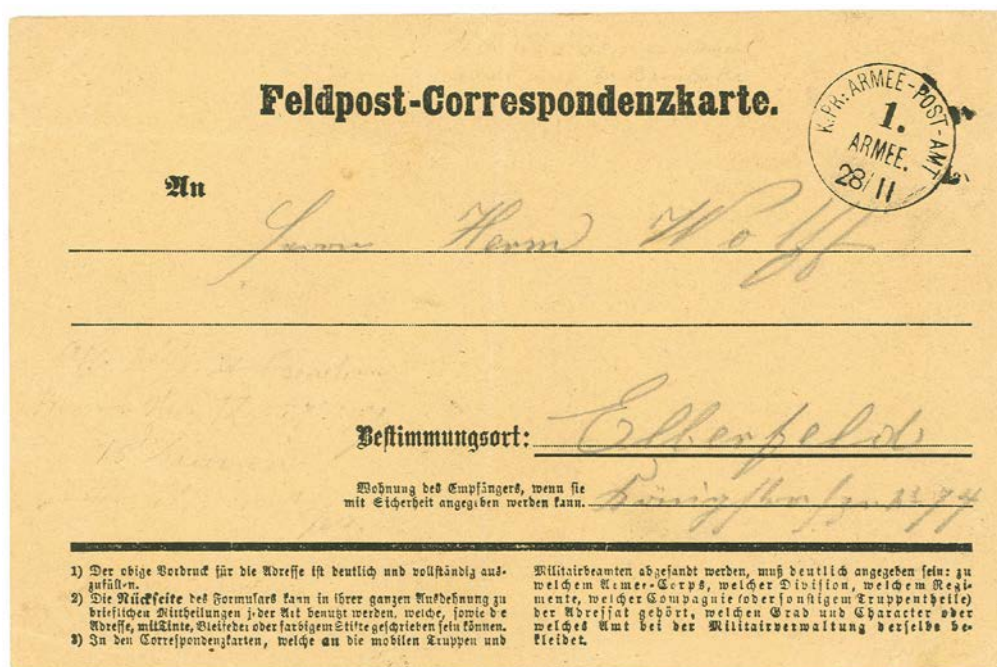


Figure 8-3.
November 28,
1870 card from
I Army HQ

Datelined at Moreuil (southeast of Amiens) on November 27, this fieldpost card was posted at the fieldpost bureau for the I Army’s headquarters a day later. It was written by a soldier in the Königs-Husar Regiment #7 of the VIII Corps, and arrived in Elberfeld on December 3.

On December 4-5, the I Army brushed aside the 22,000-man Corps de Rouen under Général Briand, and occupied Rouen. The Corps de Rouen retreated west to Le Havre, where it joined that city’s garrison.¹³ At

the same time, the lightly organized French forces south of the Seine river (Corps de l'Eure) were flanked by the German capture of Rouen, and were also forced to retreat west into Normandy.¹⁴

On December 7, the I Army was ordered to pursue and destroy the Corps de Rouen, while capturing Le Havre if practicable. To accomplish this, the I Corps garrisoned Rouen while the VIII Corps advanced toward Le Havre. Figure 8-4 shows a fieldpost card from the I Corps at this time.



Figure 8-4. Dec. 6, 1870 card from the I Corps

This fieldpost card was datelined at St. Germain des Essourts (northeast of Rouen) on December 7 and posted at the Reserve Division's fieldpost bureau. It arrived in Friedland on December 18.

The captures of Amiens and Rouen, accomplished in an amazing twelve days, stabilized the situation in the North from the perspective of the German high command.

The Reorganization of the Armée du Nord

On December 3, a new French commander, Général Faidherbe, arrived in Lille from Algeria to take command of the forces in the North,¹⁵ and to invigorate the reorganization of the defeated 22nd Corps. He also strengthened his two-division Armée du Nord by adding two new divisions. On December 18, the 22nd Corps was divided into the 22nd and 23rd Corps, with two divisions each.¹⁶ Their order of battle as of that date is included at the end of this chapter.

Faidherbe also introduced a fieldpost organization for his army in early December. A family of three simple two-line blue undated postmarks was fabricated locally for mail entrusted to the fieldpost. The Armée du Nord headquarters bureau used a blue "ARMÉE DU NORD/QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL" postmark, and the first two divisions of the 22nd Corps used blue postmarks with "22^E CORPS" on the top line and "1^E DIVISION" or "2^E DIVISION" on the lower line. In addition, the 22nd Corps postal headquarters used a blue 2-ring undated "DIRECTION DES POSTES 22ME CORPS D'ARMÉE" circular postmark. These markings are listed and illustrated in Appendix A. No surviving covers from the 23rd Corps or the 1st Division of the 22nd Corps are known.

Figure 8-5 shows an example of these rare postmarks. This letter was postmarked at the fieldpost bureau for the Armée du Nord's headquarters in Lille. They then took it to the nearby civilian post office, which postmarked it on December 10 and marked it for a military free frank. It was written by the payeur officer of the 22nd Corps 2nd Division,¹⁷ and arrived in Normandy on December 15.



Figure 8-5. December 10, 1870 letter from the headquarters of the Armée du Nord

Figure 8-6 shows an example from the 2nd Division of the 22nd Corps. This letter was docketed “22 Xbre 1870”¹⁸ and posted at the 2nd Division's fieldpost bureau. It arrived in southern France on December 26.

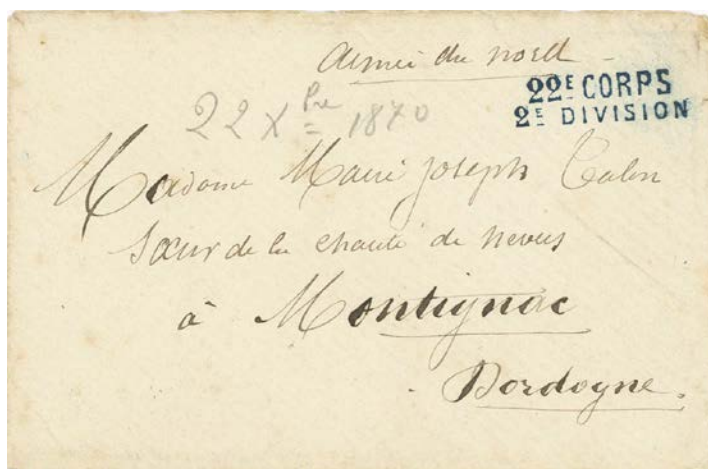


Figure 8-6. December 22, 1870 letter from the 2nd Division of the 22nd Corps

The Armée du Nord Moves South

On December 7, Gambetta ordered Faidherbe to advance toward Paris to relieve the pressure on Le Havre, and to support a planned break-out of the Parisian army toward the northeast.¹⁹ On December 8, Faidherbe set his forces in motion,²⁰ much to the surprise of the German high command. Advancing south from Arras, the 22nd Corps re-captured Ham and threatened Amiens, St. Quentin and Soissons. This movement alarmed von Manteuffel, who had the bulk of his forces between Rouen and Le Havre. On December 10, the VIII Corps discontinued its advance on Le Havre, and its 15th Division was set in motion toward Amiens. The 16th Division and 3rd Cavalry Division were sent to Dieppe with orders to continue on to Amiens via Abbeville. Figure 8-7 shows a detailed map of the area of operations. The light blue line shows the French advance, and the orange lines show the German reaction to that advance.

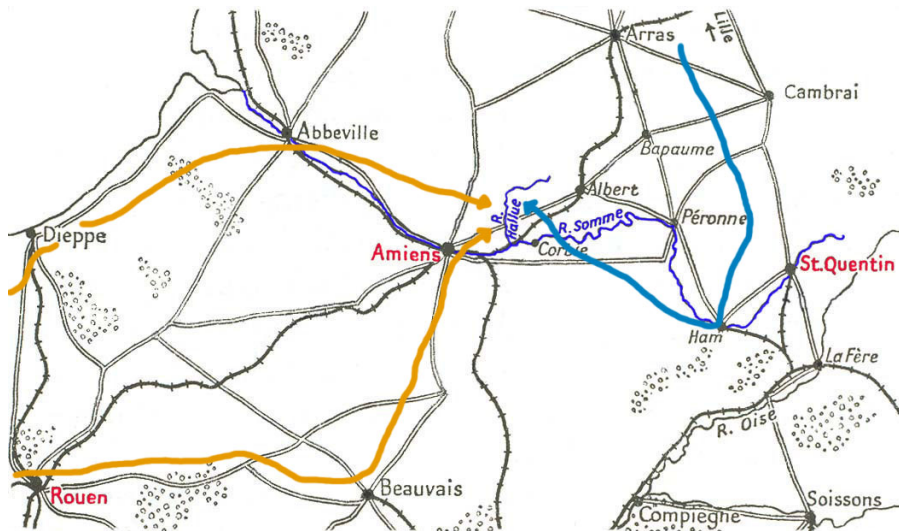


Figure 8-7. Map of the Area of Operations from Rouen to St. Quentin²¹

By December 15, the German high command was still unsure of where Faidherbe was heading, so they ordered von Manteuffel to concentrate his forces around Beauvais, while leaving strong detachments at Rouen, Amiens and St. Quentin.²² This left the I Army in an excellent position to respond threats from any direction, while continuing to protect the rear of the armies besieging Paris. By contrast, there was no coordination between the French Armée du Nord and the Armée du Havre, so they were not able to counter this German advantage in movement by simultaneous attacks at different points.

On December 16, Faidherbe moved northwest toward Amiens, and took a strong defensive position northeast of Amiens along the Hallue River. Once the VIII Corps and the 3rd Cavalry Division joined the 3rd Brigade (I Corps) at Amiens, they attacked the French position on December 23, but were repulsed. Figure 8-8 shows a postcard from the VIII Corps written just after the battle.



Figure 8-8.
December 26, 1870
card from the VIII
Corps HQ

This card was datelined at Amiens on December 24 by a soldier in the 33rd Regiment. It was postmarked two days later at the VIII Corps headquarters bureau, and arrived in Cologne on December 30.

The French remained in their positions on the battlefield that night, but the bitterly cold weather caused them to retreat to Arras on December 24.²³ It was a rare victory for the French.

The German I Army took advantage of the French withdrawal to solidify its defensive line south of the Somme River. On December 27, the 3rd Reserve Division and the 16th Division (VIII Corps) began a siege of Péronne,²⁴ the last French stronghold on the river. To support the siege, the rest of the VIII Corps and the 12th Cavalry Division were moved to St. Quentin. Faidherbe understood the strategic importance of maintaining access to the south bank of the Somme at Péronne, so he moved to its relief on January 1. The Armée du Nord ran into the 3rd Cavalry Division and elements of the VIII Corps at Bapaume on January 3. The French effectively won the battle, but nonetheless withdrew to the north. At the same time, the German defenders withdrew back toward the Somme.



“Bataille de Bapaume” by Armand Dumaes (1871)

On January 9, Péronne surrendered, ceding control of the Somme River to the Germans. Two days before that, General von Manteuffel had been promoted to the command of the Sud Army (described in Chapter Nine), and was replaced as commander of the I Army by General von Goeben. The new commander decided to move the I Army to a defensive position along the south bank of the Somme between Amiens and St. Quentin, with the 3rd Cavalry providing a cavalry screen north of the river.²⁵

Meanwhile, the 33,000-man Armée du Havre was organized into three divisions under Général Loysel on January 12, but stayed within the city’s fortifications.²⁶ They would provide no more support to offensive actions during the war. The Corps de l’Eure, still in northern Normandy, was divided into two divisions, one of which was detached to the 19th Corps of the 2^e Armée de Bretagne (see Chapter Seven). This neutralized any French offensive capacity in the Northwest, so the German I Army left a small garrison in Rouen, and was able to concentrate the bulk of its forces against the Armée du Nord.

The Parisian army decided to make a final attempt to break out to the Southwest on January 19. To help draw German troops away from the point of attack, Gambetta ordered the Armée du Nord to advance. Faidherbe decided to attack the German supply line at St. Quentin. On January 16, the 40,000-man Armée du Nord moved through Bapaume and occupied defensive positions around St. Quentin two days later. Unfortunately, the 33,000-man German I Army was positioned well to counter this movement, and quickly concentrated around St. Quentin. On January 19, they attacked and decisively routed the French.

The Armée du Nord retreated in great disorder to Cambrai, and ceased to be an effective offensive force.²⁷ Figure 8-9 shows a I Corps fieldpost card mailed shortly after the battle.

Figure 8-9.
January 24, 1871
card from the I
Corps



Datelined at Mézières-s-Oise (southeast of St. Quentin) on January 24, this fieldpost card was posted that day at the 1st Division's fieldpost bureau. That bureau unusually used green ink for its postmark.

The movement by the Armée du Nord alarmed the German high command, so they ordered the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg's XIII Corps to move to Rouen from Alençon on January 18.²⁸ When they arrived there on January 25, the 5th Cavalry Division was also placed under the orders of Mecklenburg. Figure 8-10 shows a letter posted from the XIII Corps at Rouen.



Figure 8-10. February 20,
1871 letter from the XIII
Corps headquarters

This letter received the commanding general's private cachet, and was posted at the XIII Corps' fieldpost bureau on February 20. It arrived in Rostock on February 24.

The Armistice

On January 28, von Goeben received news of the armistice, which took effect on January 31 at noon.²⁹ This ended hostilities in northern France, but Faidherbe re-organized his army on February 10³⁰ to prepare for renewed conflict in the event that the armistice did not hold. Gambetta, however, weakened his army by ordering the 22nd Corps to Normandy on February 15.³¹ Faidherbe also re-organized the fieldpost at this time, and adopted the standard type of postmark also used by the 2^e Armée de la Loire. These new postmarks are listed and illustrated in Appendix A. Figure 8-11 shows an unusual example.

Figure 8-11. January 29, 1871 letter from the 1st Division of the 23rd Corps



Addressed to occupied France, this letter was endorsed to be routed via Belgium and Prussia and accordingly prepaid 40 centimes³² foreign postage to Prussia. It was postmarked at the fieldpost bureau for the 1st Division of the 23rd Corps and then again at the 23rd Corps' headquarters bureau. It arrived in Bayon (south of Nancy) on January 31. This is the only known example of the "23rd CORPS/POSTES/QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL" postmark.

The Armée du Nord's headquarters was also provided with a new postmark, as shown in Figure 8-12.



Figure 8-12. February 1871 letter from the headquarters of the Armée du Nord

This letter was posted at the fieldpost bureau for the headquarters of the Armée du Nord, where it received a blue "ARMÉE DU NORD/POSTES/GRAND QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL" postmark. The 30

centimes franking³³ was cancelled by a blue “P.P.” marking, and the letter passed through the nearby Lille post office on February 23. It arrived in Namur, Belgium on February 24.

The majority of Armée du Nord postmarks are blue, but a few from the headquarters bureau and the 1st Division of the 22nd Corps were marked in black. Figure 8-13 shows an example from the 22nd Corps.



Figure 8-13.
February 13, 1871
letter from the 1st
Division of the
22nd Corps

This letter was postmarked at the 1st Division’s fieldpost bureau and marked for a military free frank, per the distinctive “P.P.” marking seen only on Armée du Nord mail.³⁴ It was taken to the nearby Arras post office, which postmarked it on February 13. The addressee, payeur officer of the 17th Corps Cavalry Division in the 2^e Armée de la Loire,³⁵ postmarked it “17^E CORPS/POSTES/D^{ON} DE CAVALERIE” on the reverse. It was docketed as received near Laval on February 18.

Mail Addressed to the Armée du Nord during the Armistice

A September 8, 1870 French Postal Order established the rates for communications between German-occupied France and unoccupied France, and stipulated that payment of 20 centimes single-rate domestic postage was mandatory on mail to occupied France.³⁶ Mail received in unoccupied France from the occupation area was subject to 30 centimes postage due (including the 50% premium for unpaid letters), unless 20 centimes had been prepaid in French stamps by the sender. Mail was exchanged via Prussia and Belgium. This circuitous route was eliminated in a February 14 postal convention that established more direct exchange points at Orléans, Amiens and Le Mans.³⁷

Mail from occupied cities such as Rouen and Amiens was received by soldiers in the Armée du Nord under the terms of the September 8 postal order. However, since the soldiers were entitled to a military free frank, no French postage was to be collected on incoming mail. Figure 8-14 shows an example.



Figure 8-14. February 1871 letter from Rouen to the 22nd Corps

Posted in German-occupied Rouen, this mourning envelope was prepaid 20 centimes occupation postage by an Alsace-Lorraine Issue stamp that was cancelled by the provisional "ROUEN *1871*" postmark. Since it was sent prior to the February 14 establishment of the exchange office at Amiens, the letter was routed via Prussia and Belgium to northern France. It entered France at Lille on February 17, per the red "Prusse Lille" entry marking, and was received at Cambrai a day later. Addressed to a soldier in the 22nd Corps and boldly endorsed "Armée du Nord," this letter was correctly rated for a military free frank per the black "P.P." marking.

Figure 8-15 shows a mis-rated example from Amiens (unfolded to show the markings on the reverse).



Figure 8-15. January 1871 letter from Amiens to the 22nd Corps

This letter was mailed in German-occupied Amiens and was prepaid the occupation postage by a 20 centimes Alsace-Lorraine Issue stamp. The post office cancelled the stamp with its provisional blue "AMIENS 1871 POSTE" postmark and routed the letter via Prussia and Belgium to northern France. It was received in Cambrai on February 7, but was incorrectly assessed 30 centimes French postage due and

forwarded to the nearby 22nd Corps. The 2nd Division received the letter and marked it on the reverse with its blue postmark.

Figure 8-16 illustrates a censored letter from occupied eastern France, opened to show the reverse.



Figure 8-16. January 10, 1871 letter from occupied Bischweiler to the 22nd Corps

Posted in occupied Bischwiller (northeast of Strasbourg), this letter was addressed to a soldier in the 24th Infantry Regiment depot at Cambrai, and was prepaid the postage to unoccupied France by a pair of ten centimes Alsace-Lorraine Issue stamps. The letter received a January 10 German “Bischweiler” postmark, and was sent to northern France via Prussia and Belgium. It was delayed and censored per the blue “Auf militairischen Befehl angehalten” (examined on military order) marking, and was finally received in Cambrai on February 3. The soldier had been incorporated into the 22nd Corps, so the letter was rated for a military free frank, per the black “PD” marking.

Ratifications for a preliminary peace treaty were exchanged on March 2. Accordingly, the Armée du Nord was disbanded on March 7, 1871.

The Orders of Battle Referenced in this Chapter

French 22^e Corps November 21 Order of Battle³⁸

Commandant: Général Farre

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Lecointe)

2^ebis Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs¹ (Commandant Giovaninelli – wounded on November 26)

67^e Régiment de Marche – 5^e B^{ons} de Marche des 33^e, 65^e et 75^e Régiments de Ligne (Lt. Col. de Gislain)

46^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Nord – 1^{er}, 2^e et 3^e B^{ons} (Lt. Colonel Folliot de Fierville)

2^e Brigade (Colonel Derroja)

1^{er}bis Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs² (Commandant Jan – killed on November 26)

68^e Régiment de Marche – 2 B^{ons} du 24^e Régt de Ligne, B^{on} du 64^e Régt de Ligne (Lt. Colonel Pittié)

47^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Nord – 4^e, 5^e et 6^e B^{ons} (Lt. Colonel Gallier)

3^e Brigade (Colonel Dufaure du Bessol)

20^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs (Commandant Hecquet)

69^e Régiment de Marche (2 B^{ons} du 43^e Régiment de Ligne, B^{on} d'infanterie de marine) (Lt. Col. Foerster)

48^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Nord – 7^e, 8^e et 9^e B^{ons} (Lt. Colonel Duhamel)

Garnison d'Amiens (Général Paulze d'Ivoy)

2^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs (Chef de Bataillon Boschis)

2^e Bataillon de dépôt du 43^e Régiment de Ligne (Commandant Fradin de Linières)

3^e Bataillon de Fusiliers Marins (2 compagnies) (Lieutenant de Vaisseau Rolland)

3^e Bataillon de Garde Mobile de la Marne (Chef de Bataillon du Hamel)

4^e Bataillon de Garde Mobile de la Somme (Commandant Huré)

44^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Gard – 2^e, 3^e et 5^e B^{ons} (Lt. Colonel Saignemorte)

10^e Bataillon de Garde Mobile du Nord

1^{er} Bataillon de la Légion de Mobilisées d'Amiens (Commandant Dursent)

Bataillon des Volontaires de la Somme

2 bataillons de Garde Nationale d'Amiens

¹ Later the 19^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche

² Later the 18^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche

French Armée du Nord December 18 Order of Battle³⁹

Commandant: Général Faidherbe

22^e Corps (Général Lecointe)

1^{re} Division (Général Derroja)

1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel Aynès – killed on January 19)

2^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs (Commandant Boschis)

67^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Fradin de Linières)

91^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Pas-de-Calais (Lt. Colonel Fovel)

2^e Brigade (Colonel Pittié)

17^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs (Commandant Moynier)

68^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Cottin)

46^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Nord (Lt. Colonel de Lalène-Laprade)

2^e Division (Général Dufaure du Bessol – wounded on January 19)

1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel Foerster)

20^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs (Commandant Hecquet)

69^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel de la Broue)

44^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Gard (Lt. Colonel Lemaire)

2^e Brigade (Lt. Colonel de Gislain)

18^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs (Commandant Vaton)

72^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Delpech)

101^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Somme/Marne (Lt. Colonel de Brouard)

French Armée du Nord December 18 Order of Battle (continued)

23^e Corps (Général Paulze d'Ivoy)

1^{re} Division (Amiral Moulac – replaced January 1 by Capitaine de Vaisseau Payen)

1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel Michelet)

19^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs (Commandant Wasmer – killed on January 18)

Régiment de Fusiliers Marins (Capitaine de Frégate Granger)

48^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Nord (Lt. Colonel Degoutin)

2^e Brigade (Capitaine de Frégate de Lagrange)

24^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs (Commandant de Négrier – wounded on January 19)

73^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Jacob)

47^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Nord (Lt. Colonel Lebel)

2^e Division (Général Robin)

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Brusley)

1^{er} Bataillon de Voltigeurs (Commandant Foutrein)

1^{er} Régiment de Marche de Garde Nationale Mobilisée du Nord (Lt. Colonel Loy)

2^e Régiment de Marche de Garde Nationale Mobilisée du Nord (Lt. Colonel de Courval)

2^e Brigade (Colonel Amos)

2^e Bataillon de Voltigeurs (Commandant Lacourte-Dumont)

3^e Régiment de Marche de Garde Nationale Mobilisée du Nord (Lt. Colonel Chas)

4^e Régiment de Marche de Garde Nationale Mobilisée du Nord (Lt. Colonel Brabant)

Brigade Isnard

3^e Bataillon de Marche du 24^e Régiment de Ligne (Commandant Morlet)

73^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Castaigne)

1^{er} et 2^e Bataillons de Garde Mobile des Ardennes (Lt. Colonel Giovaninelli)

43^e Régiment Provisoire (Lt. Colonel Vintimille)

Brigade Pauly

1^{er} Bataillon de Chasseurs Mobilisés d'Arras (Commandant Garreau)

1^{er} Régiment de Garde Nationale Mobilisée du Pas-de-Calais (Lt. Col. Poupard)

2^e Régiment de Garde Nationale Mobilisée du Pas-de-Calais (Lt. Col. Chouquet)

German I Army November 15 Order of Battle⁴⁰

Commandantur: General von Manteuffel (replaced by General von Goeben on January 7)

I Armee-Korps (General von Manteuffel – replaced by General von Bentheim on November 22)

1. Infanterie Division (General von Bentheim – replaced by General von Falkenstein on December 9)

1. Infanterie Brigade (General von Böcking)

Grenadier Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel von Massow)

Infanterie Regiment Nr. 41 (Lt. Colonel von Meerscheidt-Hüllessem)

2. Infanterie Brigade (General von Falkenstein – replaced by Colonel von Busse on December 9)

Grenadier Regiment Nr. 3 (Colonel von Legat)

Infanterie Regiment Nr. 43 (Col. von Busse – replaced by Lt. Col. von Rosenberg on Dec. 9)

Ostpreussen Jäger Bataillon Nr. 1 (Lt. Colonel Ploetz)

Litthauen Dragoner Regiment Nr. 1 (Major Preinitzer)

2. Infanterie Division (General von Pritzelwitz)

3. Infanterie Brigade (General von Memerty)

Grenadier Regiment Nr. 4 (Colonel von Tietzen Hennig)

Infanterie Regiment Nr. 44 (Major Bock)

4. Infanterie Brigade (General von Zglinitzki)

Grenadier Regiment Nr. 5 (Col. von Einem – replaced by Major von der Dollen on Dec. 9)

Infanterie Regiment Nr. 45 (Colonel von Mützscheffahl)

Ostpreussen Dragoner Regiment Nr. 10 (Colonel von der Goltz)

German I Army November 15 Order of Battle (continued)

VIII Armee-Korps (General von Goeben – replaced by General von Barnekow on January 7)

- 15. Infanterie Division (General von Kummer)
 - 29. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Bock)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 33 (Lt. Colonel von Henning)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 65 (Lt. Colonel von Dörnberg)
 - 30. Infanterie Brigade (General von Strubberg)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 28 (Colonel von Rosenzweig)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 68 (Colonel von Sommerfeld)
 - Rheintal Jäger Bataillon Nr. 8 (Major von Oppeln-Bronikowski)
 - Koenigs-Husar Regiment Nr. 7 (Colonel von Loë)
- 16. Infanterie Division (General von Barnekow)
 - 31. Infanterie Brigade (General von Gneisenau)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 29 (Lt. Colonel von Blumroeder)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 69 (Colonel Beyer von Karger)
 - 32. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Rex)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 40 (Lt. Colonel Reinike)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 70 (Colonel Mettler)
 - Rheintal Husar Regiment Nr. 9 (Colonel von Wittich)

3. Reserve-Division (General Schuler von Senden)

- Kombiniert Brigade (General von Blanckensee)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 19 (Colonel von Goeben)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 81 (Colonel von Sell)
- 3. Reserve Kavallerie Brigade (General von Strantz)
 - Reserve Dragonen Regiment Nr. 1 (Major von Keltsch)
 - Reserve Husar Regiment Nr. 2 (Colonel von Glasenapp)

3. Kavallerie Division (General von der Groeben)

- 6. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Mirus)
 - Rheintal Kürassier Regiment Nr. 8 (Colonel von Roedern)
 - Rheintal Ulanen Regiment Nr. 7 (Lt. Colonel von Pestel)
- 7. Kavallerie Brigade (General von Dohna)
 - Westfalia Ulanen Regiment Nr. 5 (Colonel von Reitzenstein)
 - Hannover Ulanen Regiment Nr. 14 (Colonel von Lüderitz)

12. Kavallerie (Sachsen) Division (General Graf zur Lippe) – detached to the North on September 26

- 23. Kavallerie Brigade (General Krug von Nidda)
 - Garde-Reiter Regiment Nr. 5 (Colonel von Carlowitz)
 - 1. Sachsen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 17 (Colonel von Miltitz)
- 24. Kavallerie Brigade (General Senfft von Pilsach)
 - Reiter Regiment Nr. 3 (Colonel von Standtfeat)
 - 2. Sachsen Ulanen Regiment Nr. 18 (Lt. Colonel von Trosky)

- 2. Garde-Regiment zu Fuss (Colonel von Kanitz) – detached from the Garde Corps on Sept. 26

Kombiniert Garde Brigade (General Prinz Albrecht von Preussen)

- Garde Husar Regiment (Lt. Col. von Hymmen) – detached from the Garde Corps on Sept. 27
- Garde Ulanen Regiment Nr. 2 (Major von Kaphengst) – detached on September 27
- Infanterie Regiment Nr. 27 (Col. von Pressentin) – detached from the IV Corps on Sept. 27

Endnotes

- ¹ Modified from a map in Howard, Michael, *The Franco-Prussian War*, (Methuen: London, 1981), end pages.
- ² The 24th at Cambrai, 33rd at Arras, 40th at Givet, 43rd at Amiens/Péronne, 64th at Calais, 65th at Valenciennes, 75th at Lille and the 91st at Lille. In addition, there were four Chasseur Battalion depots that provided Bataillons de Marche de Chasseurs. Rousset, Léonce, *Histoire Générale de la Guerre Franco-Allemande (1870-1871)*, (Librairie Illustrée: Paris, 1911), Volume II, page 178.
- ³ Martinien, Aristide, *La Guerre de 1870-1871, La Mobilisation de l'Armée*, (L. Fournier: Paris, 1911), page 149.
- ⁴ Faidherbe, Louis, *Campagne de l'Armée du Nord en 1870-1871*, (E. Dentu: Paris, 1871), page 12.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, page 12.
- ⁶ Section Historique de l'État-Major de l'Armée, *La Guerre de 1870-71, Campagne de l'Armée du Nord, II Pont-Noyelles*, (R. Chapelot: Paris, 1903), page 39.
- ⁷ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 182.
- ⁸ Blumé, Wilhelm, *Operations of the German Armies in France from Sedan to the End of the War*, translated by E.M. Jones, (King & Co.: London, 1872), page 52.
- ⁹ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 180.
- ¹⁰ Grand État-Major Prussien, Section Historique, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume II: Événements dans le Nord de la France depuis la fin de Novembre, dans le Nord-Ouest depuis le Commencement de Décembre et Siège de Paris depuis le Commencement de Décembre jusqu'à l'Armistice. Opérations dans le Sud-Est du Milieu de Décembre au Milieu de Janvier*, (J. Dumaine: Paris, 1880), pages 557-559.
- ¹¹ The 1st Division of the I Corps had been relieved from the siege of Mézières by the 3rd Reserve Division on November 23. Rustow, Wilhelm, *The War for the Rhine Frontier 1870*, (Blackwood & Sons: London, 1871), Volume III, page 41.
- ¹² Wartensleben, Herrmann von, *Operations of the First Army under General von Manteuffel*, (King: London, 1873), page 80.
- ¹³ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, pages 205-206.
- ¹⁴ Rolin, L., *Campagne de 1870-1871, La Guerre dans l'Ouest*, (E. Plon: Paris, 1874), page 265.
- ¹⁵ Le Faure, Amédée, *Histoire de la Guerre Franco-Allemande 1870-71*, (Garnier Frères: Paris, 1886), Volume II, page 248.
- ¹⁶ The 22nd Corps was separated into the 22nd and 23rd Corps on December 18. Section Historique, *Op. Cit.*, page 12.
- ¹⁷ Sosthène-Émile Godfroy is listed as a postal commissioner for the Armée du Nord in Steenackers, François-Frédéric, *Les Télégraphes et les Postes pendant la Guerre de 1870-1871*, (G. Charpentier: Paris, 1883), page 522.
- ¹⁸ French letter writers of this period often used abbreviations when dating their letters. Thus, “7bre” means “Sept”embre; “8bre” means “Octo”bre; “9bre” means “Neuve”embre (November); and “Xbre” means “Dix”embre (December).
- ¹⁹ As described in Chapter Five, Général Ducrot planned a breakout of his 2^e Armée through Le Bourget on December 7. The attack was repulsed by the Germans on December 21.
- ²⁰ Faidherbe, *Op. Cit.*, page 32.
- ²¹ Modified from Howard, *Op. Cit.*, page 390.
- ²² Blumé, *Op. Cit.*, page 155.
- ²³ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 222.
- ²⁴ The 3rd Brigade of the I Corps initiated the siege, but was relieved by the 16th Division on December 30. Le Faure, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 255.
- ²⁵ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 252.
- ²⁶ Rolin, *Op. Cit.*, page 359.
- ²⁷ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 270.
- ²⁸ As described in Chapter Seven, Mecklenburg had been supporting the II Army in its attack on the French 2^e Armée de la Loire at Le Mans. *Ibid.*, Volume II, page 276.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, Volume II, page 271.
- ³⁰ Faidherbe, *Op. Cit.*, page 69.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, page 70. This movement is also described in Chapter Seven.
- ³² 1870 “Bordeaux” Issue 20 centimes type III, report 1, positions six and seven, in the ultramarine shade.
- ³³ 1870 “Bordeaux” Issue ten centimes, report 1, position six, and 20 centimes type III, report 1, position seven.
- ³⁴ As seen in Chapter Ten, this “P.P.” marking was later used by the Armée de Versailles during the suppression of the Paris Commune.
- ³⁵ Ernst Hébert is listed as a postal commissioner in the 17th Corps in Steenackers, *Op. Cit.*, page 520.
- ³⁶ Chauvet Michèle and Brun, Jean-François, *Introduction à l'Histoire Postale de 1848 à 1878*, (Brun et Fils: Paris, 2007), page 741.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, pages 749-50.
- ³⁸ Lehautcourt, Pierre, *Campagne du Nord en 1870-1871*, (Berger-Levrault: Paris, 1897), page 291.
- ³⁹ Section Historique, *Op. Cit.*, page 12.
- ⁴⁰ Lehautcourt, *Op. Cit.*, pages 305-313.

Chapter Nine

Campaign in the East: October 6 to February 13

Introduction

By the end of September 1870, four German armies had advanced deep into France and had trapped two-thirds of the French regular army in the sieges of Metz and Paris. The necessity of maintaining those sieges, however, immobilized the German armies. Given that static situation, the Germans' greatest vulnerability was to an interruption in the flow of replacements and supplies to the besieging armies.

The French military leadership was very aware of this German vulnerability, and formulated several plans to attack the critical Strasbourg-Lunéville supply line with new eastern armies moving north from Belfort and Epinal. The Germans countered with new formations tasked with defending Alsace-Lorraine. Figure 9-1 shows the area of operations in the East.

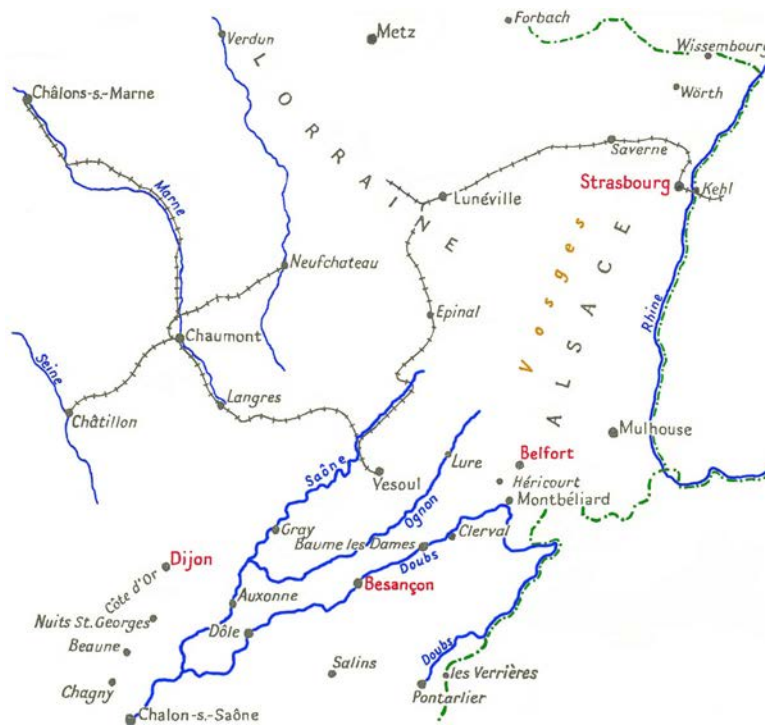


Figure 9-1. Theater of Operations in the East¹

This chapter examines the formation and movements of the new French and German armies in eastern France, as illustrated by letters handled by their fieldpost services. The German fieldpost service continued mostly as it had since the start of the war, but the French developed new fieldpost services for their new formations.

The German Supply Lines

Three railroad frontier crossings could be used to supply the German armies in France, as shown in Figure 9-2. Three major railroad lines extended west from those crossings. First, a northern line between Forbach and Metz easily supplied the large besieging army at Metz. French resistance in the fortresses of Thionville and Mézières, however, prevented supplies from moving any farther west than Metz until the January 2

capture of Mézières. Second, a southern line ran from Strasbourg to Mulhouse, and then west to Chaumont via Belfort. The French fortresses at Belfort and Langres kept this line unavailable to the Germans throughout the war. Accordingly, the majority of German supplies were carried on the central line from Strasbourg to Epernay via Nancy.



Figure 9-2. Map of railroad supply lines (in orange)²

The October 27 fall of Metz released the I Army into northern France, and the II Army to Orléans, so branches off the central route to Soissons and Troyes (shown as dashed lines in Figure 9-2) were used for their supplies, starting in November.

The Formation of a New German Army in the East

It was necessary to capture the fortified city of Strasbourg before the Germans could gain full control of the central railroad supply line. Immediately after the German III Army's August 6 victory at Wörth, its Baden Division was detached to initiate the siege of Strasbourg, as described in Chapter Four. They were reinforced there by the Garde Landwehr Division and the 1st Landwehr Division, with General von Werder in overall command. During the seven-week siege, von Werder was also tasked with suppressing French resistance in Alsace and the Vosges Mountains, so he sent several detachments as far south as Mulhouse.³

The fall of Strasbourg on September 27 released the three besieging divisions for new assignments. The newly opened central supply line was used to transport the Garde Landwehr Division to Paris,⁴ while the 1st Landwehr Division was left to garrison Strasbourg. The Baden Division was incorporated into the newly formed XIV Corps, which was filled out by two Prussian infantry regiments and two Prussian cavalry regiments. Its order of battle is shown at the end of this chapter. On September 30, the XIV Corps was ordered to cross the Vosges mountains, and move toward Châtillon-s-Seine.⁵ Along the way, it was to attempt to capture Langres.

The XIV Corps was also ordered to maintain contact with the German 4th Reserve Division. This division was formed on September 20 from landwehr troops in Baden, and placed under the orders of General von Schmeling.⁶ Its order of battle is also shown at the end of this chapter. As described in Chapter Four, von Schmeling's initial mission was to besiege the French fortresses in Alsace at Neuf-Brisach and Schlestadt (southeast and northeast of Colmar, respectively). The 4th Reserve Division entered Alsace on

October 2, and initiated the siege of Neuf-Brisach five days later.⁷ Von Schmelting then divided his forces, and began the concurrent siege of Schlestadt on October 10.⁸

The New German Fieldpost Services in the East

The Baden Division continued to use the fieldpost materials supplied at the beginning of the war, but new fieldpost bureaus were created for the XIV Corps and the 4th Reserve Division. These bureaus are described and illustrated in Appendix A. Figure 9-3 shows a XIV Corps fieldpost card.



Figure 9-3.
Nov. 20, 1870
card from the
XIV Corps

This postcard was datelined at Dijon on November 19 by a soldier in the 34th Pomeranian Fusilier Regiment of the Prussian infantry brigade in the XIV Corps. It was posted at the headquarters' fieldpost bureau on November 20, and arrived in Stettin five days later.

Figure 9-4 shows a letter posted at the Baden Division's fieldpost bureau.



Figure 9-4. November
11, 1870 letter from the
Baden Division

This letter was endorsed by a soldier from the 1st Lieb-Grenadier Regiment in the Baden Division's 1st Brigade. It was postmarked by the small format “GR.BAD.FELDPOST” on November 11, and arrived in Stuttgart on November 15. The letter also bears a private unit handstamp from the 3rd Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Brigade, suggesting that the small Baden postmark was assigned to the 2nd Brigade.

Figure 9-5 shows a letter from the 4th Reserve Division.

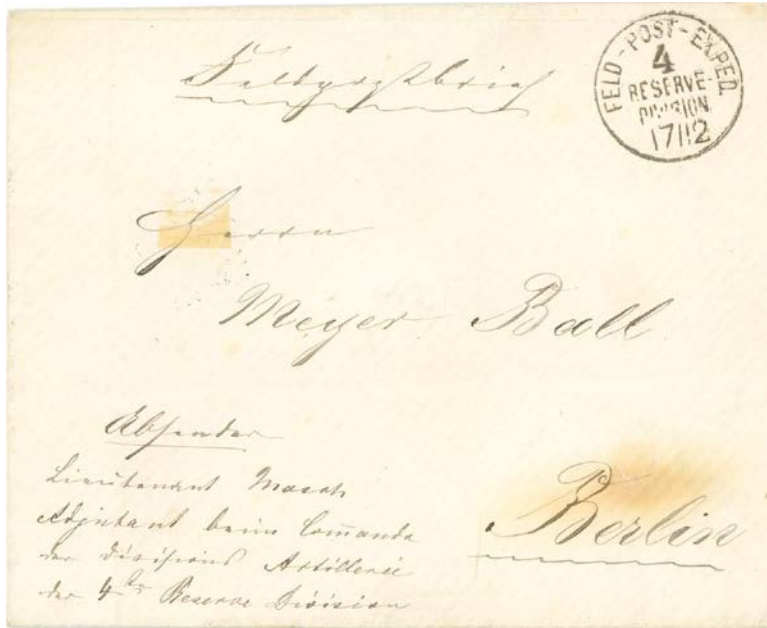


Figure 9-5.
December 17, 1870
letter from the 4th
Reserve Division

This letter from an artillery lieutenant was postmarked at the 4th Reserve Division's fieldpost bureau on December 17. It arrived in Berlin on December 22.

The Formation of New French Armies in the East

The retreat of the French 1st Corps, 5th Corps and 7th Corps after the battle of Wörth left no regular army units in Alsace or the Vosges after August 16. By the end of September, a few Garde Mobile units and some irregular franc-tireur bands had collected around Epinal and Belfort. To strengthen them, an army brigade under the orders of Général Dupré was detached from the 15th Corps at Vierzon and sent to Epinal, where it arrived on October 4.⁹ This brought the French strength at that strategic point to about 6,000 men. The next day, Général Cambriels arrived to take overall command in the East, but did not have time to re-organize his forces before they were attacked northeast of Epinal.¹⁰

The French put up a good fight at the October 6 Battle of La Bourgonce, but were forced to retreat in the face of superior German numbers.¹¹ On October 11, Cambriels ordered a further retreat from Epinal to a strong defensive position around Besançon.¹² By October 21, Cambriels had re-organized and reinforced his forces into the two-division Armée de l'Est. Their order of battle is shown at the end of this chapter.

While at Besançon, Cambriels also introduced a fieldpost service for his new army. The service used simple blue two-line “ARMÉE DE L'EST” postmarks and a circular “PP” marking. These markings are described and illustrated in Appendix A, and are very rare since the fieldpost was in existence for only 22 days. Figure 9-6 shows an example. Dated November 4 at Auxon-le-Dessus (northwest of Besançon), this letter from the payeur officer of the Garde Mobile des Pyrénées-Orientales includes a listing of the

order of battle for the 1st Division's 2nd Brigade. It was postmarked "ARMÉE DE L'EST/1^{re} Division" and marked "PP" to indicate a military free frank. It arrived in southern France on November 9.



Figure 9-6. Nov. 4, 1870 letter from the 1st Division of the Armée de l'Est

On October 9, the renowned Italian republican, General Giuseppe Garibaldi, arrived at Tours to offer his services to the new French republic. Gambetta offered him command of what would become the Armée des Vosges. The independence of this command was to cause problems, but republicans in France were ecstatic over his arrival. Figure 9-7 shows a letter addressed to him from besieged Paris.



Figure 9-7. October 25, 1870 letter to General Garibaldi from Paris

Posted in Paris on October 25, this letter was carried by the balloon *Vauban*, which left on October 27 and landed in occupied territory near Verdun. Its mail was smuggled to unoccupied France via Chaumont on October 29. This letter was addressed to Garibaldi at Tours, where it arrived on November 2. The general had left on October 14 to begin assembling his army at Dôle, so it was forwarded there. The sender described the joy experienced in Paris upon the news of his arrival at Tours. With considerable optimism, he also predicted that, "we are waiting until you are ready in the departments and then we will together deliver the great blow that finally crushes these barbarian hordes."

The presence of the German XIV Corps at Dijon caused the Armée des Vosges to retreat from Dôle to Autun (southwest of Beaune) on November 8.¹³ By the end of November, the Armée des Vosges reached its full strength of about 12,000 men in four brigades, and their order of battle is shown at the end of this chapter. Apart from a few successful skirmishes, this army would not play a significant role in the eastern campaign until it re-occupied Dijon in January 1871.

The Armée des Vosges used a variety of private handstamps to justify military free franks. Figure 9-8 shows an interesting example from the headquarters at Autun.



Figure 9-8. Dec. 10, 1870 letter from the Armée des Vosges

Endorsed by a “République Française/Armée des Vosges/Quartier Général” private unit cachet, this letter was posted with a military free frank (per the black “P.P.”) at Autun on December 10. It arrived in eastern France on December 13. Later in the war, the Armée des Vosges was provided with a fieldpost service that used a two-ring postmark. This postmark is illustrated in Appendix A, and Figure 9-9 shows an example.



Figure 9-9. February 9, 1871 letter from the Armée des Vosges

Endorsed “Garde nationale mobilisée du Jura,” this letter was written north of Chalon-s-Saône on February 9. It was postmarked “ARMÉE DES VOSGES/POSTES/Q^{ER} G^{AL}” and arrived in western France on February 15 with a military free frank. It describes the January 21-23 defense of Dijon.

Another small independent command in the East was formed on October 19 to protect Dijon. The Armée de la Côte d'Or consisted of about 18,000 Gardes Mobiles and Gardes Nationales Mobilisées who retreated from Dijon to Dôle on October 28.¹⁴ After the October 31 loss of Dijon, they were absorbed into the forces forming at Lyon on November 1. Very little mail is known from this short-lived army, which was not provided with a fieldpost service. Figure 9-10 illustrates a letter sent right after the retreat.

Figure 9-10. October 29, 1870 letter from the Armée de la Côte d'Or



Endorsed “Armée de la Côte d'Or,” this letter from a soldier in the Francs-Tireurs du Midi was postmarked at Dôle on October 29. It arrived in southern France on November 2.

The Fighting Begins in the East

The absence of regular French army units in Alsace and the Vosges Mountains left the mountain passes open to von Werder's troops. Accordingly, he sent the XIV Corps across the Vosges just after the 4th Reserve Division's October 2 arrival in Alsace. Their arrival on the western side of the mountains prompted the French withdrawal to Besançon, so von Werder advanced slowly to Epinal. On October 17, the German high command ordered him to pursue Cambriels through Lure and Vesoul and to attack the French position at Besançon.¹⁵ Figure 9-11 shows a detailed map of this area.

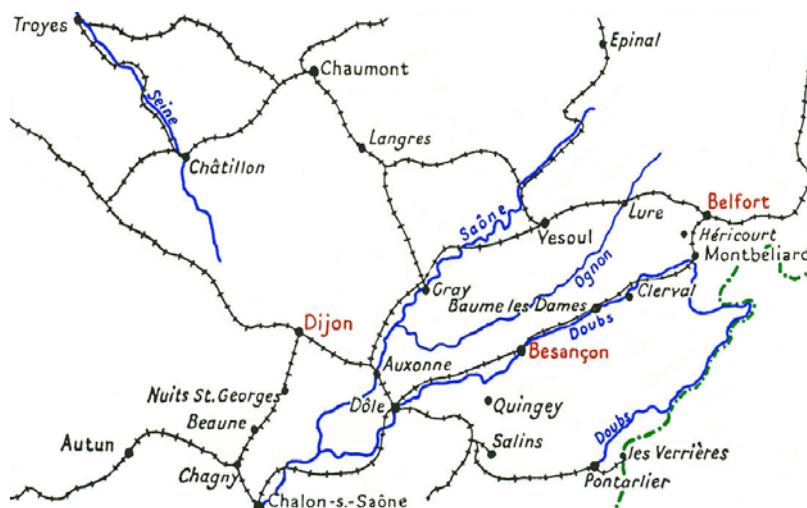


Figure 9-11. Detailed map of the region around Besançon

On October 22, von Werder made contact with the French along the Ognon River, but was stopped by the French north of Besançon. The XIV Corps fell back to a central position at Gray and, after a short fight on October 30, occupied Dijon on October 31. The Baden Division was left to garrison Dijon, and the XIV headquarters was established at Vesoul.¹⁶

Cambriels' re-organized Armée de l'Est was ready for action on October 21, just in time to repel the XIV Corps at the Ognon River. Then, mirroring the XIV Corps' westward movement to Gray and Dijon, the Armée de l'Est moved west to Chagny on November 8. This was done to protect against further movements by the XIV Corps, and also to help defend against the German II Army, which was then advancing from Metz toward Troyes. Upon its November 13 arrival at Chagny, the Armée de l'Est was re-named the 20th Corps and ordered to reinforce the Armée de la Loire at Gien (southeast of Orléans).

On October 29, General von Werder was given command of the 1st Landwehr Division and the 4th Reserve Division, in addition to the XIV Corps. He also received new orders to protect Alsace, cover the left flank of the II Army marching toward Orléans, and besiege the fortresses of Neuf-Brisach and Belfort.¹⁷ The 1st Landwehr Division was replaced at Strasbourg by 12 new landwehr battalions and sent to Belfort,¹⁸ where it initiated the siege on November 4, as described in Chapter Four.

The departure of the 20th Corps left only the besieged Belfort garrison and Garibaldi's Armée des Vosges to defend the region. Accordingly, the French government ordered the formation of a new division on November 20. This division was placed under the command of Général Cremer on November 29 at Nuits, where it was built up to 12,500 men in two brigades.¹⁹ Its order of battle is shown at the end of this chapter. An additional defensive force in the region was the Armée de Lyon, whose 33,000 men were grouped into two divisions under the orders of Général Bressolles on December 1.²⁰

Meanwhile, the German 4th Reserve Division reinforced the XIV Corps at Vesoul on November 22,²¹ having become available after the November 10 surrender of Neuf-Brisach. This allowed von Werder to concentrate most of his troops around Dijon. Figure 9-12 shows a letter posted there in late November.



Figure 9-12. November 30, 1870 letter from the Baden Division

Written by a French civilian in Dijon, this letter was mailed at the Baden fieldpost. They censored the letter per the "Commandantur von Dijon" handstamp, and applied the large format "GR.BAD.FELD POSTEXPEDITION" postmark on November 30. After a delay, it arrived in northern France on February 24, where the free frank was disallowed and 30 centimes postage due was assessed.

In addition to the 4th Reserve Division, other German forces were moved into the region. As illustrated in Figure 9-2, supplies for the advancing II Army were routed via Chaumont and Châtillon, so the French garrison at Langres represented a threat to that vital supply line. On November 29, the German high command ordered the 13th Division (VII Corps) to move from Metz to a defensive position at Châtillon-s-Seine.²² They arrived on December 13, and were joined there a month later by the 14th Division.²³

On December 12, French generals Bressolles, Cremer and Garibaldi participated in a war council at Chalon-s-Saône, where they attempted to establish a unity of command in the Saône River valley. Garibaldi refused to subordinate his command, so the conference failed to coordinate the actions of the three independent forces in the region.²⁴

Fortunately for them, the XIV Corps was content to stay in its positions at Dijon and Vesoul. On December 13, however, von Werder received new instructions from German headquarters. He was to maintain and support the siege of Belfort with the 1st Landwehr Division; protect the supply line and communications with Germany; eliminate sorties by the French garrison at Langres; and occupy the region from Vesoul to Dôle.²⁵

In accordance with his instructions, von Werder attacked Nuits on December 18, as part of a movement toward Dôle. Cremer's division stopped the advance after an intense fight, so the Baden Division returned to Dijon, and Cremer retreated to Chagny. Despite calls for help, the Armée des Vosges did not send reinforcements to Cremer until after the battle.



“Bataille de Nuits – 18 décembre 1870” by Théodore Levigne (1900)

The Formation of Bourbaki's 1^{re} Armée

As described in Chapter Seven, the German II Army's decisive December 3-4 victory at Orléans divided the Armée de la Loire into two unconnected parts. On the day after the battle, the French government gave command of the 15th Corps, 18th Corps and 20th Corps to Général Bourbaki at Bourges. This army was initially called the 1^{re} Armée de la Loire, but later became known more simply as the 1^{re} Armée. At the same time, the other three corps of the old Armée de la Loire were combined into the 2^e Armée de la Loire, commanded by Général Chanzy.

After Bourbaki reorganized his three shattered corps at Vierzon and Bourges from December 11 to December 18, he was ordered to attack Montargis, in an attempt to relieve the unrelenting pressure being placed on Chanzy's 2^e Armée de la Loire by the German II Army. On December 19, Bourbaki began his northward movement toward Gien and Montargis. Before the 1^{re} Armée could get fully underway, however, the French government decided that the movement to Montargis was too risky. Instead, they

proposed a plan to transport the 1^{re} Armée to the East, where it could re-capture Dijon, lift the siege of Belfort, and move north to attack the main German supply line. Bourbaki accepted this new plan, and halted his northward movement.²⁶ Figure 9-13 shows a map of Bourbaki's movement to the East.



Figure 9-13. Map of the 1^{re} Armée's movement to the East (light blue arrows) and the German movements in the region (orange arrows)

Bourbaki was given additional troops for this eastward movement. Général Bressolles' Armée de Lyon had been re-named the 24th Corps on December 18 and was assigned to the 1^{re} Armée.²⁷ A day later, Cremer's division at Beaune came under Bourbaki's orders.²⁸ Also on December 19, Bourbaki was ordered to begin the transport of the 18th Corps and the 20th Corps from Bourges to Chagny and Chalon-s-Saône. From there, they would join the 24th Corps in a movement toward Vesoul, while the Cremer Division covered the left flank.²⁹ The 15th Corps was to stay at Bourges and Vierzon in a defensive position, while the Armée des Vosges remained an independent command at Autun. The 1^{re} Armée's order of battle on December 21 is shown at the end of this chapter.

The 1^{re} Armée Fieldpost Service

The 1^{re} Armée used the same fieldpost services that had been provided to the Armée de la Loire. Thus, the 15th Corps used undated two-line postmarks with "15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE" on the top line, and the particular bureau on the lower line. Figure 9-14 shows a letter with this style of 15th Corps postmark.

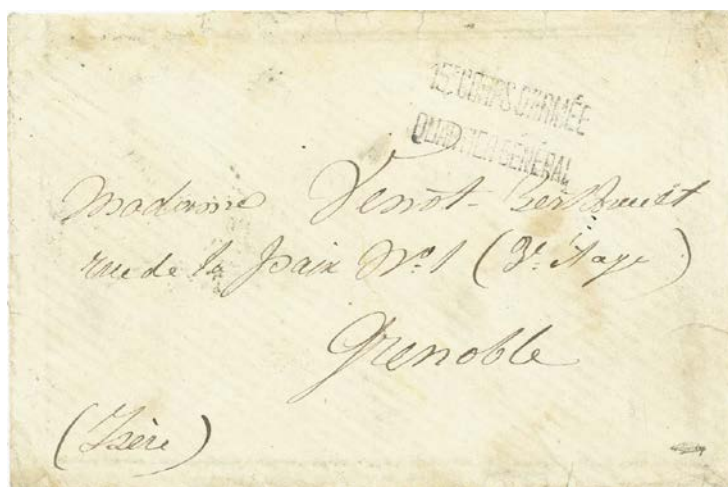


Figure 9-14. December 18, 1870 letter from the 15th Corps headquarters

This letter was postmarked “15^E CORPS D’ARMÉE/QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL” on December 18 at the 15th Corps headquarters bureau at Bourges. It was postmarked the next day in transit at Moulins-s-Allier and arrived in eastern France on December 20.

The 15th Corps remained at Vierzon and Bourges until December 31. The 1st Division was based at Vierzon, and Figure 9-15 shows a letter posted at their fieldpost bureau.



Figure 9-15. December 21, 1870 letter from the 15th Corps’ 1st Division

The 1st Division had moved into their new cantonments in Vierzon on December 21,³⁰ so this letter was written at that time and postmarked “15^E CORPS D’ARMÉE/1^{RE} DIVISION” in red. It was processed on December 22 through Bourges, where it was rated for a military free frank per the black “P.P.” marking. Mail communications with the East were interrupted by the ongoing transfer of the 18th Corps and the 20th Corps, so this letter arrived in Chambéry a week later on December 29.

Around December 31, the 15th Corps fieldpost service received new postmarks. These were also two-line markings, but with “POSTES” on the top line and the 15th Corps unit on the second line. Figure 9-16 shows an example of the new postmarks from the 1st Division.

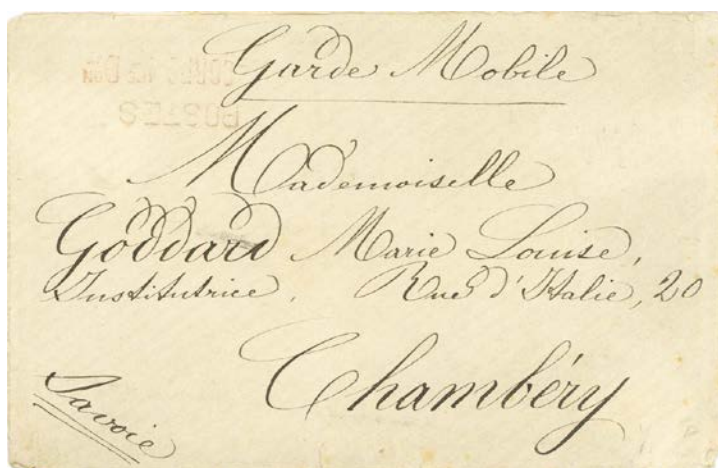


Figure 9-16. December 31, 1870 letter from the 15th Corps’ 1st Division

From the same correspondence as Figure 9-15, this letter was written by a soldier in the 1st Battalion of the Garde Mobile de la Savoie and postmarked “POSTES/15^E CORPS 1^{RE} D’ON” in red. He probably wrote it on December 31, just as the 1st Division was leaving Vierzon for Bourges.³¹ It also followed a circuitous path to eastern France, where it arrived on January 7.

Fieldpost postmarks were prepared for the 18th Corps later in the war. Figure 9-17 shows the only known example.

Figure 9-17. January 1871 letter from the 18th Corps headquarters



This letter was prepaid 30 centimes for the rate via Switzerland to occupied Strasbourg. The ten and 20 centimes stamps were cancelled by the “18^E CORPS/Quartier G^{AL}” postmark at the fieldpost bureau for the 18th Corps’ headquarters east of Besançon. The letter was routed via Bern, Switzerland on January 29 and arrived in Strasbourg on February 11, where it was taxed 30 centimes. It was also censored per a small blue “Auf militairischen Befehl angehalten” (held on military order) cachet on the reverse.

The payeur for the 2nd Division of the 20th Corps continued using the distinctive blue “PP” marking³² prepared for the Armée de l’Est (but not the two-line “Armée de l’Est” postmark) on some mail from that unit. The rest of the 20th Corps was not provided with fieldpost postmarks, so their letters can only be identified by manuscript endorsements or private unit cachets. Figure 9-18 shows a letter with a private 20th Corps unit cachet.



Figure 9-18. January 1, 1871 letter posted at St Jean de Losne from the 20th Corps

Endorsed by a red circular “20 Corps/1^{re} Armee/Etat Major General” private cachet, this letter was posted at St Jean de Losne (northeast of Chalon-s-Saône) on January 1. It arrived in central France on January 10, and was incorrectly assessed for 30 centimes postage due.

No fieldpost materials were prepared for the Cremer Division or the 24th Corps, and letters with specific endorsements from these units are rare. Figure 9-19 shows an example from the 24th Corps.

Figure 9-19. January 17, 1871 letter from the 24th Corps



Postmarked at Lyon on January 17, this letter from the Lyon Red Cross was endorsed by a 24th Corps private unit cachet. It arrived near Mâcon on January 18 free of any postal charges.

The 1^{re} Armée fieldpost markings are illustrated and described in Appendix A.

The 1^{re} Armée Movements and the Formation of the German Sud Army

On December 20, the 18th Corps and the 20th Corps began their march from Bourges to La Charité and Nevers, where they would be transported by train to the East. The embarkation on trains began on December 22, but proceeded slowly.³³ The 1^{re} Armée Reserve was the first to reach Chalon on December 23, but the 18th Corps was not assembled at Chagny until December 30. The 20th Corps reached Chalon and Dôle on January 1, while the 24th Corps re-grouped at Besançon on December 30 after a three-day trip from Lyon.³⁴

Responding to requests by Bourbaki, it was decided on December 31 to send the 15th Corps from Bourges to Clerval (northeast of Besançon). To replace them at Vierzon, the War Ministry decreed the formation of the 25th Corps on January 1.³⁵ After it was formed, the 25th Corps came under the orders of Chanzy's 2^e Armée de la Loire, as described in Chapter Seven. The 15th Corps left from Bourges on January 4-7, and arrived at Clerval from January 8 to January 16.³⁶

Despite the ponderously slow transfer of the 1^{re} Armée, the German high command did not learn of the movement until December 26. Although they did not believe that the entire army was moving east, they still ordered von Werder to concentrate his forces in a strong central position, so he evacuated Dijon for Vesoul on December 27, and directed the 4th Reserve Division to move to a position southeast of Vesoul. A few days later, the II Corps was ordered to move from Paris to Montargis to support the VII Corps at Châtillon,³⁷ and eight battalions of landwehr commanded by General von Debschitz were sent from Strasbourg to reinforce the 1st Landwehr Division around Belfort.³⁸

The Cremer Division re-occupied Dijon on December 31, and waited there until the Armée des Vosges could move from Autun to Dijon. They did not get underway from Autun until January 8, but their movement finally released the Cremer Division for action with the 1^{re} Armée.

Bourbaki arrived in Besançon on January 4, and began the movement toward Vesoul.³⁹ Skirmishes during this movement provided intelligence to the Germans that at least three French corps were converging on Vesoul. Finally alarmed, the German high command realized that their forces were greatly out-numbered in the East and that the defeat of the XIV Corps could open the Alsatian supply lines to interception by the French army. As usual, they reacted quickly. On January 6, the II Corps and the VII Corps were combined with von Werder's forces to create a new Sud Army under the command of General Manteuffel.⁴⁰ His orders were to march east to confront Bourbaki, so the II Corps and the VII Corps waited until the 14th Division arrived at Châtillon on January 12, and then began their march to Gray two days later.⁴¹ The January 6 order of battle for the Sud Army is shown at the end of this chapter.

The Sud Army Fieldpost Service

The II Corps, VII Corps, XIV Corps, 4th Reserve Division and the 1st Landwehr Division continued to use the fieldpost services that had been provided to them previously, and a new fieldpost bureau was created for the Sud Army headquarters. These postmarks are described and illustrated in Appendix A.

The “K.PR.FELDPOSTEXPED.D.OBERCOMM.D.SÜDARMEE” headquarters postmark was only in use for about three months, so it is one of the rarest German fieldpost markings. Figure 9-20 shows a late use.

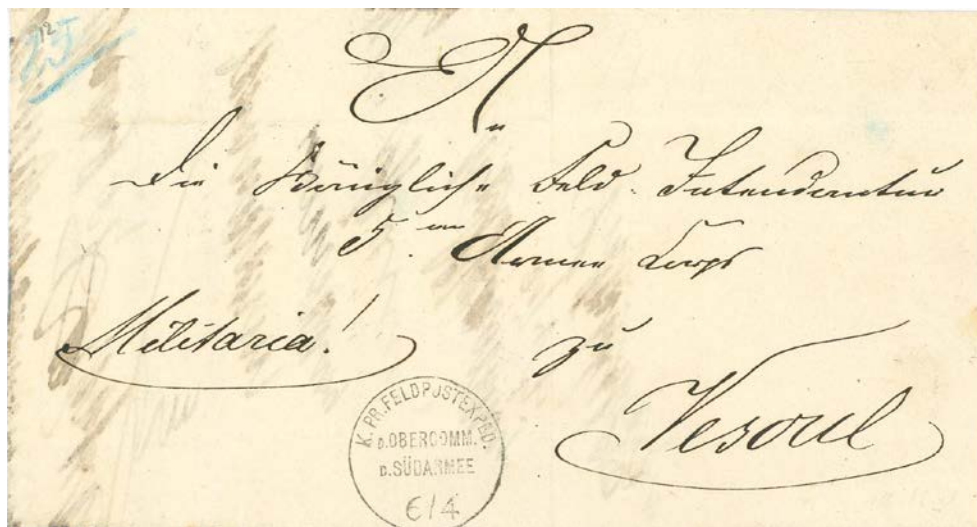


Figure 9-20. April 6, 1871 letter from the Sud Army

Addressed to the V Corps at Vesoul, this letter was postmarked at the fieldpost bureau for the Sud Army's headquarters on April 6, 1871. That bureau was at Dijon at that time, and the V Corps had been moved from Blois to Vesoul on March 12.⁴²

Another rare Sud Army fieldpost marking was used by von der Goltz's Prussian combined infantry and cavalry division in the XIV Corps. Their “FELD-POST-EXP.D.AVANTGARDE 14. ARMEE-CPS” postmark is illustrated in Figure 9-21. This letter was also endorsed by a “Feldpostbrief Sud Armee 4. Rhein Inf. Reg. No. 30” private unit handstamp for the 30th Infantry Regiment, which was part of the von der Goltz Division. The letter was postmarked at the Prussian Division's fieldpost bureau on March 4, and arrived in Lichtenfeld on March 8.

Figure 9-21. March 4, 1871 letter from the XIV Corps' Prussian Division



The Military Operations in January

The 4th Reserve Division attacked the 20th Corps at Villersexel (southeast of Vesoul) on January 9. Both sides received reinforcements during the battle, but the French held their ground. The Germans retreated northeast toward Lure.⁴³



“Attaque par le Feu d'une Maison Crénelée à Villersexel” by Alphonse de Neuville (1875)

Von Werder's forces reached a strong defensive line behind the Lisaine River between Montbéliard and Héricourt on January 11.⁴⁴ This left them in a good position to protect the siege of Belfort.

Bourbaki followed them slowly and finally came into contact with the Germans at the Lisaine River during the January 15-17 battle of Héricourt. The Cremer Division nearly succeeded in turning the German right flank, but von Werder's four divisions held their ground against sixteen French divisions. Bourbaki was finally forced to retreat on January 18, as the Sud Army's rapid advance threatened his line of retreat.⁴⁵ Figure 9-22 shows the dangerous position of the 1^{re} Armée.



Figure 9-22. Map of the Encirclement of Bourbaki's 1^{re} Armée

The movement of Bourbaki's 1^{re} Armée is shown in green, while the pursuing German Sud Army movements are shown in orange. The II Corps and VII Corps were approaching from the upper left of Figure 9-22, while the XIV Corps and 4th Reserve Division followed the 1^{re} Armée. On January 19, advance elements of the Sud Army reached Gray and learned of Bourbaki's retreat from Héricourt. They immediately pivoted south to cut off the line of retreat to the south and west.⁴⁶ This pivot exposed the Sud Army's right flank to the Armée des Vosges at Dijon, but Garibaldi did not take advantage of that, so his inaction failed to slow Manteuffel's advance.

Figure 9-23 illustrates a II Corps fieldpost card posted at this time. Datelined at Bligny-le-Sec (northwest of Dijon) on January 16, this postcard was posted at the II Corps' headquarters on the same day.

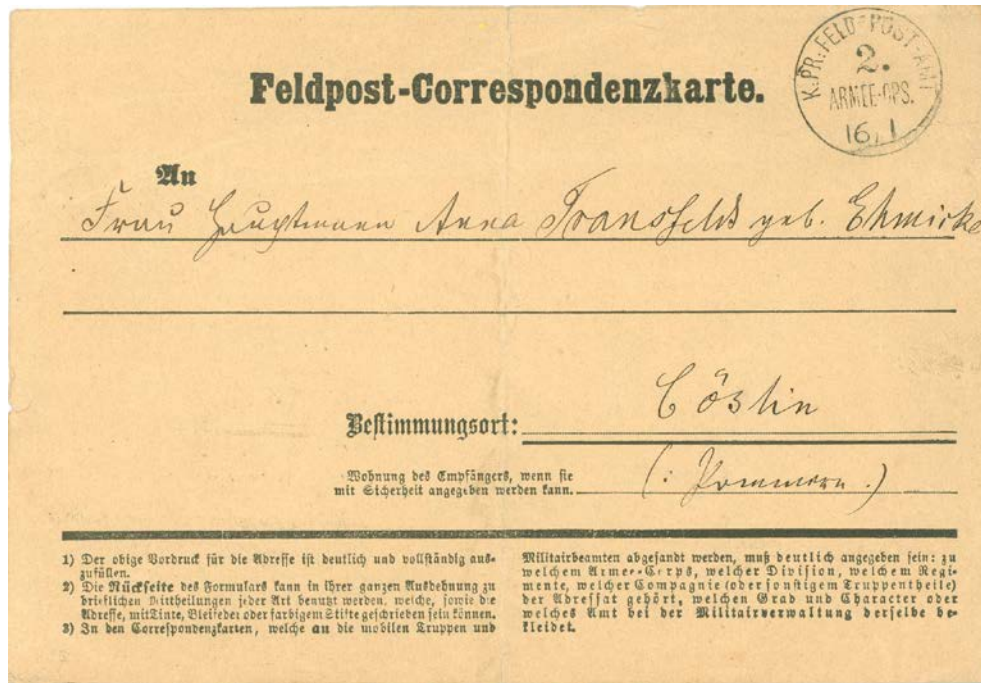


Figure 9-23.
January 16, 1871
card from the
II Corps

Bourbaki retreated slowly toward Besançon, where most of his forces arrived on January 22.⁴⁷ Figure 9-24 shows a letter posted during the retreat from Héricourt.

Figure 9-24. January 1871 letter from the Cavalry Division of the 15th Corps



Written by Général de Longuerue, commander of the 15th Corps Cavalry, this letter was postmarked “POSTES/15^E CORPS CAV^{LE}” at the Cavalry Division’s fieldpost bureau. It received a January 19 transit postmark at the Besançon-Paris railroad bureau, and arrived in central France on January 25.

On January 25, the 1^{re} Armée began a further retreat from Besançon to the French border at Pontarlier, where they arrived on January 29.⁴⁸ By then, the only escape route was a road through the snowbound Jura Mountains, since the Sud Armee had cut the last rail connection to the south on January 26.

On January 29, the German high command notified Manteuffel of the armistice signed a day earlier at Paris.⁴⁹ Incredibly, the French negotiators had excluded the 1^{re} Armée from the armistice,⁵⁰ and had failed to notify the provincial delegation of that exclusion. Gambetta accordingly informed the 1^{re} Armée generals that the armistice applied to them, so they stopped their movements.⁵¹ This fatal error eliminated all possibility of escape, since the Germans continued to press forward aggressively. If the French had continued their retreat to the south, many more units of the 1^{re} Armée would have escaped from the German encirclement. Figure 9-25 shows a letter from the VII Corps announcing the armistice.



Figure 9-25. January 31, 1871 letter from the VII Corps

Written by a soldier in the 73rd Infantry Regiment of the 13th Division, this letter was postmarked at the fieldpost bureau for the VII Corps' headquarters on January 31. The sender added a note on the reverse that reads, "On 30.1.71 an armistice was announced." The letter arrived in Einbeck on February 10.

On January 31, Manteuffel informed the new commander of the 1^{re} Armée, Général Clinchant, that his orders required the continuation of hostilities.⁵² Faced with no other option, Clinchant signed an agreement with Swiss authorities on February 1 that permitted the passage of the 1^{re} Armée from Pontarlier into Switzerland for internment until the end of the war.⁵³ By February 2, the 1^{re} Armée had withdrawn from any further military actions.



"Armée de Bourbaki en Suisse" by Édouard Castres (1881)

After Manteuffel had trapped the 1^{re} Armée against the Swiss border, he turned his attention to the Armée des Vosges at Dijon. On January 31, the 4th Division (II Corps) attacked Dijon. The Armée des Vosges retreated that night to Chagny and Chalon, so the Germans re-occupied Dijon on February 1.⁵⁴

After February 1, the only remaining French forces in the region were the French garrisons at Belfort, Auxonne and Besançon. The 2nd Division of the 15th Corps and the 1st Division of the 20th Corps had been left to protect Besançon,⁵⁵ and a 15th Corps payeur remained with the garrison. Figure 9-26 shows a letter posted at that fieldpost bureau.

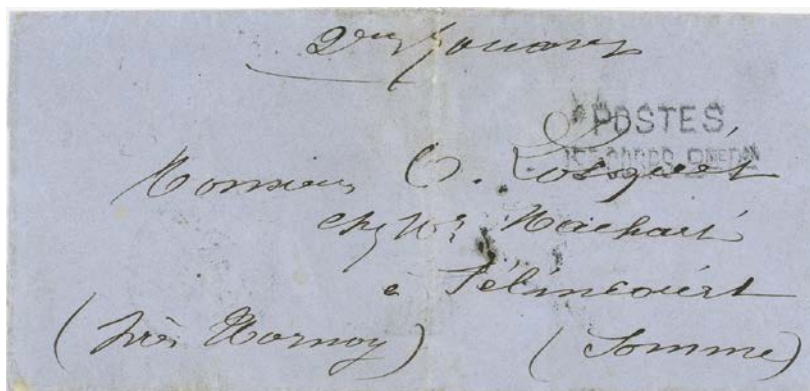


Figure 9-26. March 16, 1871 letter from the 2nd Division of the 15th Corps

Written on March 16 at La Vèze (southeast of Besançon) by a soldier in the 2^e Régiment de Zouaves de Marche, this letter was postmarked "POSTES/15^E CORPS 2^{ME} DON" at the fieldpost bureau for the 15th Corps' 2nd Division. It was processed through the Besançon post office on March 17 and arrived five days

later in northern France. The writer announced that, “in four or five days I expect to be enroute to you.” This is the latest known postmark from the 15th Corps’ fieldpost.

The Aftermath

90,000 soldiers of the 1^{re} Armée were interned in Switzerland, while only 10,000 escaped to the south over the mountain roads.⁵⁶ It was a military disaster on the scale of the previous French surrenders at Sedan and Metz.

On February 3, the Swiss Postal Circular No. 23 accorded a free frank to the interned 1^{re} Armée soldiers and to the besieged French garrison in Belfort.⁵⁷ The system worked as follows:⁵⁸

I. Communications from the interned soldiers were in the form of post cards or regular letters. Post offices receiving these applied a special gummed vignette to assure a free frank to destination. This applied only to mail addressed to unoccupied France and Switzerland; letters to German-occupied France or foreign countries were subject to regular postal charges.

II. Mail addressed to interned soldiers from unoccupied France were marked “FRANCO” to indicate a free frank.

The Swiss rapidly produced the specified free frank vignettes, so the dates of use are from February 3 to March 31. They were typically not cancelled by the post office. Figure 9-27 shows a post card from an interned 20th Corps soldier.



Figure 9-27.
February 11, 1871
post card posted
in Bern with a
“Gratis” vignette

Sent by a soldier from the 3^e Régiment de Zouaves de Marche, this official post card was posted at Bern on February 11 and addressed to nearby Payern, Switzerland. It was sent free of postage per the violet “Gratis” vignette, which was unusually cancelled by the Bern postmark.

Some special envelopes were also prepared, such as the Aarau Red Cross Committee envelope illustrated in Figure 9-28. Postmarked in Aarau on March 11, 1871, this envelope with a “Militaires français internées en Suisse” printed endorsement was sent to nearby Neuchatel. It was accorded a free frank per the “Gratis” label applied at the Aarau post office.

Figure 9-28. March 11, 1871 envelope posted in Aarau, Switzerland with a “Gratis” vignette



Letters to interned 1^{re} Armée soldiers were also sent free of all postal charges, as illustrated in Figure 9-29.

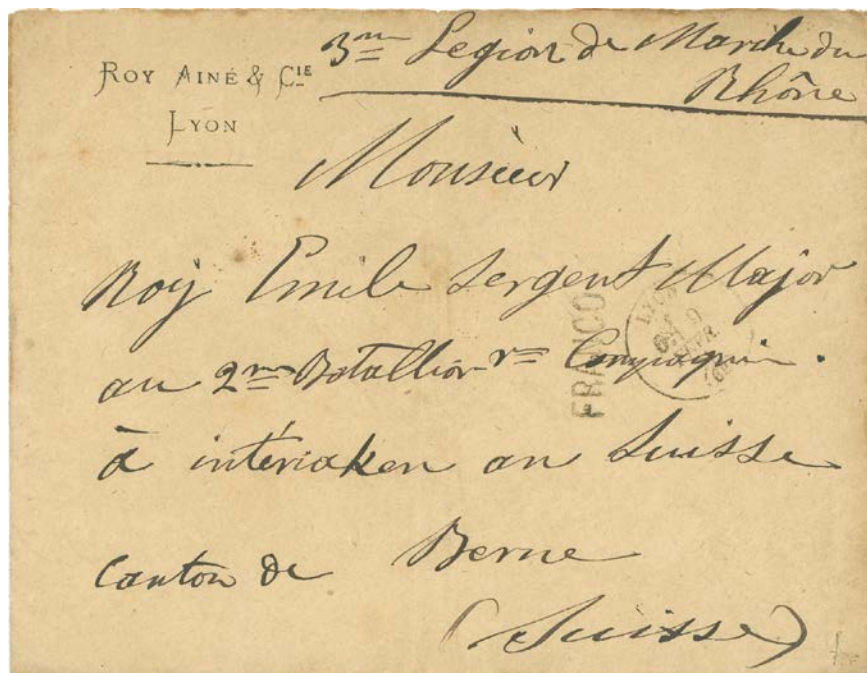


Figure 9-29.
February 9, 1871
letter posted in
Lyon and sent to
an interned 1^{er}
Armée soldier

Addressed to an interned 24th Corps soldier at Interlaken, this letter was posted with a French free frank in Lyon on February 9. It passed through Berne, Switzerland on February 11, where the “FRANCO” marking was applied to indicate a Swiss free frank. It arrived on February 12.

The armistice was finally implemented in the East on February 13.⁵⁹ The Armée des Vosges was disbanded on March 10 and the interned 1^{re} Armée soldiers began returning to France on March 13.⁶⁰

The Orders of Battle Referenced in this Chapter

French Armée de l'Est October 21, 1870 Order of Battle⁶¹

Commandant: Général Cambriels

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Crouzat)

1^{re} Brigade (Général de Polignac)

50^e Régiment de Marche

2 bataillons de Garde Mobile de la Loire

2 bataillons de Garde Mobile du Jura

2^e Brigade (Général de Palésy)

16^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

2^e et 3^e Bataillons de Garde Mobile de la Haute Garonne

4^e Bataillon de Garde Mobile de Saône-et-Loire

1^{er} et 2^e Bataillons de Garde Mobile des Pyrénées-Orientales

2^e Régiment de Marche de Lanciers

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Thornton)

1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel Boisson)

3^e Régiment de Zouaves de Marche – 2 bataillons

2 bataillons de Garde Mobile du Haut-Rhin

2^e Brigade (Capitaine de Vaisseau Aube)

32^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Graziani)

34^e Régiment de Garde Mobile des Deux-Sèvres (Lt. Colonel Rouget)

Colonne Mobile des Vosges (Lt. Colonel Perrin)

58^e Régiment de Garde Mobile des Vosges – 2 bataillons (Lt. Colonel Muller)

Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Corse – 2 bataillons (Lt. Colonel Parran)

Réserve (Lt. Colonel Ségard)

2^e Bataillon de Garde Mobile de la Meurthe (Commandant Verdelet)

French Armée des Vosges December 1, 1870 Order of Battle⁶²

Commandant: Général Garibaldi

1^{re} Brigade (Général Bossak-Hauke – killed January 21 at Dijon and replaced by Lt. Colonel Bleton)

42^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de l'Aveyron (Lt. Colonel Willame)

1^{er} Bataillon de Garde Mobile des Alpes-Maritimes (Commandant Bruneau)

1^{re} Légion de Mobilisés de l'Isère (Lt. Colonel Bleton)

Francs-Tireurs Volontaires du Rhône (Capitaine Tainturier)

Bataillon des Éclaireurs de Philippeville (Commandant Gout)

Bataillon des Éclaireurs de Gray (Commandant Neveux)

Compagnie de Tirailleurs (Capitaine Pasanisi)

Compagnie Espagnole (Capitaine Garcia)

Garibaldiens d'Alger (Capitaine Dubiez)

Garibaldiens Génois (Capitaine Panazzi)

Légion de Marsala (Commandant Orense)

Chasseurs Égyptiens (Commandant Pennazzi)

2^e Brigade (Général Lobbia)

Bataillon de Garde Mobile du Gard (Commandant Braconnier)

2 bataillons de Francs-Tireurs d'Égalité de Marseille (Commandant Gauthier)

Guérillas de Marseille (Commandant Bousquet)

Tirailleurs Garibaldiens du Var (Commandant Danilo)

Francs-Tireurs de l'Atlas (Commandant Gallien)

Guérillas d'Orient (Commandant de Saulcy)

Éclaireurs de l'Orient (Capitaine Corso)

French Armée des Vosges December 1, 1870 Order of Battle (continued)

- 3^e Brigade (Général Menotti Garibaldi)
 - Bataillon de Garde Mobile des Alpes-Maritimes (Commandant Monnié)
 - Bataillon de Garde Mobile des Hautes-Alpes (Commandant Barthélemy)
 - Bataillon de Garde Mobile des Basses-Pyrénées (Commandant Borel)
 - Légion des Volontaires Italiens (Commandant Tanara)
 - 3^e Légion de Mobilisés de l'Isère (Lt. Colonel Combarieu)
 - Chasseurs des Alpes (Commandant Ravelli)
 - Francs-Tireurs Réunis (Commandant Loste)
 - Francs-Tireurs d'Oran (Commandant Cruchy)
 - Francs-Tireurs de Franche-Comté (Commandant Ordinaire)
 - Compagnie de Vaucluse (Commandant Eyraud)
- 4^e Brigade (Colonel Ricciotti Garibaldi)
 - 2^e Légion de Mobilisés de l'Isère (Commandant Blache)
 - Bataillon de Mobilisés de la Côte d'Or (Commandant Lambert)
 - Bataillon du Commandant Nicolai
 - Francs-Tireurs de l'Allier (Commandant Prieur)
 - Chasseurs Savoisiens (Commandant Michard)
 - Francs-Tireurs de l'Aveyron (Commandant Rodat)
 - Chasseurs du Dauphiné (Commandant Rostaing)
 - Éclaireurs du Doubs (Commandant Begey)
 - Francs-Tireurs de la Côte d'Or (Commandant Godillot)
 - Chasseurs du Havre (Commandant Damone)
 - Volontaires de Loir-et-Cher (Commandant Dambricourt)
 - Éclaireurs de Caprera (Commandant Rolland)
 - Francs-Tireurs de Dôle (Commandant Habert)
 - Chasseurs du Mont-Blanc (Commandant Tappaz)
 - Francs-Tireurs de la Croix de Nice (Commandant Nivon)
 - Francs-Tireurs de Toulouse (Commandant Grozowski)
 - Francs-Tireurs des Vosges (Commandant Welker)
 - Compagnie du Gers (Commandant Duluc)
 - Chasseurs Républicaines de la Loire (Commandant Laberge)
 - Compagnies des Francs-Tireurs Dauphinois (Commandant Dunières)
 - Francs-Tireurs du Croissant (Commandant Barbot)
 - Enfants Perdus de la Montagne (Commandant Durrieu)
- 11^e Régiment de Marche de Cavalerie Mixte (Lt. Colonel Renaudot)

French Division Cremer December 9, 1870 Order of Battle⁶³

Commandant: Général Cremer

- 1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel Graziani – killed December 18 at Nuits)
 - 32^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Graziani)¹
 - 57^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Millot)
 - 3^e Bataillon de Mobiles de la Gironde (Commandant de Carayon-Latour)
 - 2^e Brigade (Colonel Celler – killed December 18 at Nuits)
 - 1^{re} Légion de Mobilisés du Rhône (Colonel Celler)
 - 2^e Légion de Mobilisés du Rhône (Colonel Chabert)
 - 3 compagnies de Chasseurs Volontaires du Rhône (Commandant Marengo)
 - Compagnie de Volontaires Libres du Rhône (Lt. Joly)
- 1) This regiment was part of the Dupré Brigade in the 20th Corps and was transported to Gien. On November 21, it was sent to Lyon and then added to the Cremer Division on December 10.

French 1^{re} Armée December 21, 1870 Order of Battle

Commandant: Général Bourbaki

15^e Corps d'Armée (Général Martineau des Chenez)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général d'Astugue)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Minot)

1^{er} Bataillon de Garde Mobile de la Savoie (Commandant de Costa de Beauregard)

1^{er} Régiment de Zouaves de Marche (Lt. Colonel Parran)

12^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Nièvre (Lt. Colonel Vény)

2^e Brigade (Général Quesrel)

4^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied (Commandant de Sicco)

Régiment de Marche de Tirailleurs Algériens (Lt. Colonel Capdepon)

18^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Charente (Lt. Colonel d'Angély)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Rebillard)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Lecamus)

5^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Commandant Chamard Boudet)

39^e Régiment d'Infanterie de Ligne (Colonel Mesny)

Légion Étrangère (Lt. Colonel Canat)

25^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Gironde (Lt. Colonel d'Artigolles)

2^e Brigade (Général Choppin-Merey)

2^e Régiment de Zouaves de Marche (Lt. Colonel Chevalier)

30^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Godin)

29^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Maine-et-Loire (Lt. Colonel Arnous-Rivière)

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Peytavin)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Jacob de la Cottière)

6^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Commandant Regain)

16^e Régiment d'Infanterie de Ligne (Lt. Colonel Behague)

Bataillon du 33^e Régiment de Marche

32^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Puy-de-Dôme (Lt. Colonel Sersiron)

2^e Brigade (Général Martinez)

27^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Peragallo)

34^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Audouard)

69^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de l'Ariège (Lt. Colonel Acloque)

Division de Cavalerie (Général de Longerue)

1^{re} Brigade (Général d'Astugue)

6^e Régiment de Dragons (Colonel Fombert de Villers)

6^e Régiment de Hussards (Lt. Colonel Polinière)

11^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel de Baillencourt)

2^e Brigade (Général de Boério)

2^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel Maillard de Landreville)

5^e Régiment de Lanciers (Colonel Gayraud)

3^e Régiment de Marche de Dragons (Colonel d'Audiffred)

3^e Brigade (Général Tillion)

9^e Régiment de Cuirassiers (Colonel de Vouges de Chanteclair)

1^{er} Régiment de Marche de Cuirassiers (Colonel Renusson d'Hauteville)

1^{er} Régiment de Marche de Chasseurs (Colonel Rouher)

French 1^{re} Armée December 21, 1870 Order of Battle (continued)

18^e Corps d'Armée (Général Billot)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Feillet-Pilatrie)

1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel Leclaire)

9^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Commandant de Boisfleury)

42^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Couston)

19^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Cher (Lt. Colonel de Choulot)

2^e Brigade (Général Robert)

44^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Achilli)

73^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Loiret/Isère (Lt. Colonel de Raucourt)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Amiral Penhoat)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Perrin)

12^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Commandant de Villeneuve)

52^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Quénot)

77^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Tarn/Allier/Maine-et-Loire (Lt. Colonel de Labro)

2^e Brigade (Général Perreaux)

92^e Régiment d'Infanterie de Ligne (Lt. Col. Trinité) – arrived from Algeria on December 18

Régiment de Marche d'Infanterie Légère d'Afrique (Lt. Colonel Gratteaud)

80^e Rég. de Garde Mobile de l'Isère/Deux Sèvres/Ardèche (Lt. Col. Welter) – never formed

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Bonnet)

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Goury)

4^e Régiment de Zouaves de Marche (Colonel de Boisfleury)

81^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Charente Inf./Cher/Indre (Lt. Colonel Renaud)

2^e Brigade (Lt. Colonel Brémens)

14^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Commandant Bonnet de Kermor)

53^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Brenières)

82^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de Vaucluse/Var (Lt. Colonel Homey)

Division de Cavalerie (Général de Brémond d'Ars)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Charlemagne)

2^e Régiment de Marche de Hussards (Lt. Colonel de Pointis)

3^e Régiment de Marche de Lanciers (Lt. Colonel Renaudot)

2^e Brigade (Général Hanglaise)

5^e Régiment de Marche de Dragons (Lt. Colonel d'Ussel)

5^e Régiment de Marche de Cuirassiers (Lt. Colonel de Brécourt)

20^e Corps d'Armée (Général Clinchant)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général de Polignac)

1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Logerot)

50^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Godefroy)

55^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Jura (Lt. Colonel de Montravel)

11^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Loire (Lt. Colonel Poyeton)

2^e Brigade (Colonel Brissac)

67^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Haute-Loire (Lt. Colonel Roche)

4^e Bataillon de Garde Mobile de la Saône-et-Loire (Commandant Berthol)

24^e Régiment de Mobiles de la Haute-Garonne (Lt. Colonel de Sarmejane)

Bataillon de Francs-Tireurs du Haut-Rhin (Commandant de Luppé)

2^e Régiment de Marche de Lanciers (Lt. Colonel Basserie)

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Thornton)

1^{re} Brigade (Général de Seigneurens)

25^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Commandant Bailly)

34^e Régiment de Garde Mobile des Deux-Sèvres (Lt. Colonel Rouget)

2^e Bataillon de Garde Mobile de la Savoie (Commandant Dubois)

French 1^{re} Armée December 21, 1870 Order of Battle (continued)

20^e Corps d'Armée (continued)

- 2^e Brigade (Colonel Vivenot)
 - 3^e Régiment de Zouaves de Marche (Lt. Colonel Bernard)
 - 68^e Régiment de Garde Mobile du Haut Rhin (Lt. Colonel Dollfus)
- 7^e Régiment de Chasseurs (Colonel de Ricaumont)
- 3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Ségard)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Durochat)
 - 47^e Régiment de Marche (Colonel N.)
 - Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Corse (Lt. Colonel Parran – killed January 9 at Villersexel)
 - 2^e Brigade (Colonel Simonin)
 - 1^{er} et 2^e Bataillons de Garde Mobile des Pyrénées-Orientales (Commandant Devaux)
 - 58^e Régiment de Garde Mobile des Vosges (Lt. Colonel Muller)
 - 2^e Bataillon de Garde Mobile de la Meurthe (Commandant Verdelet)
 - 6^e Régiment de Marche de Cuirassiers (Lt. Colonel Chevals)

24^e Corps d'Armée (Général Bressolles)

- 1^{re} Division (Général d'Ariès)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel Desveaux du Lyf)
 - 15^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Chef de Bataillon Huguet)
 - 63^e Régiment de Marche (Colonel N.)
 - 2^e Brigade (Lt. Colonel d'Ollonne)
 - 1^{er} Régt. Mixte de Garde Mobile du Haut-Rhin/Haute-Gar./Tarn-et-Gar. (Lt. Col. d'Ollonne)
- 2^e Division (Général Comagny-Thibaudin)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Lt. Colonel Irlande)
 - 20^e Bataillon de Chasseurs de Marche (Commandant Hermier)
 - 60^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Jouneau)
 - 61^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Dauriac)
 - 2^e Brigade (Lt. Colonel Bramas)
 - 14^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de l'Yonne (Lt. Colonel Bramas)
 - 87^e Régiment de Garde Mobile des Basses Pyrénées/Lozère (Lt. Colonel Bordier)
- 3^e Division (Général Carré de Busserolles)
 - 1^{re} Légion de Mobilisés du Rhône (Colonel Valentin)
 - 2^e Légion de Mobilisés du Rhône (Colonel Chabert)
 - 89^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Loire/Var (Lt. Colonel Maréchal)
 - 4^e Bataillon de Garde Mobile de la Loire (Commandant Cholat)

Division Cremer (Général Cremer)

- 1^{re} Brigade (Colonel Millot)
 - 32^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Reboulet)
 - 57^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Champcommunal)
- 2^e Brigade (Général Carol-Tevis – killed at La Lisaine)
 - Francs-Tireurs Vendéens (Commandant Koziell)
 - 83^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de l'Aube/Gers (Lt. Colonel Puech – killed at La Lisaine)
 - 86^e Régiment de Garde Mobile de la Saône-et-Loire (Lt. Colonel Cadot)

Réserve Générale (Général Pallu de la Barrière)

- 38^e Régiment d'Infanterie de Ligne (Lt. Colonel Courtot)
- 29^e Régiment de Marche (Lt. Colonel Carré)
- Régiment de Marche d'Infanterie de Marine (Lt. Colonel Coquet)
- Brigade de Cavalerie (General Boërio)
 - 3^e Régiment de Marche de Dragons (Lt. Colonel Durdilly)
 - 2^e Régiment de Marche de Chasseurs d'Afrique (Lt. Colonel Gaume)

German XIV Corps October 1 Order of Battle⁶⁴

Commandantur: General von Werder

Badische Feld-Division (General von Beyer)

1. Infanterie Brigade (General von Jarrys)
 - Lieb. Grenadier Regiment Nr. 1 (Colonel von Wechmar)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 2 (Colonel von Renz)
2. Infanterie Brigade (General von Degenfeld)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 3 (Colonel Müller)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 4 (Colonel Bayer)
3. Infanterie Brigade (General Keller)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 5 (Colonel Sachs)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 6 (Colonel Bauer)
- Kavallerie Brigade (General von Roche-Starkenfels)
 - Lieb. Dragoner Regiment Nr. 1 (Lt. Colonel von Schaeffer)
 - Dragoner Regiment Nr. 2 (Colonel Wirth)
 - Dragoner Regiment Nr. 3 (Lt. Colonel von Gemmingen)

Kombiniert Infanterie Brigade (General von der Goltz)

- Infanterie Regiment Nr. 30 (Lt. Colonel Nachtigal)
- Fusilier Regiment Nr. 34 (Lt. Colonel Wahlert)

Kombiniert Kavallerie Brigade (General Krugg von Nidda)

1. Reserve Dragonen Kavallerie Regiment (Major von Walther)
2. Reserve Husar Kavallerie Regiment (Major von Dohna)

German 4th Reserve Division October 1 Order of Battle⁶⁵

Commandantur: General von Schmelting

Kombiniert Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Knappstaedt)

1. Rhein. Infanterie Regiment Nr. 25 (Colonel von Loos)
2. Komb. Landwehr Infanterie Regiment Nr. 4/5 (Colonel von Krane)

Ostpreussen Landwehr Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Zimmermann)

1. Komb. Landwehr Infanterie Regiment Nr. 1/3 (Lt. Colonel Scheuermann)
3. Komb. Landwehr Infanterie Regiment Nr. 43/45 (Colonel von Usedom)

4. Reserve Kavallerie Brigade (General von Treskow II)

1. Reserve Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment (Lt. Colonel von Wulffen)
3. Reserve Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment (Lt. Colonel von Schmidt)



“Battle of Villersexel 9 January 1871” by Richard Knötel

Sud Armee January 6, 1871 Order of Battle⁶⁶

Commandantur: General Manteuffel

II Armee-Korps (General von Fransecky)

- 3. Infanterie Division (General von Hartmann)
 - 5. Infanterie Brigade (General von Koblinsky)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 2 (Colonel von Ziemietzky)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 42 (Colonel von Knesebeck)
 - 6. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Wedell)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 14 (Major von Schorlemmer)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 54 (Major Liebe)
 - Pommern Jäger Bataillon Nr. 2 (Captain Schulz)
 - Neumärk Dragoner Regiment Nr. 3 (Major von Wedell)
- 4. Infanterie Division (General Hann von Weyhern)
 - 7. Infanterie Brigade (General von Trossel)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 9 (Colonel von Ferentheil-Gruppenberg)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 49 (Lt. Colonel Lauren)
 - 8. Infanterie Brigade (General von Kettler)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 21 (Lt. Colonel von Lobenthal)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 61 (Lt. Colonel Weyrach)
 - Pommern Dragoner Regiment Nr. 11 (Lt. Colonel von Guretzky-Cornitz)

VII Armee-Korps (General von Zastrow)

- 13. Infanterie Division (General von Bothmer)
 - 25. Infanterie Brigade (General von Osten)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 13 (Lt. Colonel von Bussche-Haddenhausen)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 73 (Lt. Colonel von Loebell)
 - 26. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Barby)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 15 (Colonel von Delitz)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 55 (Lt. Colonel von Bischofshausen)
 - Westfalia Jäger Bataillon Nr. 7 (Major von Kamecke)
 - Husar Regiment Nr. 8 (Lt. Colonel Arent)
- 14. Infanterie Division (General Schuler von Senden)
 - 27. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Pannwitz)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 39 (Major Herrmann)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 74 (Lt. Colonel von Kamecke)
 - 28. Infanterie Brigade (General von Woyna II)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 53 (Lt. Colonel von Grabow)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 77 (Major von Köppen)
 - Hannover Husar Regiment Nr. 15 (Colonel von Cosel)
- Kombiniert Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Dannenberg)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 60 (Colonel von Dannenberg)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 72 (Lt. Colonel Löwenberger von Schönholtz)
 - Reserve Ulanen Regiment Nr. 5 (Colonel von Bode)

Sud Armee January 6, 1871 Order of Battle (continued)

XIV Armee-Corps (General von Werder)

Badische Feld-Division (General von Glümer)

1. Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Wechmar)
 - Lieb. Grenadier Regiment Nr. 1 (Lt. Colonel Hoffmann)
 - Grenadier Regiment Nr. 2 (Lt. Colonel Stölzel)
2. Infanterie Brigade (General von Degenfeld)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 3 (Lt. Colonel Kraus)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 4 (Colonel Bayer)
3. Infanterie Brigade (General Keller)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 5 (Colonel Sachs)
 - Infanterie Regiment Nr. 6 (Colonel Bauer)

Dragoner Regiment Nr. 3 (Lt. Colonel von Gemmingen)

Kavallerie Brigade (Colonel von Willisen)

Lieb. Dragoner Regiment Nr. 1 (Major von Merhart)

Dragoner Regiment Nr. 2 (Colonel Wirth)

Preussisches Division (General von der Goltz)

Kombiniert Infanterie Brigade (Colonel Wahlert)

Infanterie Regiment Nr. 30 (Lt. Colonel Nachtigal)

Fusilier Regiment Nr. 34 (Colonel von der Osten)

Kombiniert Kavalerie Brigade (General Krugg von Nidda)

2. Reserve Dragonen Kavallerie Regiment (Major von Walther)

2. Reserve Husar Kavallerie Regiment (Major von Dohna)

4. Reserve Division (General von Schmeling)

Kombiniert Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Knappstaedt)

1. Rhein. Infanterie Regiment Nr. 25 (Colonel von Loos)

2. Komb. Landwehr Infanterie Regiment (Colonel von Krane)

Ostpreussen Landwehr Infanterie Brigade (Colonel von Zimmermann)

1. Komb. Landwehr Infanterie Regiment (Lt. Colonel Scheuermann)

3. Komb. Landwehr Infanterie Regiment (Colonel von Usedom)

4. Reserve Kavallerie Brigade (General von Treskow II)

1. Reserve Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment (Lt. Colonel von Wulffen)

3. Reserve Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment (Lt. Colonel von Schmidt)

1. Landwehr Division (General von Treschow I)

1. Landwehr Brigade (General von Buddenbrock)

1. Kombiniert Pommern Landwehr Regiment (Colonel von Zitzewitz)

2. Kombiniert Pommern Landwehr Regiment (Colonel von Ostrowski)

2. Landwehr Brigade (General von Avemann)

3. Kombiniert Pommern Landwehr Regiment (Colonel von Berger)

4. Kombiniert Pommern Landwehr Regiment (Colonel Gericke)

4. Magdeburg Landwehr Regiment No. 67 (Colonel von Zglinicki)

2. Reserve Ulanen Kavallerie Regiment (Colonel von Bredow)

Abtheilung Debschitz (General von Debschitz)

1. Battalion der 2 Westpreussen Landwehr Regiment Nr. 7 (Major von Borowski)

2. Battalion der 2 Westpreussen Landwehr Regiment Nr. 7 (Major von Sothen)

1. Battalion der 2 Niederschlesien Landwehr Regiment Nr. 47 (Major Kierstein)

2. Battalion der 2 Niederschlesien Landwehr Regiment Nr. 47 (Major Brinckmann)

1. Battalion der 1 Schlesien Landwehr Regiment Nr. 10 (Captain Arretz)

1. Battalion der 3 Niederschlesien Landwehr Regiment Nr. 50 (Captain von Schmidt)

2. Battalion der 3 Niederschlesien Landwehr Regiment Nr. 50 (Captain von Münenberg)

2. Battalion der Schlesien Landwehr Regiment Nr. 84 (Captain von der Schulenburg)

Endnotes

- ¹ Modified from a map in Howard, Michael, *The Franco-Prussian War*, (Methuen: London, 1981), end pages.
- ² *Ibid.*, page 375.
- ³ Rousset, Léonce, *Histoire Générale de la Guerre Franco-Allemande (1870-1871)*, Volume 2, (Librairie Illustrée: Paris, 1911), pages 278-80.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, Volume 2, page 281.
- ⁵ Secretan, Édouard, *L'Armée de l'Est 20 Décembre 1870 – 1^{er} Février 1871*, Deuxième Edition, (Attinger Frères: Neuchâtel, 1894), page 112.
- ⁶ Le Faure, Amédée, *Histoire de la Guerre Franco-Allemande 1870-71*, Volume 2, (Garnier Frères: Paris, 1886), page 19.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, Volume 2, page 19.
- ⁸ Grand État-Major Prussien, Section Historique, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume I: Depuis l'Investissement de Paris jusqu'à la Reprise d'Orléans par les Allemandes*, (J. Dumaine: Paris, 1878), page 339.
- ⁹ Lehautcourt, Pierre, *Campagne de l'Est en 1870-1871, Nuits, Villersexel*, (Berger-Levrault: Paris, 1896), page 5.
- ¹⁰ Beauquier, Charles, *Guerre de 1870-71 Les Dernières Campagnes dans l'Est*, (A. Lemerre: Paris, 1873), page 26.
- ¹¹ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, page 285.
- ¹² Lehautcourt, *Op. Cit.*, page 7.
- ¹³ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, page 300.
- ¹⁴ Lehautcourt, *Op. Cit.*, page 25.
- ¹⁵ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, page 314.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, pages 325-331.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, page 323.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, page 353.
- ¹⁹ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, pages 309-310.
- ²⁰ Lehautcourt, *Op. Cit.*, page 60.
- ²¹ Grand État-Major Prussien, Section Historique, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume II: Événements dans le Nord de la France depuis la fin de Novembre, dans le Nord-Ouest depuis le Commencement de Décembre et Siège de Paris depuis le Commencement de Décembre jusqu'à l'Armistice. Opérations dans le Sud-Est du Milieu de Décembre au Milieu de Janvier*, (J. Dumaine: Paris, 1880), page 601.
- ²² *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume II, pages 599 and 608.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume II, page 880.
- ²⁴ Lehautcourt, *Op. Cit.*, page 64.
- ²⁵ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume II, page 691.
- ²⁶ Ortholan, Henri, *L'Armée de l'Est 1870-1871*, (Giovanangeli, 2009), pages 27-29.
- ²⁷ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, page 324.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, Volume 2, page 320.
- ²⁹ Ortholan, *Op. Cit.*, pages 48-51.
- ³⁰ Lehautcourt, *Op. Cit.*, page 152.
- ³¹ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, page 331.
- ³² Research note published by Christian Marsanoux in the June 2002 Lahitte & Marsanoux auction catalog on page 219.
- ³³ Lehautcourt, *Op. Cit.*, page 152.
- ³⁴ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, page 329.
- ³⁵ Pourcet, Joseph, *Campagne sur la Loire (1870-1871)*, (Moniteur Universelle: Paris, 1874), pages 54-59.
- ³⁶ Lehautcourt, Pierre, *Campagne de l'Est en 1870-1871, Héricourt, La Cluse*, (Berger-Levrault: Paris, 1896), page 3.
- ³⁷ The 14th Division was detached from the I Army and ordered to join the 13th Division at Châtillon on January 5, so the VII Corps was reunited on January 7-12. Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, page 334.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, Volume 2, page 333.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, Volume 2, page 332.
- ⁴⁰ Von Manteuffel had previously been commander of the I Army, and arrived in Châtillon on January 12 to assume command of the Sud Army. Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume II, page 392.
- ⁴¹ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, page 382.
- ⁴² Grand État-Major Prussien, Section Historique, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume III: Les Événements dans le Sud-Est de la France depuis le Milieu de Janvier jusqu'à la Cessation des Hostilités. Les Communications avec l'Arrière, l'Armistice. Marche Rétrograde et Occupation. Coup d'Œil Rétrospectif*, (J. Dumaine: Paris, 1882), page 1342.
- ⁴³ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, page 338.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Volume 2, pages 347-353.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Volume 2, page 377.

⁴⁶ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1127.

⁴⁷ Secretan, *Op. Cit.*, page 371.

⁴⁸ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, page 401.

⁴⁹ Wartensleben, Herrmann von, *Opérations de l'Armée du Sud*, (J. Dumaine: Paris, 1872), page 53.

⁵⁰ "The military operations in the departments of Doubs, Jura and Côte d'Or, as well as the siege of Belfort, will continue independently of the armistice, until there is agreement on a line of demarcation in those departments." Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, pages 405-406.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Volume 2, pages 405-406.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Volume 2, page 408.

⁵³ Secretan, *Op. Cit.*, page 549.

⁵⁴ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1216.

⁵⁵ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, pages 402-404.

⁵⁶ Ortholan, *Op. Cit.*, page 179.

⁵⁷ Pittier, Raymond, "Le Siège de Belfort (1870-1871)," *Association Internationale d'Histoire Postale de la Guerre de 1870-1871*, Number 2, (June 1995), page 26.

⁵⁸ Vuille, Louis, "L'Armée de l'Est en Suisse," *Centex Catalog*, Fribourg, 1970, pages 127-130.

⁵⁹ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1229.

⁶⁰ Ortholan, *Op. Cit.*, page 195.

⁶¹ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 1, Pièces Justicatives, pages vi-vii.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Volume 1, Pièces Justicatives, pages vii.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Volume 1, Pièces Justicatives, pages vii.

⁶⁴ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, page 98*.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, page 102*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume I, page 98*.



"Retraite de l'armée de Bourbaki" by Édouard Castres (1881)

Chapter Ten

Armistice, Paris Commune and the German Occupation

Introduction

On January 24, 1871, the Paris-based Government of National Defense learned that all three French provincial armies had been defeated during the week of January 12-17, and were retreating in the face of superior German forces. The realization that external military help was not coming, combined with insufficient food reserves at Paris, convinced them to open negotiations with the Germans for the capitulation of Paris. Those negotiations culminated in a 21-day armistice signed at Paris on January 28. The armistice was effective immediately at Paris and on January 31 elsewhere, except that military operations in the East were to continue.¹ Paris sent a telegram that night to Bordeaux announcing the armistice and setting February 12 for the convocation of a newly elected National Assembly at Bordeaux.

The armistice set the stage for the Paris Commune and the German occupation of France, so this chapter describes those events and the fieldposts that were engaged.

The Armistice Period

The January 28 armistice started the process toward a permanent peace and established procedures for separating the warring parties. The 180,000-man Armée de Paris re-entered Paris as prisoners on January 29, and surrendered their arms over the ensuing three-week period. January 29 was also the last day of operation for the fieldpost of the 2^e Armée de Paris. The armistice provided for an armed French division of 12,000 men to keep order in Paris,² but unfortunately allowed the Parisian National Guards to keep their arms. Lines of demarcation were drawn between other opposing armies outside of Paris, and neutral zones were established to eliminate all contact.³

As the Armée de Paris retreated, the Germans moved forward, occupying the external forts and St. Denis. Figure 10-1 shows a January 29 letter from the Württemberg Division, which advanced to Nogent fort.



Figure 10-1.
January 29, 1871
letter from the
Württemberg
6th Regiment

This printed envelope was prepared for the Württemberg fieldpost, which was under the administrative control of the Saxon fieldpost, and was postmarked "K.W. FELDPPOST VI. INF. REG." in green on January 29. It arrived in Nordlingen on February 1.

Article XV of the January 28 armistice re-opened letter communications with Paris by allowing unsealed letters sent via Versailles for censoring by German authorities.⁴ Outgoing letters could only be prepaid to Versailles, so postage beyond Versailles was charged to the recipient. Figure 10-2 shows the German censor mark on the reverse of a February 11 letter from Paris (the front of the letter is shown in Figure 10-4).

Figure 10-2. February 11, 1871 letter from Paris with Versailles censor marking



This letter was prepaid 20 centimes and postmarked in Paris on February 11. Addressed to a French prisoner-of-war in Germany, it was opened and examined at Versailles, per the blue boxed “Versailles Auswechselungs Stelle” (Versailles Exchange Office) marking.⁵ The letter was received in Neisse on February 20 with no additional postage due, since the recipient was granted a prisoner’s free frank.

Initially, the Germans maintained the positions of their armies around Paris. When it became apparent that fighting would not resume, they began to re-align their forces. On January 31, they dissolved the XIII Corps at Rouen, and sent its 22nd Division back to the XI Corps at Paris.⁶ Nine days later, the German High Command detached the IV Corps and the V Corps from the Paris siege to reinforce the II Army.⁷ To help fill the gap, the I Bavarian Corps moved to the region between the Seine and Marne Rivers southeast of Paris. Figure 10-3 shows a letter posted at their fieldpost.

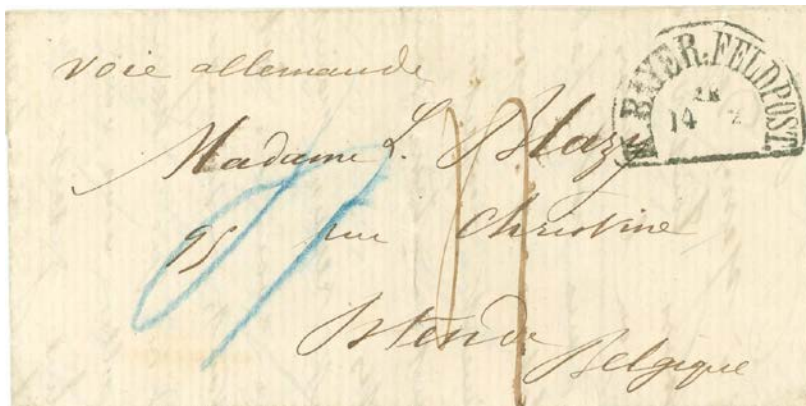


Figure 10-3. February 14, 1871 letter from the I Bavarian Corps

Datelined at Yerres (southeast of Paris) on February 13 and endorsed “voie allemande” (German route) by a French civilian, this unfranked letter was postmarked “K.BAYER.FELDPOST II” at the 1st Bavarian Division’s fieldpost bureau on February 14. It was sent via Prussia to Ostende, Belgium on February 18,

where it was rated for 4 décimes postage due. The writer, whose balloon mail correspondence is well known, noted that, “we cannot visit you until the calm is restored here.”

After two extensions of the armistice, France and Germany signed a preliminary peace treaty on February 26. This established the broad terms of the concessions made by France to Germany, and outlined the process for the German withdrawal from France. Alsace and part of Lorraine were to be annexed by Germany, and France was to pay five billion francs in war reparations to Germany. German military forces were to begin leaving after the ratification of the preliminary peace treaty, and to continue in proportion to the payment of the reparations. The French negotiators were able to prevent the annexation of Belfort, but with the concession that a portion of the German army could march through Paris and occupy the southwestern part of Paris. Upon ratification of the preliminary peace treaty, the Germans would leave Paris, evacuate the Parisian external forts on the south bank of the Seine River, and withdraw from all positions south of the Seine. At the same time, the French army (except for the garrison at Paris) was to move south of the Loire River until a final peace treaty was signed. The 12,000-man Paris garrison permitted in the January 28 armistice was increased to 40,000 men in the preliminary peace treaty. After the ratification of the preliminary peace treaty, negotiations for a final peace treaty would open in Brussels, and French prisoners-of-war would begin to be repatriated.⁸

Much to the displeasure of the already restless Parisians, units of the German army marched down the Champs-Élysées on March 1. To limit their stay in Paris, the French National Assembly rushed to ratify the preliminary peace treaty on that day. Figure 10-4 shows the address side of Figure 10-2, which was postmarked upon arrival at the “Assemblée nationale” postal bureau in Bordeaux on March 1.



Figure 10-4. February 11, 1871 letter posted in Paris

Addressed to a French prisoner-of-war in Neisse, this letter was postmarked in Paris on February 11. The 20 centimes prepayment was the correct amount, since the letter could only be prepaid to Versailles. After censoring at Versailles, the letter was sent with a free frank to Neisse on February 20. The addressee had been elected to the National Assembly on February 8, so he had already left for Bordeaux. Accordingly, the letter was struck with the Neisse POW camp cachet, and forwarded to the “Assemblée nationale” bureau at Bordeaux on March 1. The faint double-circle postmark of that date can be seen in Figure 10-2.

The addressee, Pierre-Louis Tribert, had enlisted at the 95th line regiment depot at Auxerre on August 15. He was placed in the regiment’s 4th battalion, which later formed part of the 12^e Régiment de Marche at Paris. That regiment, re-designated the 112^e Régiment de Ligne on October 28, formed part of the

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Maud'huy Division in the 3^e Armée. It supported the attempted break-out from Paris on December 21, but Tribert was captured during that action and sent to Neisse.

The Germans vacated Paris on March 3, and a March 4 military convention prescribed the withdrawal of all German forces south of the Seine River.⁹

- The external Paris forts on the south bank of the Seine were to be evacuated on March 7.
- The III Army was to be fully withdrawn from its Paris siege positions by March 19. Accordingly, the VI Corps, the XI Corps and the II Bavarian Corps were moved from the south bank of the Seine to occupation duties in the departments of the Seine.
- II Army units at Évreux, Dreux and Chartres were to cross to the north bank by March 12.
- II Army troops at Alençon, Le Mans and Tours were to cross to the north bank by March 28.
- Sud Army units in the Côte-d'Or were to retire to a line between Châtillon and Beaune by March 28.

A March 6 convention provided for the German evacuation of Versailles by March 11. The III Army headquarters and the XI Corps moved to St Denis, while the Supreme Headquarters left for Fontainebleau. Figure 10-5 shows a letter posted at that fieldpost during the armistice period.



Figure 10-5.
February 16, 1871
letter from the
Supreme HQ

Prepaid the 15 centimes rate to Dresden in Alsace-Lorraine Issue stamps, this letter was postmarked "K.PR.FELD-OBER-POST-AMT" at the fieldpost bureau for the Supreme Headquarters on February 16. It reached its destination three days later.

On March 14, the IV Army was disbanded, and its troops were placed under the III Army around Paris. The 1st Guard Division, 22nd Division and 2nd Bavarian Division were left in the front line around Paris, occupying the forts to the northeast, east and southeast of Paris.¹⁰

On March 15, the last units of the Garde Mobile in Paris were disbanded, and those soldiers were sent to their homes. On the same day, the regular army marched out of Paris to cross the Loire River near Orléans.¹¹ Except for its 40,000-man army garrison, Paris was left to the mercy of its restless armed National Guard battalions.

The Commune Uprising in Paris

Extreme elements of the Paris National Guard had already rebelled twice during the siege, and were unhappy with the capitulation by the Government of National Defense. On January 30, the “Comité Central de la Garde Nationale” was formed from National Guard representatives of the 20 Parisian arrondissements.¹² The purpose of this Central Committee was to oppose the government and to carry on resistance to the Germans. Throughout February, they ordered a number of raids to collect arms, munitions and cannon from military depots in Paris. This culminated with the February 26 removal of 200 cannon from two Parisian artillery parks.¹³

The February 8 election of a conservative National Assembly inflamed the Parisian radicals, but the Assembly’s March 1 vote in support of the preliminary peace treaty created an unbridgeable division between Paris and the rest of the country. War between the French government and the rebels had become inevitable. Recognizing this, the government rapidly assembled the additional troops needed to contain the growing rebellion. 28,000 men in four divisions were formed on March 8-18 from the best units of the 2^e Armée de la Loire and the Armée du Nord, and were added to Faron’s 12,000-man garrison already in Paris. The augmented Armée de Paris was placed under the command of Général Vinoy, and its order of battle is shown at the end of this chapter.

On March 18, the French government decided to recover the stolen cannon and munitions, so a force of 15,000 men was ordered to move on the rebel strongholds at Montmartre and Belleville. They achieved their initial objectives, but were delayed in removing the re-captured cannon. This gave the rebels time to send reinforcements to Montmartre. During the ensuing confrontation, soldiers from the 88^e Régiment de Marche defected to the rebels,¹⁴ raising doubts about the reliability of the regular army. Wisely, Vinoy decided to retreat. During the retreat, generals Lecomte and Clément-Thomas were captured and executed, further inflaming the rebellion. The uncontrolled situation persuaded the French government and army to leave Paris and to regroup at Versailles. Rebel national guards filled the ensuing governmental void by occupying all of the important municipal buildings in Paris.¹⁵ On March 26, Parisians voted for a new municipal council, and the Paris Commune was proclaimed two days later. Figure 10-6 shows the map of Paris at this time.

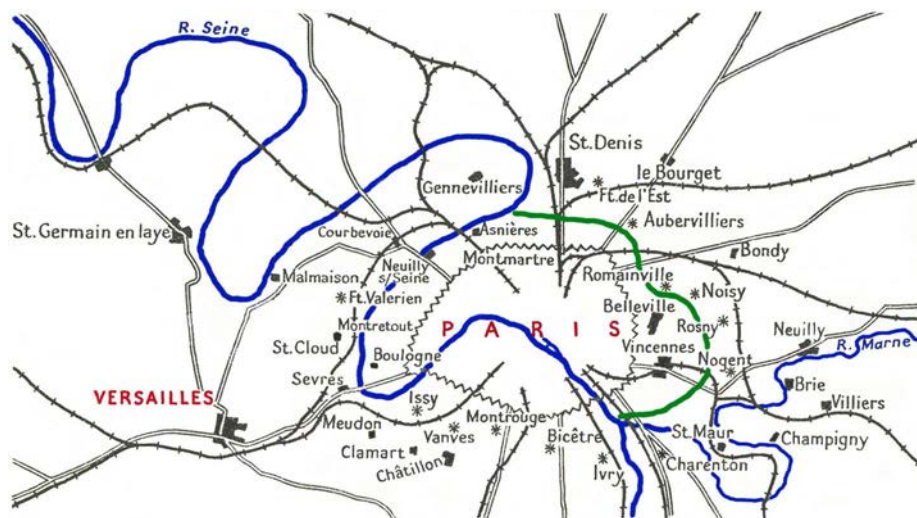


Figure 10-6. Map of Paris and Versailles during the Commune. Stars mark the external forts, and the green line shows the German occupation line to the north and east

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The government troops were concentrated around Versailles, and occupied the strategic Mont Valérien fort to the west of Paris. The Commune occupied Paris and the five southern external forts (Issy, Vanves, Montrouge, Bicêtre and Ivry), as well as the Vincennes fort east of Paris. The German siege line, shown in green in Figure 10-6, enclosed the northern and eastern sides of Paris.

The Parisian post office organization left for Versailles with its staff and materials on March 30, and the French government declared a postal blockade of Paris on the following day.¹⁶ Some Paris mail bypassed that blockade through the German fieldposts, as seen in Figure 10-7.



Figure 10-7. April 23, 1871 letter mailed at the Bavarian fieldpost

This letter originated from a French civilian in Paris, and was prepaid 20 centimes¹⁷ for the postage from Paris, and ten centimes¹⁸ for the postage in the German occupation area. On April 23, it was given to the Bavarian fieldpost southeast of Vincennes, and was postmarked “K.BAYER.FELDPOST VI.”¹⁹ The fieldpost bureau transferred the letter on April 24 to the nearby French post office at Fontenay-s.-Bois,²⁰ which cancelled the 20 centimes stamp with its “1543” lozenge of dots. It was sent from there to Metz on April 26, where it was charged 30 centimes for its second trip through occupied territory.

The Civil War Begins

The Commune organized its military forces under Général Bergeret at the end of March. He had 190,000 national guards available, but only about 30,000 were reliable soldiers.²¹ Even so, he began to prepare for an attack with 70,000 men against the government positions west and south of Paris.

The French government was also busy. On March 28, it obtained an agreement from the Germans to increase the size of their army around Paris to 80,000 men, and began to draw upon returning French prisoners-of-war.²² Since the prisoners did not return in intact regiments, they were formed into provisional line infantry regiments at camps near Cherbourg and Cambrai. By the end of March, the Armée de Paris had been increased to about 60,000 men in eight divisions around Versailles.²³

Vinoy’s Armée de Paris struck first, attacking rebel positions northwest of Paris on April 2, and driving the Commune forces back into Neuilly. The rebels counter-attacked on the next day, but were repulsed west and south of Paris.²⁴ After the April 3 setbacks, the Commune arrested Général Bergeret and replaced him with Général Cluseret on April 4. Cluseret immediately re-organized the Commune army by dividing the 234 battalions into war companies and sedentary companies. The war companies, staffed by men between the ages of 19 and 40, were to conduct active military operations. The sedentary companies

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were to maintain order inside of Paris. For easier handling in battle, he also grouped the 234 battalions into 20 legions, corresponding to the arrondissements of Paris. In all, Cluseret had 80,000 men available for offensive actions.²⁵

Légion	Colonel	Arrondissement	Number of Battalions	Active Soldiers	Sedentary Soldiers
1 ^{re}	Boursier	Louvre	7	2,300	1,700
2 ^e	Grill	Bourse	9	2,100	4,100
3 ^e	Spinoy	Temple	11	3,200	4,300
4 ^e	Esgonnière	Hôtel-de-Ville	11	3,100	4,900
5 ^e	Blin	Panthéon	10	4,300	4,600
6 ^e	Combatz	Luxembourg	8	3,100	3,100
7 ^e	Witt	Palais-Bourbon	3	900	1,100
8 ^e	Allix	Elysée	5	700	1,400
9 ^e	Courgeon	Opéra	7	1,500	2,200
10 ^e	Lisbonne	Saint-Laurent	17	4,800	8,600
11 ^e	Luchesne	Popincourt	29	11,200	11,300
12 ^e	Huot	Reuilly	13	3,500	5,300
13 ^e	Cougenot	Gobelins	12	4,500	6,200
14 ^e	Henri	Observatoire	9	3,600	4,300
15 ^e	Damary	Vaugirard	9	3,100	6,300
16 ^e	Laporte	Passy	2	800	900
17 ^e	Jaclard	Batignolles	13	5,100	8,000
18 ^e	Josselin	Butte-Montmartre	24	9,000	11,900
19 ^e	Pillioud	Buttes-Chaumont	15	5,700	8,600
20 ^e	Matuzewicz	Ménilmontant	20	7,700	12,300
Total			234	80,400	111,200

Cluseret also ordered the construction of barricades inside of Paris to create a second line of defense behind the outer walls. These barricades sprang up all over Paris.



Barricade at the rue Lafayette

On April 6, the enlarged Armée de Paris was re-organized into the Armée de Versailles and the Armée de Reserve.²⁶ The former was designated for offensive actions, while the latter was responsible for protecting Versailles. As it turned out, both armies were fully engaged in the ensuing offensive actions. Maréchal MacMahon returned from captivity to command the Armée de Versailles and to exercise strategic control

over the Armée de Reserve. Two more divisions were formed and added to the Armée de Versailles on April 23, so the army's order of battle as of that date is included at the end of this chapter.

The Armée de Versailles Fieldpost Service

The April 6 creation of the Armée de Versailles triggered the formation of a makeshift fieldpost operation to support that army. The payeurs used postmark devices that had previously been used by the 2^e Armée de la Loire and the Armée du Nord (as described in Chapters Seven and Eight). The known postmarks are described in Appendix A, and Figure 10-8 shows a letter handled by the postal headquarters bureau.

Figure 10-8. April 11, 1871 letter from the postal HQ



Prepaid 20 centimes²⁷ to Alsace, this letter bears the large blue “Direction des Postes Grand Quartier Général” two-ring cachet on the reverse. Illustrated in Appendix A, this marking was previously used by the Armée du Nord, and was brought by the payeur to Versailles. He also applied the distinctive blue “P.P.” marking that had also been previously used by the Armée du Nord. The letter passed through nearby Versailles on April 11, and was received in Munster on April 15, where it was charged 30 centimes (20 centimes plus a 50% unpaid letter fee) for the postage in annexed Alsace.

A 19th Corps payeur was assigned to the Armée de Versailles headquarters. He brought his old fieldpost materials with him, as shown in Figure 10-9, which is from the same correspondence as Figure 10-8.



Figure 10-9. April 22, 1871 letter from the Armée de Versailles

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This registered letter was postmarked “19^E CORPS/POSTES/QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL” and then processed through the Versailles post office on April 22. It was prepaid 40 centimes²⁸ for postage and the registration fee, and was accordingly marked “CHARGÉ” in blue ink at the fieldpost bureau. It was received in Munster on April 15, where it was charged 30 centimes due for the postage in annexed Alsace.

The headquarters fieldpost bureau also used a modified “Armée du Nord/Postes/Grand Quartier Général” postmark, as seen in Figure 10-10.



Figure 10-10. May 1871 letter from the HQ of the Armée de Versailles

Franked by a 20 centimes stamp,²⁹ this letter was written by Général Clinchant, commander of the 5th Corps of the Armée de Versailles. It was postmarked “POSTES QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL” at the headquarters’ fieldpost bureau, and was received in Melun on May 21.

Figure 10-11 shows a different modified Armée du Nord postmark that was used by the 2nd Corps.



Figure 10-11. May 11, 1871 receipt notice from the 2nd Corps

This receipt notice for a registered letter was datelined on May 11 at Versailles and postmarked “2^E CORPS POSTES 2^E DIVISION” at the fieldpost bureau for the 2nd Division of the 2nd Corps. The postmark was modified from the old 23rd Corps fieldpost marking, and the 2nd Corps designation was added in ink. The payeur also added the blue “CHARGÉ” registration marking. This letter was franked ten centimes³⁰ (inside the form) for the receipt notice rate, and was received in Lyon on May 16.

Figure 10-12 shows a remarkable letter addressed to the Armée de Versailles.



Figure 10-12. May 3, 1871 letter sent from Clerval to the Armée de Versailles

This letter was picked up by a postal carrier near Clerval (in eastern France) and marked “OR” (rural origin). Due to shortages in that war-torn region (see Chapter Nine), the sender did not have a 20 centimes stamp, so he paid cash to the carrier, who marked the letter “PP” (postage paid) in ink. When the carrier returned to Clerval, he gave the 20 centimes to the postmaster, who applied a quadrisect of an 80 centimes “Bordeaux” Issue stamp over the “PP” and cancelled it with his “1054” lozenge of dots. He then postmarked the letter with his May 3 datestamp, and sent it on to Versailles. It was addressed to a soldier in the 110^e Régiment de Ligne of the Armée de Reserve at Meudon. At that time, the regiment was engaged in the siege of the southern forts at Paris.

The End of the Commune

On April 11, the Armée de Versailles was ready to continue the suppression of the Commune by force. Ladmirault’s 1st Corps began a campaign on the western side of Paris to contain the rebels in Neuilly. At the same time, Cissey’s 2nd Corps and Faron’s division from the Armée de Reserve attacked the southern forts. The key to the southern defenses was Issy fort, so the 2nd Corps concentrated on that position.³¹

On April 30, Issy fort was evacuated by the Communards, but a column under Cluseret re-gained control of it. Blamed for the temporary loss, Cluseret was arrested upon his return to Paris, and was removed from command of the Armée de la Commune.³² In his place, Rossel re-organized the army once again. Its 50,400 active soldiers were divided into three commands: Général Dombrowski at Neuilly, covering the west side of Paris; Général La Cécilia, commanding the southern forts and the south bank of the Seine; and Général Wroblewski, commanding the southeastern flank between Bicêtre fort and Vincennes fort. In addition, two brigades under Bergeret and Eudes were stationed inside of Paris.³³ The army’s order of battle as of May 1 is shown at the end of this chapter. There was no fieldpost service established for this army.

Issy fort finally fell on May 9, so the Armée de Versailles was able to approach the southwestern Paris wall.³⁴ On May 21, the rebels unexpectedly abandoned the Paris ramparts at Auteuil, so the Vergé Division of the Armée de Reserve entered Paris, and began opening gates for the 1st Corps, 4th Corps and 5th Corps.³⁵

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The entry of the Armée de Versailles began the “Semaine Sanglante” (Bloody Week) of combat, which was fought from southwest Paris to northeast Paris in continuous street fighting. On May 23, the 1st and 5th Corps captured the heights at Montmartre, which gave them artillery command of central Paris. This forced the Communards to abandon a strong position at the Place de la Concorde that evening.³⁶



**“Place de la Concorde mai 1871” by Gustave Boulanger (c. 1872-73)
(Musée Carnavalet, Paris)**

In desperation, the rebels began to set fire to many prominent monuments, which further heightened the urgency of re-taking Paris. In reprisal, the Armée de Versailles began shooting anyone captured with flammable materials or weapons.

The letter illustrated in Figure 10-13 was written in Paris on May 25.



**Figure 10-13. May 25,
1871 letter from the 2nd
Corps' 2nd Division**

Dateline “Paris 25 Mai 71,” this letter was postmarked “^E CORPS POSTES 2^E DIVISION” at the fieldpost bureau for the 2nd Division of the 2nd Corps.³⁷ Unlike the letter in Figure 10-11, no manuscript “2” was added to designate the corps. This letter received a military free frank, and arrived in Fontainebleau on May 28. The writer reported that, “still today, projectiles are raining on the quarter from the Buttes Chaumont. Montmartre was taken by surprise at the beginning...they say that the Hôtel de Ville has been taken, but it was not yet this morning, it burns along with many other monuments.”

On May 27-28, the final Communard positions at the Père Lachaise cemetery, Buttes Chaumont and Belleville were overrun, so the Commune was vanquished.³⁸ Normal postal communications with Paris were restored on June 7,³⁹ and the Armée de Versailles returned to Versailles on June 10.



“Derniers Combats au Cimetière du Père-Lachaise” by Félix Philippoteaux (1871)
(Musée d’Art et d’Histoire de St. Denis)

Peace and the German Occupation of France

The final peace treaty was signed at Frankfurt on May 10, 1871, and ratified by both countries during the following week.⁴⁰ The February 26 preliminary peace treaty and the May 10 final peace treaty set the schedule for the payment of five billion francs in war reparations to Germany, and tied the withdrawal of occupation troops to those payments.

Per article VII of the final peace treaty, 500 million francs were to be paid 30 days after the suppression of the Paris Commune, a billion more was to be paid in 1871, and another 500 million by May 1, 1872. The remaining three billion francs were to be paid by March 2, 1874.⁴¹

Per Article III, the German evacuation would proceed as follows:

- The departments of the Somme, Seine-Inférieure and the Eure (northwest of Paris) would be evacuated after the payment of the first 500 million francs. That payment was made on July 22, 1871, so the I Corps began its journey back to Germany at that time.⁴²
- The evacuation of the region around Paris (departments of Oise, Seine-et-Oise, Seine-et-Marne and Seine), along with the remaining Paris forts, would occur when, in the judgement of German high command, the French government had re-gained enough order in Paris and elsewhere to ensure the fulfillment of their treaty obligations. This evacuation took place after the payment of an additional billion francs on September 11, 1871.⁴³
- An October 12, 1871 convention stipulated the immediate evacuation of the eastern departments of Côte d’Or, Haute-Saône, Jura and Doubs upon the promise by the French to pay an additional 500 million francs by April 30, 1872.⁴⁴ This evacuation started on October 22, and left only the 4th Division occupying the Vosges and Belfort in the East.⁴⁵ The final payment against the first two billion francs was completed on March 6, 1872.⁴⁶
- The February 26 preliminary peace treaty detailed the German occupation after the payment of the first two billion francs. At that point, the occupation would be restricted to Belfort and six

departments in northeastern France: Marne, Ardennes, Haute-Marne, Meuse, Vosges and Meurthe. The occupation force would be limited to 50,000 men in the 4th Division, 6th Division, 19th Division and 2nd Bavarian Division.⁴⁷

A new fieldpost bureau was created for the headquarters of the Occupation Army at Reims on March 24, 1871. On June 20, command of the army was given to General von Manteuffel, who moved the headquarters to Nancy on September 14.⁴⁸ Most of the German army units in France returned to Germany in June-July 1871.⁴⁹ In late 1871, the four-division residual Occupation Army was provided with a new set of fieldpost postmarks. These are described and illustrated in Appendix A. Figure 10-14 shows two examples of the new Occupation Army fieldpost markings.



Figure 10-14. March 15, 1872 letter from the Occupation Army

This letter was postmarked “FELDPOSTAMT DER OCCUPATIONS-ARMEE” at the headquarters fieldpost bureau on March 15, 1872. After transiting the fieldpost relay bureau #25 at Ligny-en-Barrois, it was received at the 6th Division fieldpost bureau at Bar-le-Duc on March 16. The receiving postmark reflects the formation of the new German Empire, so the prefix reads “K.D.” for “king of Germany.”

The March 15, 1873 Franco-German Convention regulated the final retirement of German troops from French soil. The 3rd billion had been paid the previous autumn, and the 4th billion was scheduled for the first week of May 1873. The final billion was to be paid in four equal monthly installments.⁵⁰ In return, the Germans agreed to evacuate Belfort and the four departments of Vosges, Ardennes, Meuse and Meurthe-et-Moselle in July 1873, followed by Lunéville and Nancy during the first week of August. By August 5, the Germans had evacuated all positions except for Verdun.⁵¹ Exactly one month later, the last payment was made, so General von Manteuffel left Verdun for Germany on September 13. The last German soldier left French soil three days later.⁵²

The Orders of Battle Referenced in this Chapter

Armée de Paris March 18 Order of Battle⁵³

Commandant: Général Vinoy

1^{re} Division (Général Faron)

1^{re} Brigade (Général de la Mariouse)

35^e Régiment de Ligne

42^e Régiment de Ligne

4^e Bataillon de la Garde Mobile du Finistère

2^e Brigade (Général Valentin)

109^e Régiment de Ligne

110^e Régiment de Ligne

Régiment d'Infanterie de Marine

3^e Brigade (Général Daudel)

113^e Régiment de Ligne

114^e Régiment de Ligne

2^e Division (Général de Maud'huy)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Wolff)

23^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

67^e Régiment de Marche

68^e Régiment de Marche

69^e Régiment de Marche

2^e Brigade (Capitaine de Vaisseau Hanrion)

2^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

4^e Bataillon de Fusiliers Marins

45^e Régiment de Marche

3^e Division (Général Susbelle)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Paturel)

17^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

31^e Régiment de Marche

32^e Régiment de Marche

76^e Régiment de Marche

2^e Brigade (Général Lecomte – killed on March 18)

18^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

88^e Régiment de Marche

36^e Régiment de Marche

4^e Division (Général Barry)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Bocher)

3^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

41^e Régiment de Marche

89^e Régiment de Marche

2^e Brigade (Général Champion)

30^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

38^e Régiment de Marche

39^e Régiment de Marche

46^e Régiment de Marche

Division de Cavalerie (Général Ressayre)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Bernis)

4^e Régiment de Dragons de Marche

8^e Régiment de Dragons de Marche

2^e Brigade (Général Cousin)

3^e et 9^e Régiments de Cuirassiers de Marche

Armée de Versailles April 23 Order of Battle⁵⁴

Commandant: (Maréchal de Mac-Mahon)

1^{er} Corps (Général de Ladmirault)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Grenier)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Abatucci)

48^e Régiment de Marche

87^e Régiment de Marche

2^e Brigade (Général Pradier)

10^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

51^e Régiment de Marche

72^e Régiment de Marche

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Laveaucoupet)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Wolff)

23^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

67^e Régiment de Marche

68^e Régiment de Marche

69^e Régiment de Marche

2^e Brigade (Général Hanrion)

2^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

45^e Régiment de Marche

135^e Régiment de Ligne

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général de Montaudon)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Dumont)

30^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

39^e Régiment de Ligne

Régiment Étranger

2^e Brigade (Général Lefebvre)

31^e Régiment de Marche

36^e Régiment de Marche (Colonel Davoust)

119^e Régiment de Ligne

Brigade de Cavalerie (Général de Galliffet)

9^e Régiment de Chasseurs

12^e Régiment de Chasseurs

2^e Corps (Général Courtot de Cisse)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Levassor-Sorval)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Besson – killed on April 7 and replaced by Général Lian)

4^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

82^e Régiment de Marche

85^e Régiment de Marche

2^e Brigade (Général Osmont)

113^e Régiment de Ligne

114^e Régiment de Ligne

2^e Division (Général Susbielle)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Bocher)

18^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

46^e Régiment de Marche

89^e Régiment de Marche

2^e Brigade (Général Paturel)

17^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

38^e Régiment de Marche

76^e Régiment de Marche

Armée de Versailles April 23 Order of Battle (continued)

2^e Corps (continued)

- 3^e Division (Général Lacretelle)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Noël)
 - 19^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied
 - 39^e Régiment de Marche
 - 41^e Régiment de Marche
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Péchot – killed on April 7 and replaced by Gen. Bounnetou)
 - 70^e Régiment de Marche
 - 71^e Régiment de Marche
- 6^e Régiment de Lanciers

3^e Corps (Général du Barail)

- 1^{re} Division de Cavalerie (Général Halna du Frétay)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Charlemagne)
 - 2^e Régiment de Hussards
 - 3^e Régiment de Hussards
 - 8^e Régiment de Hussards
 - 2^e Brigade (Général de Lajaille)
 - 7^e Régiment de Chasseurs
 - 11^e Régiment de Chasseurs
- 2^e Division de Cavalerie (Général du Preuil)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Cousin)
 - 3^e Régiment de Cuirassiers de Marche
 - 4^e Régiment de Dragons de Marche
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Dargentolle)
 - 8^e Régiment de Dragons
 - 9^e Régiment de Dragons
- 3^e Division de Cavalerie (Général Ressayre)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Bernis)
 - 6^e Régiment de Chasseurs
 - 7^e Régiment de Dragons
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Bachelier)
 - 4^e Régiment de Cuirassiers
 - 8^e Régiment de Cuirassiers

4^e Corps (Général Douay)

- 1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Berthaut)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Gandil)
 - 26^e Régiment de Ligne
 - 5^e Régiment d'Infanterie Provisoire
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Carteret)
 - 94^e Régiment de Ligne
 - 6^e Régiment d'Infanterie Provisoire
- 2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général l'Hérillier)
 - 1^{re} Brigade (Général Leroy de Dais – killed on May 26)
 - 55^e Régiment de Marche
 - 58^e Régiment de Marche
 - 2^e Brigade (Général Nayral)
 - Détachement du 27^e Régiment de Ligne
 - Various troops from the Camp de Cherbourg

Armée de Versailles April 23 Order of Battle (continued)

5^e Corps (Général Clinchant)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Duplessis)

1^{re} Brigade (Général de Courcy)

1^{er} Régiment d'Infanterie Provisoire

2^e Régiment d'Infanterie Provisoire

2^e Brigade (Général Blot)

3^e Régiment d'Infanterie Provisoire

4^e Régiment d'Infanterie Provisoire

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Garnier)

1^{re} Brigade (Général de Brauer)

13^e Régiment d'Infanterie Provisoire

14^e Régiment d'Infanterie Provisoire

2^e Brigade (Général Cottret)

15^e Régiment d'Infanterie Provisoire

17^e Régiment d'Infanterie Provisoire

Armée de Reserve (Général Vinoy)

1^{re} Division d'Infanterie (Général Faron)

1^{re} Brigade (Général de la Mariouse)

35^e Régiment de Ligne

42^e Régiment de Ligne

2^e Brigade (Général Derroja)

109^e Régiment de Ligne

110^e Régiment de Ligne

3^e Brigade (Général Berthe)

22^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

64^e Régiment de Marche

65^e Régiment de Marche

2^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Bruat)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Bernard de Seigneurens)

74^e Régiment de Marche

1^{er} Régiment d'Infanterie de Marine

2^e Régiment de Fusiliers Marins

2^e Brigade (Colonel de Langourian)

75^e Régiment de Marche

2^e Régiment d'Infanterie de Marine

1^{er} Régiment de Fusiliers Marins

3^e Division d'Infanterie (Général Vergé)

1^{re} Brigade (Général Daguerre)

26^e Bataillon de Marche de Chasseurs à Pied

37^e Régiment de Marche

79^e Régiment de Marche

2^e Brigade (Général Grémion)

90^e Régiment de Marche

91^e Régiment de Marche

Armée de la Commune May 1 Order of Battle⁵⁵

Commandant: (Colonel du Génie Rossel)

1^{re} Armée (Général Dombrowski) – 22,300 men

1^{re} Subdivision – Clichy à Asnières (Général Olokowicz until April 27; then Colonel Durassier)

5 Bataillons de Garde Nationale Fédérée à Saint-Ouen

5 Bataillons de Garde Nationale Fédérée à Asnières/Clichy

3.5 Batteries d'Artillerie

2^e Subdivision – Levallois à Auteuil (Colonel Mathieu)

3 Bataillons de Garde Nationale Fédérée à Levallois-Perret

17 Bataillons de Garde Nationale Fédérée à Neuilly

19 Bataillons de Garde Nationale Fédérée à Passy/Auteuil

4 Batteries d'Artillerie

2^e Armée (Général La Cécilia) – 17,700 men

Brigade Brunel – Issy (Général Brunel)

19 Bataillons de Garde Nationale Fédérée à Issy

2 Batteries d'Artillerie

Brigade Lisbonne – Vanves à Montrouge (Colonel Lisbonne)

14 Bataillons de Garde Nationale Fédérée au Petit-Vanves

2 Bataillons de Garde Nationale Fédérée à Montrouge

Forts du Sud (Général Eudes)

Fort d'Issy

Fort de Vanves

Fort de Montrouge

3^e Armée (Général Wroblewski) – 10,400 men

Quartier Général à Gentilly

Fort de Bicêtre

Redoute des Hautes-Bruyères

Redoute du Moulin-Saquet

Redoute de Villejuif

Fort d'Ivry



“Combat dans la rue de Rivoli” by T.H. Wilson⁵⁶

Endnotes

- ¹ As described in Chapter Nine, the armistice was finally extended to include the East on February 13.
- ² This 12,000-man division consisted of six infantry regiments drawn from the Faron and Maud'huy Divisions of the Armée de Paris, one battalion of the Garde Mobile and a regiment of marine infantry. Général Faron was placed in command:
De la Mariouse Brigade: 35^e Régiment d'Infanterie (RI), 42^e RI and 4^e Bataillon of Garde Mobile de la Finistère.
Valentin Brigade: 109^e RI, 110^e RI and regiment of marines (Capt. Lamothe-Tenet)
Daudel Brigade: 113^e RI and 114^e RI
- 3,500 gendarmes also remained armed to help keep order in Paris. Vinoy, Joseph, *L'Armistice et la Commune*, (Henri Plon: Paris, 1872), pages 14-19.
- ³ Grand État-Major Prussien, Section Historique, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume II: Événements dans le Nord de la France depuis la fin de Novembre, dans le Nord-Ouest depuis le Commencement de Décembre et Siège de Paris depuis le Commencement de Décembre jusqu'à l'Armistice. Opérations dans le Sud-Est du Milieu de Décembre au Milieu de Janvier*, (Dumaine: Paris, 1880), page 1110.
- ⁴ Chauvet Michèle & Brun, Jean-François, *Introduction à l'Histoire Postale de 1848 à 1878*, (Brun et Fils: Paris, 2007), page 747.
- ⁵ This very rare marking was only in use for five days, from February 10 to February 14, 1871. Pittier, Raymond, (translated by Ernst Cohn), "The German Censor's Mark at Versailles Headquarters," *France & Colonies Philatelist* (G.B.), Whole Number 206, Volume 47, No. 4, (December 1997), page 192.
- ⁶ The 17th Division of the former XIII Corps stayed at Rouen. Rolin, L., *Campagne de 1870-1871, La Guerre dans l'Ouest*, (E. Plon: Paris, 1874), page 395.
- ⁷ Grand État-Major Prussien, Section Historique, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume III: Les Événements dans le Sud-Est de la France depuis le Milieu de Janvier jusqu'à la Cessation des Hostilités. Les Communications avec l'Arrière, l'Armistice. Marche Rétrograde et Occupation. Coup d'Œil Rétrospectif*, (J. Dumaine: Paris, 1882), page 1329.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1336.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, pages 1339-44.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, pages 1342-44.
- ¹¹ Rousset, Léonce, *Histoire Générale de la Guerre Franco-Allemande (1870-1871)*, Vol. I, (Librairie Illustrée: Paris, 1911), page 505.
- ¹² Vinoy, *Op. Cit.*, page 113.
- ¹³ Rousset, Léonce, *1871 La Commune à Paris et dans la Province*, (Jules Tallandier: Paris, 1912), page 13.
- ¹⁴ The 88th march regiment and the 120th line regiment were disbanded on April 2 for having cooperated with the rebels on March 18, per the *Journal Officiel*.
- ¹⁵ Vinoy, *Op. Cit.*, page 222.
- ¹⁶ Chanaryn, Victor, *An Introduction to the Posts of France in the Franco-German War of 1870-1871 and its Aftermath*, (Chanaryn: London, 1976), page 88.
- ¹⁷ A 20 centimes type III, report 2, position 2 stamp of the 1870 "Bordeaux" Issue.
- ¹⁸ A ten centimes stamp from the 1870 "Alsace-Lorraine" Occupation Issue.
- ¹⁹ The "K.BAYER.FELDPOST VI" postmark had been assigned to the 4th Bavarian Division during the war, but its fieldpost officer must have been servicing the 2nd Bavarian Division at this time.
- ²⁰ Post offices in the occupation areas that were not slated to be annexed by Germany were returned to French control on March 24, 1871. Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1383.
- ²¹ Vidieu, l'Abbé, *Histoire de la Commune de Paris en 1871*, (Dentu: Paris, 1876), pages 179-81.
- ²² Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1348.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1348.
- ²⁴ Vidieu, *Op. Cit.*, pages 184-88.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, pages 353-55.
- ²⁶ Vinoy, *Op. Cit.*, pages 424-27.
- ²⁷ Two five centimes stamps from the 1862 Issue and a ten centimes report 1, position 15 of the 1870 "Bordeaux" Issue.
- ²⁸ A pair of 20 centimes stamps of the 1863-70 "Empire Lauré" Issue. 20 centimes was for the registration fee and 20 centimes was for the domestic letter rate.
- ²⁹ A 20 centimes type III, report 2, position 15 stamp of the 1870 "Bordeaux" Issue.
- ³⁰ A ten centimes report 1, position 5 stamp of the 1870 "Bordeaux" Issue.
- ³¹ MacMahon, Patrice de, *L'Armée de Versailles*, (A. Ghio: Paris, 1871), pages 1-3.
- ³² Horne, Alistair, *The Fall of Paris*, (MacMillan, 1965), page 390.
- ³³ Vidieu, *Op. Cit.*, page 368.
- ³⁴ Vinoy, *Op. Cit.*, pages 296-98.
- ³⁵ MacMahon, *Op. Cit.*, page 15.
- ³⁶ Vinoy, *Op. Cit.*, pages 318-19.

³⁷ The same postmark is known on a June 4, 1871 letter from Général Susbille's aide-de-camp which is addressed to Angers. Susbille commanded the 2nd Division of Cissy's 2nd Corps. Ceres December 2016 auction catalog, lot 1151.

³⁸ MacMahon, *Op. Cit.*, pages 38-44.

³⁹ Chanaryn, *Op. Cit.*, page 97.

⁴⁰ Germany ratified the final peace treaty on May 16, and France ratified it on May 18. Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1349 and appendices.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1349.

⁴² Petit, Maxime, *Histoire de France Contemporaine de 1871 à 1914*, (Librairie Larousse: Paris, 1916), page 36.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, page 36.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, page 37.

⁴⁵ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1359.

⁴⁶ Petit, *Op. Cit.*, page 46.

⁴⁷ Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1349.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1359.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1352.

⁵⁰ The final billion was scheduled to be paid in four equal installments on June 5, July 5, August 5 and September 5, 1873. Verdun was to be evacuated starting September 5, 1873, lasting no more than two weeks. Petit, *Op. Cit.*, page 51.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, page 51.

⁵² Grand État-Major Prussien, *Op. Cit.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1361.

⁵³ Vinoy, *Op. Cit.*, pages 182-84.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pages 424-27.

⁵⁵ Vidieu, *Op. Cit.*, page 635.

⁵⁶ *L'illustration Européenne* no. 33 (1870), page 257.



Aftermath of the Paris Commune

Appendix A

Fieldpost Bureau Listings

French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine: July 14 to October 27, 1870 (Chapter 2)

The initial 48 Armée du Rhin fieldpost bureaus and their associated postal markings are listed below. As described in Chapter Two, they mobilized along the northeast frontier from July 14 to August 6. On August 7, the army was divided, so the Garde Impériale, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 6th Corps retreated to Metz, where they were besieged from August 19 to October 27. The 1st, 5th and 7th Corps retreated to Châlons-s-Marne to form the Armée de Châlons (see Ardennes fieldpost listing below).

Payeurs were supplied with a 2-ring datestamp with “Armée du Rhin” across the top, and their unit description at the bottom. Divisional bureaus were assigned a letter from A to AK (there were no bureaus J or AJ). Some payeurs were also provided with cancels consisting of a lozenge of dots with “A.R.” followed by the bureau designation. The vast majority of this mail was sent unfranked, so most of these cancels are not known on cover. The various types of fieldpost postmarks are illustrated below.



Supreme
Headquarters



Postal
Headquarters



Corps
Headquarters



Division
Headquarters



Garde Impériale Infantry



Garde Impériale Cavalry



Bureau AK Cancel



Headquarters Cancel

Fieldpost Bureau

Imperial Headquarters
Supreme Headquarters
Postal Headquarters
Postal HQ - Dead Letter
Garde Impériale Headquarters¹
1^{re} Division
2^e Division
Cavalry Division
1^{er} Corps Headquarters
1^{re} Division
2^e Division
3^e Division
4^e Division
Cavalry Division
2^e Corps Headquarters
1^{re} Division
2^e Division
3^e Division
Cavalry Division

Fieldpost Postmark

BUREAU SPÉCIAL DE L'EMPEREUR
ARMÉE DU RHIN G^D Q^{ER} GAL
ARMÉE DU RHIN B^{AU} CENTRAL
REBUTS DE L'ARMÉE/DU RHIN/INCONNU
GARDE IMP^{LE} QUARTIER G^{AL}
GARDE IMP^{LE} 1^{re} DON
GARDE IMP^{LE} 2^e DON
GARDE IMP^{LE} 1 CAVALERIE
ARMÉE DU RHIN Q^R G^L 1^R CORPS
ARMÉE DU RHIN B^{AU} A
ARMÉE DU RHIN B^{AU} B
ARMÉE DU RHIN B^{AU} C
ARMÉE DU RHIN B^{AU} D
ARMÉE DU RHIN B^{AU} E
ARMÉE DU RHIN Q^R G^L 2^E CORPS
ARMÉE DU RHIN B^{AU} F
ARMÉE DU RHIN B^{AU} G
ARMÉE DU RHIN B^{AU} H
ARMÉE DU RHIN B^{AU} I

Cancel

Red BSE
A.R.G.Q.G
A.R.BC^{AL}
G.I.Q.G
G.I.1^E.DON
G.I.2^E.DON
G.I.1.C.
A.R.1^e.C
A.R.A
A.R.B
A.R.C
A.R.D
A.R.E
A.R.2^e.C
A.R.F
A.R.G
A.R.H
A.R.I

Illustration

Figure 2-9
Figure 2-23
Figure 2-22
Figure 2-7
Next page
Figure 2-5
Figure 2-17
Figure 2-4
Figure 2-12

¹ The Garde Impériale headquarters postmark is also known with a “GARDE IMP^{AL}” variant.

French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine (continued)

Fieldpost Bureau	Fieldpost Postmark	Cancel	Illustration
3 ^e Corps Headquarters	ARMÉE DU RHIN Q ^R G ^L 3 ^E CORPS	A.R.3 ^e .C	
1 ^{re} Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} K	A.R.K	
2 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} L	A.R.L	
3 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} M	A.R.M	
4 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} N	A.R.N	
Cavalry Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} O	A.R.O	
4 ^e Corps Headquarters	ARMÉE DU RHIN Q ^R G ^L 4 ^E CORPS	A.R.4 ^e .C	
1 ^{re} Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} P	A.R.P	
2 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} Q	A.R.Q	
3 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} R	A.R.R	
Cavalry Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} S	A.R.S	
5 ^e Corps Headquarters	ARMÉE DU RHIN Q ^R G ^L 5 ^E CORPS	A.R.5 ^e .C	Figure 2-15
1 ^{re} Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} T	A.R.T	
2 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} U	A.R.U	
3 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} V	A.R.V	
Cavalry Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} W	A.R.W	
6 ^e Corps Headquarters	ARMÉE DU RHIN Q ^R G ^L 6 ^E CORPS	A.R.6 ^e .C	
1 ^{re} Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} Y	A.R.Y	
2 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} Z	A.R.Z	Figure 2-3
3 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AA	A.R.A.A	
4 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AB	A.R.A.B	
Cavalry Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AC	A.R.A.C	
7 ^e Corps Headquarters	ARMÉE DU RHIN Q ^R G ^L 7 ^E CORPS	A.R.7 ^e .C	Figure 4-2
1 ^{re} Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AD	A.R.A.D	
2 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AE	A.R.A.E	
3 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AF	A.R.A.F	
Cavalry Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AG	A.R.A.G	
Cavalry Reserve 1 ^{re} Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AH	A.R.A.H	
Cavalry Reserve 2 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AI	A.R.A.I	
Cavalry Reserve 3 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AK	A.R.A.K	Figure 2-16
Artillery Reserve	ARTILLERIE RÉSERVE GÉN ^L E	A ^{IE} R.G ^{AL}	
Artillery Supply Train	ARTILLERIE GRAND PARC	A ^{IE} G.P	



Garde Impériale “Quartier G^{AL}” Bureau

German Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine: July 15 to October 27, 1870 (Chapter 2)

The initial 102 German army fieldpost bureaus and their associated postal markings are listed below. The German fieldpost markings contain full descriptions of their military units. Prussian postmarks begin with “K:PR:” (King of Prussia) and contain the word “Feld-Post” or “Armee-Post.” Beyond this, there are two types of fieldpost bureaus: “Amt” for supervisory (used at the army and corps levels); and “Exp” for dispatch, which was used at the divisional levels. Thus, the postmark for the VI Corps reads “K:PR:Feld-Post-Amt” with “6. Armee-CPS” in the center, and the date (day/month) at the bottom. By contrast, the 1st Infantry Division postmark reads “K:PR:Feld-Post-Expd” with “1. Inf. Div.” in the center. Corps support services were given “reserve” fieldpost bureaus, while cavalry division fieldpost bureaus are distinguished by “avantgarde” designations.



Supreme
Headquarters



Army
Headquarters



Corps
Headquarters



Corps
(old style)



Garde Corps



Infantry
Division



Garde Infantry
Division



Support
Services



Support
(old style)



Cavalry
Division

Non-Prussian units, such as the Saxon XII Corps, the Hessian 25th Division and the Mecklenburg Corps, used Prussian style datestamps which omitted the “K:PR:” designation. The allied southern German states used very different types of postmarks. The double-circle Baden Division postmark reads “fieldpost of the Grand Duke of Baden.” The double-circle Württemberg Division postmarks include variants of “Kon. Württ” or “K.W” (King of Württemberg). Similarly, the Bavarian postmarks incorporate “K. Bayer” or “K.B” (King of Bavaria) in a tombstone or single-circle format. The table below shows the various types of German fieldpost postmarks from non-Prussian German States.



Saxon 12th Corps



Hessian 25th Division



Mecklenburg Corps



Baden Division



Württemberg Division
Headquarters



Württemberg Division
5th Infantry Regiment



Bavarian Army
3rd Infantry Division



Bavarian Army
Cavalry Division

German Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine (continued)

Fieldpost Bureau

Supreme Headquarters
 I Army Headquarters
 I Corps (joined August 12)
 1 Infantry Division
 2 Infantry Division
 I Corps Support Division
 VII Corps
 13 Infantry Division
 14 Infantry Division
 VII Corps Support Division
 VIII Corps
 (Also used an older style)
 15 Infantry Division
 16 Infantry Division
 VIII Corps Support Division
 1 Cavalry Div. (joined August 12)
 3 Cavalry Division
 II Army Headquarters
 II Corps (joined August 11)
 3 Infantry Division
 4 Infantry Division
 II Corps Support Division
 III Corps
 (Also used an older style)
 5 Infantry Division
 6 Infantry Division
 III Corps Support Division
 IV Corps
 7 Infantry Division
 8 Infantry Division
 IV Corps Support Division
 IX Corps
 18 Infantry Division
 25 (Hessian) Infantry Division
 IX Corps Support Division
 X Corps
 19 Infantry Division
 20 Infantry Division
 X Corps Support Division
 XII (Saxon) Corps
 23 Infantry Division
 24 Infantry Division
 XII Corps Support Division
 12 Cavalry Division
 Garde Corps
 1 Garde Infantry Division
 2 Garde Infantry Division
 Garde Corps Support Division
 Garde Cavalry Division
 (Also used a different style)
 5 Cavalry Division
 6 Cavalry Division
 3 Landwehr Division (joined August 18)

Fieldpost Postmark

K.PR.FELD-OBER-POST-AMT
 K:PR: ARMEE-POST-AMT 1. ARMEE
 K:PR: FELD-POST-AMT 1. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 1. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 2. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 1. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 7. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 13. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 14. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 7. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 8. ARMEE-CPS
 K.Pr. FELDPPOST VIII. ARMEE CORPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 15. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 16. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 8. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 2. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 7. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: ARMEE-POST-AMT 2. ARMEE
 K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 2. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 3. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 4. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 2. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 3. ARMEE-CPS
 K.Pr. FELDPPOST III. ARMEE CORPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 5. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 6. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 3. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 4. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 7. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 8. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 4. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 9. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 18. INF: DIV:
 FELDPPOST D:GROSSH:HESSISCHEN 25. DIVISION
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 9. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 10. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 19. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 20. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 10. ARMEE-CPS
 FELD-POST-AMT 12. ARMEE-CPS
 FELD-POST-EXPED: 23. INF: DIV:
 FELD-POST-EXPED: 24. INF: DIV:
 FELD-POST-EXP:D:RESERVE 12. ARMEE-CPS
 FELD-POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 12. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELDPPOST-AMT GARDE-CORPS
 K:PR: FELDPPOST-EXP I GRD. INF. DIV.
 K:PR: FELDPPOST-EXP II GRD. INF. DIV.
 K:PR: FELD-POST-EXP:D.RESERVE GARDE-CORPS
 K:PR: FELD-POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE GARDE-CORPS
 K:PR: FELDPPOST-EXP GRD. CAV. DIV.
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 4. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 3. ARMEE-CPS
 FELD-POST-EXPED 3. LANDW. DIV.

German Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine (continued)

Fieldpost Bureau

III Army Headquarters
 V Corps (old style)
 9 Infantry Division
 10 Infantry Division
 V Corps Support Division
 VI Corps (joined August 8)
 11 Infantry Division
 12 Infantry Division
 VI Corps Support Division
 XI Corps
 21 Infantry Division
 22 Infantry Division
 XI Corps Support Division (old style)
 I Bavarian Corps
 1 Bavarian Infantry Division
 2 Bavarian Infantry Division
 II Bavarian Corps
 3 Bavarian Infantry Division
 4 Bavarian Infantry Division
 Bavarian Cavalry Division
 Baden Division
 (Also used a smaller postmark)
 Württemberg Division Headquarters
 1 Brigade
 1 Infantry Regiment
 7 Infantry Regiment
 2 Jäger Battalion
 2 Brigade
 2 Infantry Regiment
 5 Infantry Regiment
 3 Jäger Battalion
 3 Brigade
 3 Infantry Regiment
 8 Infantry Regiment
 1 Jäger Battalion
 (Unbrigaded regiments)
 4 Regiment
 6 Regiment
 Württemberg Cavalry Headquarters
 1 Reiter Regiment
 2 Reiter Regiment
 3 Reiter Regiment
 Württemberg Artillery Headquarters
 1 Artillery
 2 Artillery
 3 Artillery
 Württemberg Artillery Supply
 Württemberg Engineers
 Württemberg Transport
 Württemberg Relay
 2 Cavalry Division (joined August 8)
 4 Cavalry Division

Fieldpost Postmark

K:PR:ARMEE-POST-AMT 3. ARMEE
 K:PR.FELDPOST-AMT 5t ARMEE CORPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 9. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 10. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 5. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 16. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 11. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 12. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 6. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 11. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 21. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 22. INF: DIV:
 FELD-P.-EXPED.RES. XI. A.C.
 K.BAYER.FELDPOST I
 K.BAYER.FELDPOST II
 K.BAYER.FELDPOST III
 K.BAYER.FELDPOST IV
 K.BAYER.FELDPOST V
 K.BAYER.FELDPOST VI
 FELD-POSTEXPED. K.B. KAVALLERIE DIVISION
 GR.BAD.FELDPOSTEXPEDITION
 GR.BAD.FELDPOST
 KÖN.WÜRTT. FELDPOSTAMT.
 K.W. FELDPOST I BRIGADE
 K.W. FELDPOST I INF. REG.
 K.W. FELDPOST VII INF. REG.
 K.W. FELDPOST II JAEGER BAT.
 K.W. FELDPOST II BRIGADE
 K.W. FELDPOST II INF. REG.
 K.W. FELDPOST V INF. REG.
 K.W. FELDPOST III JAEGER BAT.
 K.W. FELDPOST III BRIGADE
 K.W. FELDPOST III INF. REG.
 K.W. FELDPOST VIII INF. REG.
 K.W. FELDPOST I JAEGER BAT.

 K.W. FELDPOST IV INF. REG.
 K.W. FELDPOST VI INF. REG.
 (no fieldpost provided)
 K.W. FELDPOST I REIT. REG.
 K.W. FELDPOST II REIT. REG.
 K.W. FELDPOST III REIT. REG.
 (no fieldpost provided)
 K.W. FELDPOST I ART. ABTEIL.
 K.W. FELDPOST II ART. ABTEIL.
 K.W. FELDPOST III ART. ABTEIL.
 K.W. FELDPOST MUNIT. RES.
 K.W. FELDPOST PIONIERCORPS
 K.W. FELDPOST LEBENSM. FUHR.
 K.W. FELDPOST ETAPP. EXPED.
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 6. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 5. ARMEE-CPS

French Campaign in the Ardennes: August 9 to September 1, 1870 (Chapter 3)

The fieldpost bureaus for the Armée de Châlons are listed below. As described in Chapter Three, the 1st, 5th, 7th and 12th Corps regrouped at the military camp near Châlons from August 15 to August 21, and were joined later by the 13th Corps. The 1st, 5th and 7th Corps continued to use the postmarks supplied at the start of the war, but fieldpost postmarks were not ready for the 12th or 13th Corps at Châlons. The 5th Corps apparently lost their fieldpost materials during the August 7-19 retreat from the frontier to Châlons, since no 5th Corps postmarks are known after August 4. The Armée de Châlons surrendered at Sedan on September 1, but the 13th Corps escaped to Paris where it finally received its fieldpost materials (see the Campaign for Paris below).

Fieldpost Bureau	Fieldpost Postmark	Cancel	Notes
Imperial Headquarters	BUREAU SPÉCIAL DE L'EMPEREUR	Red BSE	
1 ^{er} Corps Headquarters	ARMÉE DU RHIN Q ^R G ^L 1 ^R CORPS	A.R.1 ^c .C	
1 ^{re} Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} A	A.R.A	Figure 3-15
2 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} B	A.R.B	Figure 3-3
3 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} C	A.R.C	
4 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} D	A.R.D	
Cavalry Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} E	A.R.E	Figure 3-2
5 ^e Corps Headquarters	ARMÉE DU RHIN Q ^R G ^L 5 ^E CORPS	A.R.5 ^c .C	Not known after August 4
1 ^{re} Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} T	A.R.T	Not known after August 4
2 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} U	A.R.U	Not known after August 4
3 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} V	A.R.V	Not known after August 4
Cavalry Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} W	A.R.W	Not known after August 4
7 ^e Corps Headquarters	ARMÉE DU RHIN Q ^R G ^L 7 ^E CORPS	A.R.7 ^c .C	Figure 3-4
1 ^{re} Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AD	A.R.A.D	Illustrated below
2 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AE	A.R.A.E	
3 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AF	A.R.A.F	Figure 3-12
Cavalry Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AG	A.R.A.G	
Cavalry Reserve 1 ^{re} Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AH	A.R.A.H	Re-used later at Paris ¹
Cavalry Reserve 2 ^e Division	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AI	A.R.A.I	

¹ The Bureau AH payeur officer apparently escaped from Sedan to Paris, where this fieldpost datestamp was used again.



Bureau AD of the 1st Division in the 7th Corps

German Campaign in the Ardennes: August 9 to September 1, 1870 (Chapter 3)

The fieldpost bureaus of the III and IV German armies are listed below. These armies left Metz on August 23 to pursue the Armée de Châlons to Sedan. On September 3, they were put in motion toward Paris. With the exception of the Saxon Crown Prince's IV Army Headquarters postmark (illustrated below), all of these postmarks are the same as those used during the Alsace-Lorraine campaign.



New IV Army Headquarters fieldpost marking

Fieldpost Bureau

III Army Headquarters
V Corps (old style)
9 Infantry Division
10 Infantry Division
V Corps Support Division
VI Corps
11 Infantry Division
12 Infantry Division
VI Corps Support Division
XI Corps
21 Infantry Division
22 Infantry Division
XI Corps Support Division (old style)
I Bavarian Corps
1 Bavarian Infantry Division
2 Bavarian Infantry Division
II Bavarian Corps
3 Bavarian Infantry Division
4 Bavarian Infantry Division
Bavarian Cavalry Division
Württemberg Division
2 Cavalry Division
4 Cavalry Division
IV Army Headquarters
IV Corps
7 Infantry Division
8 Infantry Division
IV Corps Support Division
XII (Saxon) Corps
23 Infantry Division
24 Infantry Division
XII Corps Support Division
12 Cavalry Division
Garde-Corps
1 Garde Infantry Division
2 Garde Infantry Division
Garde Corps Support Division
Garde Cavalry Division
5 Cavalry Division
6 Cavalry Division

Fieldpost Postmark

K:PR:ARMEE-POST-AMT 3. ARMEE
K:PR.FELDPOST-AMT 5t ARMEE CORPS
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 9. INF: DIV:
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 10. INF: DIV:
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 5. ARMEE-CPS
K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 16. ARMEE-CPS
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 11. INF: DIV:
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 12. INF: DIV:
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 6. ARMEE-CPS
K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 11. ARMEE-CPS
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 21. INF: DIV:
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 22. INF: DIV:
FELD-P.-EXPED.RES. XI A.C.
K.BAYER.FELDPOST I
K.BAYER.FELDPOST II
K.BAYER.FELDPOST III
K.BAYER.FELDPOST IV
K.BAYER.FELDPOST V
K.BAYER.FELDPOST VI
FELD-POSTEXPED K.B. KAVALLERIE DIVISION
K.W. FELDPOST (25 different – see Alsace Campaign listing)
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP.D.AVANTGARDE 6. ARMEE-CPS
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP.D.AVANTGARDE 5. ARMEE-CPS
F.P.E:d.O.C.d.ARM.ABTH.d.KRONPR.v.SACHSEN
K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 4. ARMEE-CPS
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 7. INF: DIV:
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 8. INF: DIV:
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 4. ARMEE-CPS
FELD-POST-AMT 12. ARMEE-CPS
FELD-POST-EXPED: 23. INF: DIV:
FELD-POST-EXPED: 24. INF: DIV:
FELD-POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 12. ARMEE-CPS
FELD-POST-EXP:D.AVANTGARDE 12. ARMEE-CPS
K:PR: FELDPOST-AMT GARDE-CORPS
K:PR: FELDPOST-EXP I GRD. INF. DIV.
K:PR: FELDPOST-EXP II GRD. INF. DIV.
K:PR: FELD-POST-EXP.D.RESERVE GARDE-CORPS
K:PR: FELDPOST-EXP GRD. CAV. DIV.
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.AVANTGARDE 4. ARMEE-CPS
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.AVANTGARDE 3. ARMEE-CPS

German Reserve Army

Mecklenburg's Corps was called from Germany to provide protection for the supply lines servicing the armies besieging Paris. It left Toul on September 23 for Reims, and stayed there until called to the siege of Paris in October, at which time the XIII Corps fieldpost replaced the Mecklenburg fieldpost (one of the rarest of all German fieldpost markings). The fieldpost of the Governor-General of Lorraine also began operations at Reims at that time, and the 2nd Landwehr Division was transferred to his command. At Strasbourg, the Governor-General of Alsace and the 3rd Landwehr Division were responsible for protecting the supply and communication lines in Alsace.



Mecklenburg
Corps



2 Landwehr
Division



Military Governor
(Reims)



Military Governor
(Nancy)



Military Governor
(Strasbourg)

Fieldpost Bureau

Mecklenburg Corps

17 Infantry Division¹

2 Landwehr Division

Military Governor at Reims

Military Governor at Nancy

Military Governor at Strasbourg

3 Landwehr Division

Württemberg 4 Infantry Regiment

¹ The 17th Division was detached from Reims around October 8 to the siege of Paris.

Fieldpost Postmark

FELD-POSTAMT d.CORPS d.GROSSHERZOGS v.MECKLENB.

K:PR:FELD -POST-EXPED: 17. INF: DIV:

FELD-POST-EXPED 2. LANDWEHR DIVISION

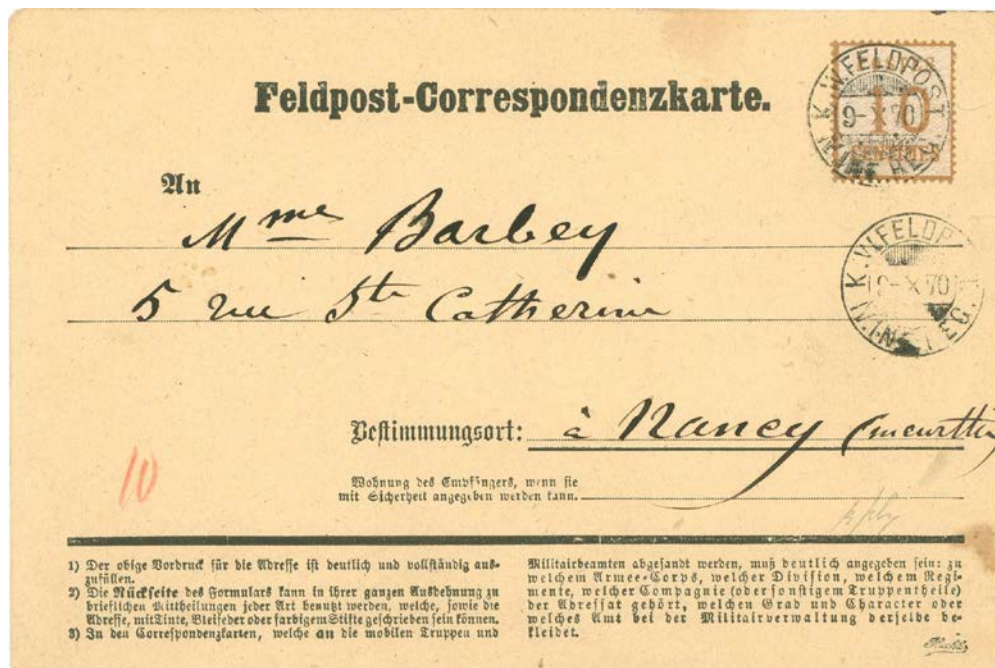
FELD -POST-EXPED.Z.DISP.D.GEN.GOUV. IN LOTHRINGEN

K:PR:FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 8. ARMEE-CPS

K:PR:FELD -POST-EXPED.Z.DISP.D.GEN.GOUV. IM ELSASS

FELD-POST-EXPED 3. LANDW. DIV.

K.W. FELDPST.IV.INF.REG.



Fieldpost bureau of Württemberg's 4th Infantry Regiment at Saverne

French Campaign for Paris: September 17, 1870 to January 28, 1871 (Chapter 5)

The Parisian fieldpost bureaus used during the siege are listed below.

Initial Organization (September 17 to November 7, 1870)



13th Corps
Headquarters



13th Corps
1st Division



Bureau AM
cancel



Bureau AL
cancel



14th Corps
Headquarters



14th Corps
1st Division

Fieldpost Bureau	Fieldpost Postmark	Cancel	Illustration
13 ^e Corps Headquarters (Vinoy)	ARMÉE DU RHIN Q ^R G ^L 13 ^E CORPS	A.R.A.L	Figures 5-5 and 5-16
1 ^{re} Division (d'Exea)	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AL	A.R.13 ^e C	Figure 5-4
2 ^e Division (de Maud'huy)	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AM	A.R.A.M	Figures 5-6 and 5-10
3 ^e Division (Blanchard)	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AN	A.R.A.N	Figures 5-7 and 5-17
14 ^e Corps Headquarters (Renault)	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE QUART ^R G ^{AL}	Black datestamp	Figure 5-8
1 ^{re} Division (de Caussade)	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE 14 ^E CORPS A	Red datestamp	Figures 5-9 and 5-19
2 ^e Division (d'Hughes)	(not assigned)		
3 ^e Division (de Maussion)	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE 14 ^E CORPS B	Black datestamp	Figure 5-11
Corps de St Denis	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AH	A.R.A.H	Figure 5-12

First 2^e Armée Re-Organization (November 8 to November 27, 1870)

The re-organized 2^e Armée continued to use the 13th and 14th Corps fieldpost postmarks and cancels until new fieldpost markings were introduced starting on November 28.

Fieldpost Bureau	Fieldpost Postmark	Previous Unit
1 ^{er} Corps Headquarters (Blanchard)	ARMÉE DU RHIN Q ^R G ^L 13 ^E CORPS	13 th Corps Headquarters
1 ^{re} Division (de Malroy)	(not assigned)	14 th Corps 2 nd Division ¹
2 ^e Division (de Maud'huy)	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AM	13 th Corps 2 nd Division
3 ^e Division ((Faron)	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AN	13 th Corps 3 rd Division
2 ^e Corps Headquarters (Renault)	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE QUART ^R G ^{AL}	14 th Corps Headquarters
1 ^{re} Division (Susbielle)	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE 14 ^E CORPS A	14 th Corps 1 st Division
2 ^e Division (Berthaut)	(not assigned)	14 th Corps 2 nd Division ¹
3 ^e Division (de Maussion)	ARMÉE FRANÇAISE 14 ^E CORPS B	14 th Corps 3 rd Division
3 rd Corps Headquarters (d'Exea)	(not assigned)	No pre-existing fieldpost
1 ^{re} Division (de Bellemare)	(not assigned)	No pre-existing fieldpost
2 ^e Division (Mattat)	ARMÉE DU RHIN B ^{AU} AL	13 th Corps 1 st Division

¹ The 14th Corps' 2nd Division was split in two on October 28, and was never re-united.

French Campaign for Paris (continued)

First 2^e Armée Fieldpost Re-Organization (November 28, 1870 to December 19)

Starting on November 28, new 2^e Armée fieldpost postmarks were introduced.



Bureau G



Bureau A



Bureau A cancel



Bureau H cancel

Fieldpost Bureau

2^e Armée Headquarters (Ducrot)
1^{er} Corps HQ (Blanchard)
1^{re} Division (Malroy)
2^e Division (Maud'huy)
3^e Division (Faron)
2^e Corps HQ (Renault)
1^{re} Division (Susbielle)
2^e Division (Berthaut)
3^e Division (Maussion)
3^e Corps HQ (d'Exea)
1^{re} Division (Bellemare)
2^e Division (Mattat)

Fieldpost Postmark

ARMÉE FRANÇAISE A
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE B
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE C
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE D
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE E
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE F
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE G
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE H
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE J
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE K
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE L
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE M

Cancel

Black A.F.A./datestamp
Red A.F.B
Red datestamp
Black A.F.D
Black A.F.E
Black A.F.F
Black A.F.G
Black A.F.H/datestamp
Black A.F.J
Black A.F.K
Black A.F.L
Black A.F.M

Postmark Notes

Figure 5-21
No covers known in this period
Figure 5-20
Figure 5-22
No covers known in this period
No covers known in this period
No covers known in this period
Figure 5-23
Figure 5-24

Second 2^e Armée Fieldpost Re-Organization (December 19 to January 28, 1871)

Fieldpost Bureau

2^e Armée Headquarters (Ducrot)
1^{er} Corps HQ (Maussion)
1^{re} Division (Susbielle)
2^e Division (Berthaut)
3^e Division (Courty)
2^e Corps HQ (d'Exea)
1^{re} Division (Bellemare)
2^e Division (Mattat)
Reserve Division (Faron)

Fieldpost Postmark

ARMÉE FRANÇAISE A
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE B (red)
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE C
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE D
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE E
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE F (red)
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE G
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE H
ARMÉE FRANÇAISE J

Previous Unit

2^e Armée Headquarters
2^e Corps HQ
2^e Corps 1^{re} Division
2^e Corps 2^e Division
2^e Corps 3^e Division
3^e Corps Headquarters
3^e Corps 1^{re} Division
3^e Corps 2^e Division
1^{er} Corps 3^e Division

Illustration

Figure 5-25
Figure 5-26
Figures 5-27 and 5-34
Figure 5-28
Figure 5-29
Figure 5-30 (in red)
Figure 5-31
Figure 5-32 and below
Figure 5-33



Bureau H of the 2nd Corps' 2nd Division

German Campaign for Paris: September 3, 1870 to January 28, 1871 (Chapter 5)

The fieldpost bureaus used around Paris by the III and IV German armies are listed below.

Fieldpost Bureau	Fieldpost Postmark
Imperial Headquarters	K.PR.FELD-OBER-POST-AMT
III Army Headquarters	K.PR:ARMEE-POST-AMT 3. ARMEE
II Corps (arrived November 5 from Metz) ¹	K.PR: FELD -POST-AMT 2. ARMEE-CPS
3 Infantry Division	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 3. INF: DIV:
4 Infantry Division	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 4. INF: DIV:
II Corps Support Division	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 2. ARMEE-CPS
V Corps	K.PR.FELDPOST-AMT 5t ARMEE CORPS
9 Infantry Division	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 9. INF: DIV:
10 Infantry Division	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 10. INF: DIV:
V Corps Support Division	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 5. ARMEE-CPS
VI Corps	K.PR: FELD -POST-AMT 16. ARMEE-CPS
11 Infantry Division	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 11. INF: DIV:
12 Infantry Division	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 12. INF: DIV:
VI Corps Support Division	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 6. ARMEE-CPS
XI Corps (delayed at Sedan)	K.PR: FELD -POST-AMT 11. ARMEE-CPS
21 Infantry Division (arrived October 7)	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 21. INF: DIV:
22 Infantry Div. (arrived September 23) ²	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 22. INF: DIV:
XI Corps Support Division	FELD-P.-EXPED.RES. XI A.C.
XIII Corps	FELD -POSTAMT 13 ARMEE-CORPS
17 Infantry Div. (arrived October 10) ³	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 17. INF: DIV:
I Bavarian Corps (arrived September 23) ²	K.BAYER.FELDPOST I
1 Bavarian Infantry Division	K.BAYER.FELDPOST II
2 Bavarian Infantry Division	K.BAYER.FELDPOST III
II Bavarian Corps	K.BAYER.FELDPOST IV
3 Bavarian Infantry Division	K.BAYER.FELDPOST V
4 Bavarian Infantry Division	K.BAYER.FELDPOST VI
Württemberg Division (arrived in mid-Sept.)	K.W. FELDPOST (25 different – see Alsace Campaign listing)
Bavarian Cavalry Division	FELD-POSTEXPED K.B. KAVALLERIE DIVISION
2 Cavalry Division ³	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 6. ARMEE-CPS
4 Cavalry Div. (arrived September 23) ²	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 5. ARMEE-CPS
IV Army Headquarters	F.P.E.d.O.C.d.ARM.ABTH.d.KRONPR.v.SACHSEN
IV Corps	K.PR: FELD -POST-AMT 4. ARMEE-CPS
7 Infantry Division	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 7. INF: DIV:
8 Infantry Division	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 8. INF: DIV:
IV Corps Support Division	K.PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 4. ARMEE-CPS
XII (Saxon) Corps	FELD-POST-AMT 12. ARMEE-CPS
23 Infantry Division	FELD-POST-EXPED: 23. INF: DIV:
24 Infantry Division	FELD-POST-EXPED: 24. INF: DIV:
XII Corps Support Division	FELD-POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 12. ARMEE-CPS
12 Cavalry Division ⁴	FELD-POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 12. ARMEE-CPS
Garde-Corps	K.PR: FELDPOST-AMT GARDE-CORPS
1 Garde Infantry Division	K.PR: FELDPOST-EXP I GRD. INF. DIV.
2 Garde Infantry Division	K.PR: FELDPOST-EXP II GRD. INF. DIV.
Garde Corps Support Division	K.PR: FELD-POST-EXP.D.RESERVE GARDE-CORPS
Garde Cavalry Division	K.PR: FELD-POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE GARDE-CORPS.
Garde Landwehr Div. (arrived October 12)	FELD -POST-EXPED. GARDE LANDWEHR DIVISION
5 Cavalry Division ³	K.PR: FELD-POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 4. ARMEE-CPS
6 Cavalry Division ³	K.PR: FELD-POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 3. ARMEE-CPS

¹ The II Corps was detached on January 1 for service in the East at Montargis.

² Detached on October 6 for service on the Loire. The 22nd Division was part of the XIII Corps in November-January.

³ Detached on November 6 for service on the Loire. The 2nd Landwehr Division had been left at Reims.

⁴ Detached on September 26 for service with the I Army north of Paris.

French Campaign along the Loire: October 11, 1870 to March 7, 1871 (Chapter 7)

The fieldpost bureaus used by the Armée de la Loire and the 2^e Armée de la Loire during the pre-armistice period are listed below. Some 16th Corps fieldpost markings were used by both the Armée de la Loire and the 2^e Armée de la Loire. During the January 31 to March 7 armistice period, the French army introduced new undated 2-ring circular fieldpost markings for the 2^e Armée de la Loire and the 2^e Armée de Bretagne.

Armée de la Loire (October 11 to December 4, 1870)



Army
Headquarters

15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE
2^{ME} DIVISION

15th Corps
2nd Division



16th Corps
Headquarters



16th Corps
1st Division

Fieldpost Bureau

Army Headquarters

15^e Corps Headquarters

1^{re} Division

2^e Division

3^e Division

Cavalry Division

16^e Corps Headquarters

1^{re} Division

2^e Division

3^e Division

Cavalry Division

Fieldpost Postmark

ARMÉE DE LA LOIRE

TRÉSOR ET POSTES G^d QUARTIER G^d

15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE/QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL

15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE/1^{RE} DIVISION

15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE/2^{ME} DIVISION

15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE/3^{ME} DIVISION

15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE/DIVISION DE CAVALERIE

16^E CORPS QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL

16^E CORPS B.A

16^E CORPS B.B

16^E CORPS B.C

16^E CORPS B.D

Postmark Notes

Black undated 2-ring (Fig. 7-8)

Black undated 2-line (Fig. 7-4)

Red or black undated 2-line

Black undated 2-line (Fig. 7-5)

Red undated 2-line (Fig. 7-9)

Black undated 2-line (Fig. 7-10)

Black undated single-ring (Fig. 7-11)

Black undated single-ring (Fig. 7-6)

Black undated single-ring

Black undated single-ring

Black undated single-ring

Black undated single-ring (Fig. 7-12)

2^e Armée de la Loire (December 5, 1870 to January 29, 1871)

POSTES. — 16^e CORPS.

Quartier – Général.

16th Corps
Headquarters



16th Corps
Cavalry Division



19th Corps



21st Corps
Headquarters



21st Corps
4th Division

Fieldpost Bureau

16^e Corps Headquarters

1^{re} Division

2^e Division

3^e Division

Cavalry Division

19^e Corps

21^e Corps Headquarters

4^e Division

Fieldpost Postmark

POSTES. — 16^e CORPS./Quartier – Général.

16^E CORPS B.A

16^E CORPS B.B

16^E CORPS B.C

16^E CORPS B.D

POSTES/19^E CORPS

ARMÉE DE L'OUEST

ARMÉE DE BRETAGNE PAYEUR

Postmark Notes

Black undated 2-line (Fig. 7-26)

Black undated single-ring

Black undated single-ring

Black undated single-ring

Black undated single-ring (Fig. 7-22)

Blue or black boxed 2-line (Fig. 7-25)

Black undated 2-ring (Figs. 7-19, 7-27)

Blue undated 2-ring (Fig. 7-20)

French Campaign along the Loire (continued)

2^e Armée de la Loire (January 31 to March 7, 1871) – Armistice Period



2^e Army
Headquarters



16th Corps
3rd Division



17th Corps
1st Division



19th Corps
Headquarters



25th Corps
Headquarters

Fieldpost Bureau

Army Headquarters
16^e Corps Headquarters
1^{re} Division
2^e Division
3^e Division
Cavalry Division
17^e Corps 1^{re} Division
19^e Corps Headquarters
1^{re} Division
2^e Division
Cavalry Division
21^e Corps Headquarters
1^{re} Division
2^e Division
3^e Division
Cavalry Division
25^e Corps Headquarters
1^{re} Division
2^e Division

Fieldpost Postmark

2^E ARMÉE POSTES GRAND QUARTIER G^{AL}
16^E CORPS POSTES QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL
16^E CORPS POSTES 1^{ERE} DIVISION
16^E CORPS POSTES 2^E DIVISION
16^E CORPS POSTES 3^E DIVISION
16^E CORPS POSTES DON DE CAVALERIE
17^E CORPS POSTES *1^{ERE} DIVISION*
19^E CORPS POSTES QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL
19^E CORPS POSTES 1^{ERE} DIVISION
19^E CORPS POSTES 2^E DIVISION
19^E CORPS POSTES DON DE CAVALERIE
21^E CORPS POSTES QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL
21^E CORPS POSTES 1^{ERE} DIVISION
21^E CORPS POSTES 2^E DIVISION
21^E CORPS POSTES 3^E DIVISION
21^E CORPS POSTES DON DE CAVALERIE
25^E CORPS D'ARMÉE *Q^{TIER} GÉNÉRAL*
25^E CORPS D'ARMÉE *1^{RE} DIVISION*
25^E CORPS D'ARMÉE *2^E DIVISION*

Postmark Notes

Black undated 2-ring (Fig. 7-29)
Black undated 2-ring
Black undated 2-ring
Black undated 2-ring
Black undated 2-ring (Fig. 7-30)
Black undated 2-ring
Black undated 2-ring (Fig. 7-31)
Black or blue undated 2-ring
Black undated 2-ring (Fig. 7-33)
Black undated 2-ring
Black undated 2-ring
Black undated 2-ring (Fig. 7-35)
Black undated 2-ring
Black undated 2-ring
Black undated 2-ring
Black undated 2-ring
Blue undated 2-ring
Blue undated 2-ring
Blue undated 2-ring (Fig. 7-37)

2^e Armée de Bretagne (February 11 to March 7, 1871) – Armistice Period



17th Corps
Cavalry Division

21^e Corps, 4^e Division
POSTES

21st Corps 4th Division



22nd Corps
2nd Division

INCONNU
LIPOWSKI

Lipowski Corps

Fieldpost Bureau

17^e Corps Headquarters
2^e Division
3^e Division
Cavalry Division
19^e Corps 3^e Division
21^e Corps 4^e Division
22^e Corps Headquarters¹
1^{re} Division
2^e Division
Lipowski Corps

Fieldpost Postmark

17^E CORPS POSTES *QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL*
17^E CORPS POSTES *2^E DIVISION*
17^E CORPS POSTES *3^E DIVISION*
17^E CORPS POSTES *DON DE CAVALERIE*
19^E CORPS POSTES 3^E DIVISION
21^E Corps, 4^e Division/POSTES
22^E CORPS POSTES *QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL*
22^E CORPS POSTES *1^{ERE} DIVISION*
22^E CORPS POSTES *2^E DIVISION*
INCONNU/LIPOWSKI

Postmark Notes

Black undated 2-ring
Black undated 2-ring (Fig. 7-32)
Black undated 2-ring
Black undated 2-ring
Black undated 2-ring
(May not have been prepared)
Black undated 2-line (Fig. 7-36)
(May not have been prepared)
Blue undated 2-ring
Blue undated 2-ring (Fig. 7-38)
Black 2-line (Fig. 7-39)

¹ The 22nd Corps arrived at Caen on February 26 (transferred from the Armée du Nord on February 15).

German Campaign along the Loire: October 6, 1870 to March 7, 1871 (Chapter 7)

The fieldpost bureaus of the German armies that were active along the Loire are listed below.



1st Bavarian Corps

Von der Tann Detachment (October 6 to November 5, 1870)

Fieldpost Bureau

I Bavarian Corps
 1 Bavarian Infantry Division
 2 Bavarian Infantry Division
 22 Infantry Division¹
 2 Cavalry Division
 4 Cavalry Division¹

Fieldpost Postmark

K.BAYER.FELDPOST I
 K.BAYER.FELDPOST II
 K.BAYER.FELDPOST III
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 22. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 6. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 5. ARMEE-CPS

¹ Returned to III Army command from October 17 to November 5.

Mecklenburg Detachment (November 6 to November 24, 1870)²

Fieldpost Bureau

XIII Corps³
 17 Infantry Division
 22 Infantry Division
 I Bavarian Corps
 1 Bavarian Infantry Division
 2 Bavarian Infantry Division
 2 Cavalry Division
 4 Cavalry Division
 5 Cavalry Division⁴
 6 Cavalry Division

Fieldpost Postmark

FELD -POSTAMT 13 ARMEE-CORPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 17. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 22. INF: DIV:
 K.BAYER.FELDPOST I
 K.BAYER.FELDPOST II
 K.BAYER.FELDPOST III
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 6. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 5. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP :D :AVANTGARDE 4. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 3. ARMEE-CPS

² Placed under the orders of the II Army from November 25 to December 18, and again from January 1 to 15.

³ The XIII Corps was detached from the II Army on January 18 for service with the I Army at Rouen

⁴ The 5th Cavalry Division was detached on November 18 for service west of Paris at Dreux and Evreux

II Army (November 20, 1870 to March 7, 1871)

Fieldpost Bureau

II Army Headquarters
 III Corps
 (also used an older style)
 5 Infantry Division
 6 Infantry Division
 III Corps Support Division
 IX Corps
 18 Infantry Division
 25 (Hessian) Infantry Division
 IX Corps Support Division
 X Corps
 19 Infantry Division
 20 Infantry Division
 X Corps Support Division
 1 Cavalry Division

Fieldpost Postmark

K:PR: ARMEE-POST-AMT 2. ARMEE
 K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 3. ARMEE-CPS
 K.Pr. FELDPPOST III. ARMEE CORPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 5. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 6. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 3. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 9. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 18. INF: DIV:
 FELDPPOST D:GROSSH:HESSISCHEN 25. DIVISION
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 9. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 10. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 19. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 20. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 10. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 2. ARMEE-CPS

French Campaign in the North: December 3, 1870 to March 7, 1871 (Chapter 8)

The fieldpost bureaus used by the Armée du Nord during the pre-armistice period are listed below. During the January 29 to March 7 armistice period, the French army introduced new undated 2-ring circular fieldpost markings for the Armée du Nord.

Armée du Nord (December 3 to January 28, 1871)

ARMÉE DU NORD.
QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL.

Army Headquarters

22^E CORPS
2^E DIVISION

22nd Corps 2nd Division



22nd Corps Postal
Headquarters

Fieldpost Bureau

Army Headquarters
22^e Corps 1^{re} Division
22^e Corps 2^e Division
22^e Corps Postal HQ

Fieldpost Postmark

ARMÉE DU NORD./QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL
22^E CORPS/1^{ERE} DIVISION
22^E CORPS/2^E DIVISION
DIRECTION DES POSTES 22ME CORPS D'ARMÉE

Postmark Notes

Blue undated 2-line (Fig. 8-5)
(unknown)
Blue undated 2-line (Fig. 8-6)
Large blue undated 2-ring

Armée du Nord (January 29 to March 7, 1871) – Armistice Period



Army
Headquarters



22nd Corps
2nd Division



23rd Corps
Headquarters



23rd Corps
1st Division



Postal
Headquarters



22nd Corps Postal
Headquarters

Fieldpost Bureau

Army Headquarters
22^e Corps Headquarters¹
1^{re} Division
2^e Division
23^e Corps Headquarters
1^{re} Division
2^e Division
Postal Headquarters
22^e Corps

Fieldpost Postmark

ARMÉE DU NORD POSTES
GRAND QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL
22^E CORPS POSTES QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL
22^E CORPS POSTES 1^{ERE} DIVISION
22^E CORPS POSTES 2^E DIVISION
23^E CORPS POSTES QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL
23^E CORPS POSTES 1^{ERE} DIVISION
23^E CORPS POSTES 2^E DIVISION
DIRECTION DES POSTES GRAND QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL
DIRECTION DES POSTES 22^E CORPS

Postmark Notes

Blue or black (Figure 8-12)
(unknown)
Black (Figure 8-13)
Blue (Figure 8-15)
Blue (Figure 8-11)
Blue (Figure 8-11)
Blue
Blue
Blue

¹ The 22nd Corps was detached on February 15 for service with the 2^e Armée de Bretagne in Normandy.



Distinctive “P.P.” marking used by the Armée du Nord

German Campaign in the North: November 20, 1870 to March 7, 1871 (Chapter 8)

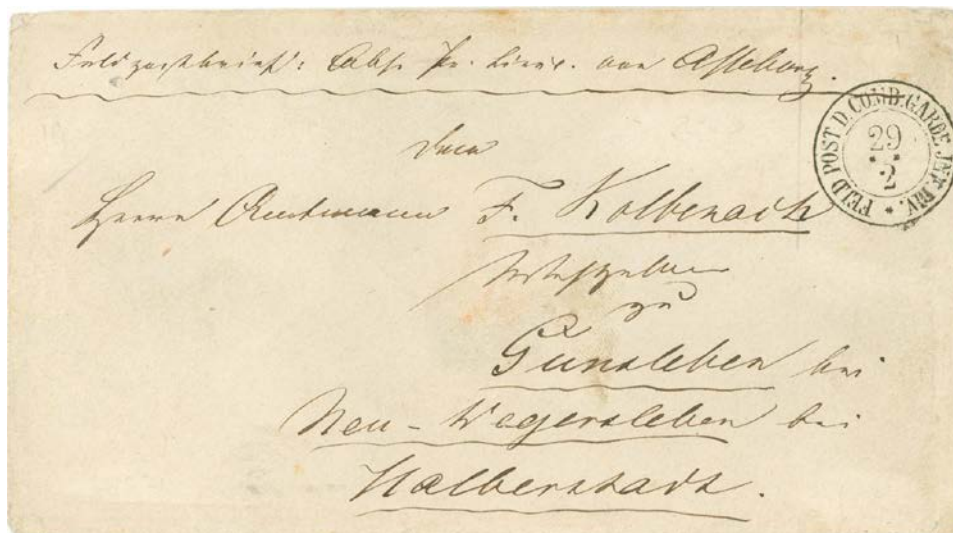
The fieldpost bureaus of the German I Army and attached units that were active in the North are listed below. They continued to use the fieldpost materials that had been supplied at the start of the war. The VII Corps had been a part of the I Army at the start of the war, but was not active in the North, so it is not included here. The 3rd Reserve Division was formed from the 3rd Landwehr Division on October 27, but was apparently not provided with a fieldpost bureau.

Fieldpost Bureau

I Army Headquarters
 I Corps
 1 Infantry Division
 2 Infantry Division
 I Corps Support Division
 VIII Corps
 (Also used an older style)
 15 Infantry Division
 16 Infantry Division
 VIII Corps Support Division
 XIII Corps (joined January 25)
 17 Infantry Division
 22 Infantry Division
 3 Cavalry Division
 Combined Garde Brigade (formed Sept. 29)
 12 Cavalry Division (joined September 26)

Fieldpost Postmark

K:PR: ARMEE-POST-AMT 1. ARMEE
 K:PR: FELD-POST-AMT 1. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 1. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 2. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 1. ARMEE-CPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 8. ARMEE-CPS
 K.Pr. FELDPOST VIII. ARMEE CORPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 15. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 16. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 8. ARMEE-CPS
 FELD -POSTAMT 13 ARMEE-CORPS
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 17. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 22. INF: DIV:
 K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 7. ARMEE-CPS
 FELD POST D COMB.GARDE JNF.DIV.
 FELD-POST-EXP:D:AVANTGARDE 12. ARMEE-CPS



Combined Garde Infantry Division fieldpost bureau

French Campaign in the East: October 21, 1870 to February 1, 1871 (Chapter 9)

The fieldpost bureaus used by the armies in the East are listed below. Postmarks from the Armée de l'Est are very rare, since that fieldpost was in operation for only 22 days. The distinctive “PP” marking used in conjunction with the Armée de l'Est fieldpost markings was later used as a fieldpost marking by the 2nd Division of the 20th Corps.

Armée de l'Est (October 21 to November 12, 1870)

ARMÉE DE L'EST.

1^{re} Division.

1st Division



“Port Payé” marking

Fieldpost Bureau

1^{re} Division

2^e Division

Fieldpost Postmark

ARMÉE DE L'EST./1^{re} Division.

ARMÉE DE L'EST./2^{me} Division.

Postmark Notes

Blue undated 2-line (Figure 9-6)

Blue undated 2-line

Armée des Vosges (October 14, 1870 to February 13, 1871)



Headquarters

Fieldpost Bureau

Headquarters

Fieldpost Postmark

ARMÉE DES VOSGES POSTES * Q^{ER} GAL *

Postmark Notes

Black undated 2-ring (Figure 9-9)

1^{re} Armée (December 5, 1870 to March 20, 1871)

15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE
QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL

15th Corps
Headquarters

15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE
2^{ME} DIVISION

15th Corps
2nd Division

POSTES
15^E CORPS 2^{ME} D^{ON}

15th Corps
(second type)

18^E CORPS
Quartier G^{AL}

18th Corps
Headquarters

ARMÉE DE L'EST

Belfort Garrison

Fieldpost Bureau

15^e Corps Headquarters
(second type)

1^{re} Division
(second type)

2^e Division
(second type)

3^e Division
(second type)

Cavalry Division
(second type)

18^e Corps Headquarters

20^e Corps 2^e Division

Belfort Garrison

Fieldpost Postmark

15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE/QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL
POSTES/15^E CORPS QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL

15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE/1^{RE} DIVISION
POSTES/15^E CORPS 1^{RE} D^{ON}

15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE/2^{ME} DIVISION
POSTES/15^E CORPS 2^{ME} D^{ON}

15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE/3^{ME} DIVISION
POSTES/15^E CORPS 3^{ME} D^{ON}

15^E CORPS D'ARMÉE/DIVISION DE CAVALERIE
POSTES/15^E CORPS CAV^{LE}

18^E CORPS/Quartier G^{AL}

PP

ARMÉE DE L'EST

Postmark Notes

Black undated 2-line (Figure 9-14)

Black undated 2-line (unknown)

Red undated 2-line (Figure 9-15)

Red undated 2-line (Figure 9-16)

Black undated 2-line

Black undated 2-line (Figure 9-26)

Red undated 2-line

Red undated 2-line

Black undated 2-line

Black undated 2-line (Figure 9-24)

Blue undated 2-line (Figure 9-17)

Blue circled ‘PP’

Blue undated straight-line (Fig. 4-43)

German Campaign in the East: October 4, 1870 to February 13, 1871 (Chapter 9)

The fieldpost bureaus of the German army units that were active in the East are listed below. The XIV Corps fieldpost bureaus were used by both the von Werder and Sud Armies. Many of the fieldpost postmarks had been supplied at the start of the war, except for the new fieldpost markings prepared for the XIV Corps, 4th Reserve Division and the Sud Armee.

Von Werder Army (October 4 to January 5, 1871)



XIV Corps
Headquarters



Baden Division
(large datestamp)



Baden Division
(small datestamp)



4th Reserve
Division



1st Landwehr
Division

Fieldpost Bureau

XIV Corps
Baden Division
(Also used a smaller postmark)
Combined Infantry/Cavalry Division
4th Reserve Division
1st Landwehr Division¹

¹ The 1st Landwehr Division was deployed to the siege of Belfort.

Fieldpost Postmark

FELD -POST-AMT 14. ARMEE-CPS.
GR.BAD.FELDPOSTEXPEDITION
GR.BAD.FELDPOST
FELD-POST-EXP.D.AVANTGARDE 14. ARMEE-CPS
FELD -POST-EXPED. 4 RESERVE-DIVISION
FELD-POST-EXPED 1. LANDWEHR INF. DIV.

Sud Army (January 6 to February 13, 1871)



Sud Army
Headquarters



II Corps
Headquarters



14th Division
(VII Corps)



Combined Division
(XIV Corps)

Fieldpost Bureau

Sud Army Headquarters
II Corps
3 Infantry Division
4 Infantry Division
II Corps Support Division
VII Corps
13 Infantry Division
14 Infantry Division
VII Corps Support Division
XIV Corps
Baden Division
(Also used a smaller postmark)
Combined Infantry/Cavalry Division
4th Reserve Division
1st Landwehr Division

Fieldpost Postmark

K.PR.FELDPOSTEXPED.D.OBERCOMM.D.SÜDARMEE
K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 2. ARMEE-CPS
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 3. INF: DIV:
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 4. INF: DIV:
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 2. ARMEE-CPS
K:PR: FELD -POST-AMT 7. ARMEE-CPS
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 13. INF: DIV:
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXPED: 14. INF: DIV:
K:PR: FELD -POST-EXP:D.RESERVE 7. ARMEE-CPS
FELD -POST-AMT 14. ARMEE-CPS.
GR.BAD.FELDPOSTEXPEDITION
GR.BAD.FELDPOST
FELD-POST-EXP.D.AVANTGARDE 14. ARMEE-CPS
FELD -POST-EXPED. 4 RESERVE-DIVISION
FELD-POST-EXPED 1. LANDWEHR INF. DIV.

French Training Camps: November 25, 1870 to March 7, 1871

On November 22, all able men from 21 years to 40 years were mobilized into the National Guard. Three days later, a decree ordered the creation of 11 training camps for the new mobilisés. Mail from two of the 11 camps (Alpines and Cavalaire) is known with special postal markings.

A^T CAMP des ALPINES
SECTION de GRAVESON

Camps des Alpines - Graveson



Provisional postmark

A^T CAMP des ALPINES
SECTION de S^T RÉMY

Camp des Alpines – St Rémy

CAMP de CAVALAIRE

Camp de Cavalaire (Cogolin)

French Military Camp

Alpines – Graveson Section
Alpines – Graveson Section
Alpines – St. Rémy Section
Cavalaire (Cogolin)

Fieldpost Postmark

A^T CAMP des ALPINES/SECTION de GRAVESON
GRAVESON (provisional post office postmark)
A^T CAMP des ALPINES/SECTION de S^T RÉMY
CAMP de CAVALAIRE

Postmark Notes

Black undated 2-line
Black dated 2-ring
Black undated 2-line
Black straight-line



Letter from Cavalaire Camp postmarked at nearby Cogolin

Campaign against the Paris Commune: March 18 to May 28, 1871 (Chapter 10)

The Armée de Versailles used fieldpost postmarks which had previously been used by the Armée du Nord and the 19th Corps of the 2^e Armée de la Loire. Some were modified by the removal of unit identifications. The six known fieldpost markings are listed below, although there may be more to be discovered.

Armée de Versailles (April 6 to May 28, 1871)



Fieldpost Bureau

Army Headquarters
Army Headquarters
2^e Corps 2^e Division
3^e Corps Headquarters
Postal Headquarters
Postal Headquarters

Fieldpost Postmark

POSTES QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL
19^E CORPS POSTES QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL
2^E CORPS POSTES 2^E DIVISION
3^E CORPS POSTES QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL
DIRECTION DES POSTES GRAND QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL
P.P.

Postmark Notes

Blue 2-ring (Figure 10-10)
Black 2-ring (Figure 10-9)
Blue 2-ring (Figure 10-11)
Blue 2-ring
Large blue 2-ring
Blue boxed marking (Fig. 10-8)

¹ Modified from the Armée du Nord supreme headquarters postmark.

² Used previously by the 19th Corps of the 2^e Armée de la Loire.

³ Modified from the Armée du Nord 23rd Corps 2nd Division postmark.

⁴ Modified from the Armée du Nord 23rd Corps Headquarters postmark.

⁵ Used previously by the Armée du Nord.

⁶ Used previously by the Armée du Nord.



June 4, 1871 letter postmarked at the fieldpost bureau for the 2nd Division of the 2nd Corps
(Lot 1151 in December 2016 Ceres auction catalog)

German Occupation Army: March 24, 1871 to September 16, 1873 (Chapter 10)

The Occupation Army Headquarters fieldpost bureau was established at Reims on March 24, 1871. At that time, other German units in France continued to use the fieldpost materials that had been provided at the start of the war. An October 12, 1871 agreement reduced the occupation army to four divisions, which were provided with new fieldpost postmarks. Reflecting the creation of the German Empire on January 18, 1871, the postmarks no longer read “K:PR” (King of Prussia), but were instead modified to read “K.D” (Emperor of Germany). The 2nd Bavarian Division used the “K.BAYER.FELDPOST II” postmark during the occupation period.

Occupation Army (March 24, 1871 to September 16, 1873)



Headquarters



4th Division



6th Division



2nd Bavarian Division

Fieldpost Bureau

Headquarters

4 Infantry Division

6 Infantry Division

19 Infantry Division

2 Bavarian Infantry Division

Fieldpost Postmark

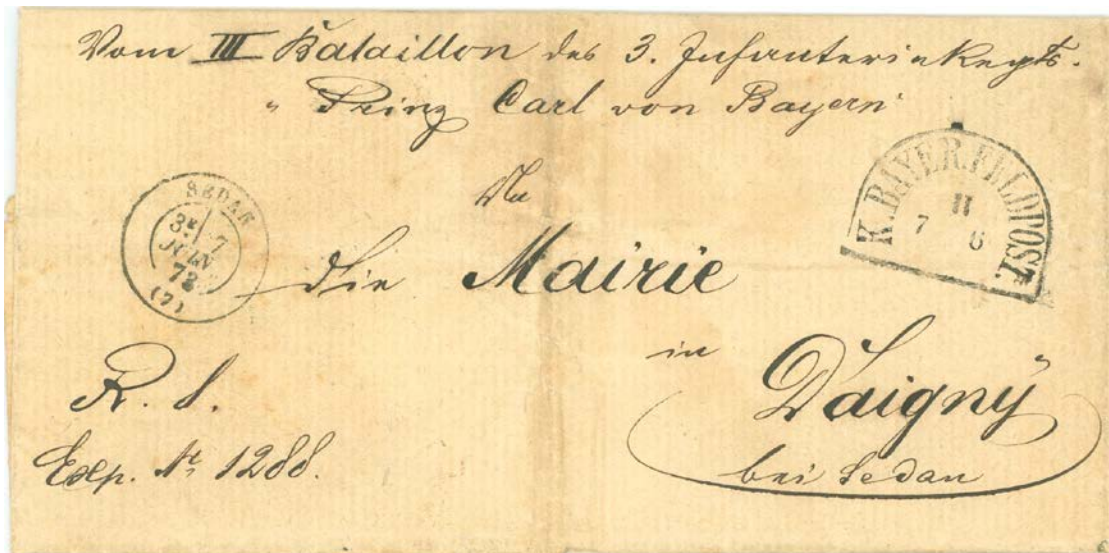
FELDPSTAMT DER OCCUPATIONS-ARMEE

K.D.FELD-POSTEXPED. 4. INF.-DIV.

K.D.FELD-POSTEXPED. 6. INF.-DIV.

K.D.FELD-POSTEXPED. 19. INF.-DIV.

K.BAYER.FELDPOST II



June 7, 1873 letter postmarked at the 2nd Bavarian Division's fieldpost bureau at Charleville

Appendix B

Censuses of Alsace-Lorraine Siege Mail

Metz Pharmacists' Balloon Mail (Chapter Four)

N°	Metz Date	Postmark	Destination	Addressee
4th Balloon - left September 6 - recovered October 25 near Niort				
MP4-1	(Forwarding envelope)	Niort October 26 (3 ^e), P.P.	Troyes	Brocard
5th Balloon - left September 10 - landed near Lille (40 letters carried)				
MP5-1	September 7	Lille September 19 (5 ^e), red P.P.	Paris	Lejeune
MP5-2	September 7		Paris	Maurin
6th Balloon - left September 11 - landed near Forbach (about 50 letters carried)				
MP6-1	September 8		Castelnau le Lez	Jeannel
	(Forwarding envelope)	Saarbrücken Sep. 15, Prusse-Erquelines Sep. 18	Montpellier Sep. 22	
MP6-2	September 8	Forbach September 14 (2 ^e)	Paris	Lejeune
	(Forwarding envelope)	Saarbrücken Sep. 15, Prusse-Erquelines Sep. 18	Paris Sep. 18 (6 ^e)	
MP6-3	September 8		Soucy	de Ginibrail
	(Forwarding envelope)	Saarbrücken Sep. 15, Prusse-Erquelines Sep. 18	Pleumartin Sep. 22	
7th Balloon - left September 11 - landed near Ravenstein, Germany (63 letters carried) - captured				
MP7-1	September 7		Paris	Maguin
	(Forwarding envelope)	P.P., 14 ^e Corps d'Armée État Major Général	Paris Oct. 15	
MP7-2	September 8		Paris	Vincent
MP7-3	September 8		Palais St Cloud	Dupont
8th Balloon - left September 11 - landed near Elmstein, Germany (90 letters carried) - captured				
MP8-1	September 9		Alençon	Prevost
MP8-2	September 10		Arras	Birouste
MP8-3	September 10		Domérat	d'Auvergne
MP8-4	(none)	("confié à Jeannel")	Dornach	Bondolphi
MP8-5	September 10		Havre	Dollard
MP8-6	September 9		Hazebrouck	de la Serre
MP8-7	September 9		Lyon	Marmy
MP8-8	September 11		Pouliguen	Pigueroy
MP8-9	September 9		Toulon	Ginouves
MP8-10	(none)		1 ^e Don 5 ^e Corps	Dieu
13th Balloon - left September 15 - landed near St. Dié				
MP13-1	September 13		Bourges	Protche
	(Forwarding envelope)	Nevers September 24 (4 ^e), P.P.	Bourges	
14th Balloon - left September 15 - landed near St. Louis (130 letters carried) - mail processed via Marseille				
MP14-1	September 11		Bergerac	Roustans
	(Forwarding envelope)	Marseille September 19 (7 ^e), P.P.	Bergerac Sept. 21	
MP14-2	September 14		La Bouille	Castex
	(Forwarding envelope)	Marseille September 19 (7 ^e), P.P.	La Bouille Sept. 23	
MP14-3	September 13		Lyon	Louvier
	(Forwarding envelope)	Marseille September 19 (7 ^e), P.P.	Lyon	
MP14-4	September 13		Toulouse	Barrat
	(Forwarding envelope)	Marseille September 19 (7 ^e), P.P.	Toulouse Sept. 20	
MP14-5	September 14		Valenciennes	Rogues

Total census for the Metz Pharmacists' Balloon Service: 24 papillons and 10 forwarding envelopes

Metz Engineers' Balloon Mail (Chapter Four)

N°	Metz Date	Postmark	Destination	Addressee
1st Balloon - left September 16 - landed near Neufchâteau (5-7,000 letters carried)				
ME1-1	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17	Anduze	(illegible)
ME1-2	September 16	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e), red P.P.	Arbecy	Jacob
ME1-3	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (2 ^e)	Arc	Boinguet
ME1-4	(none)	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Arras	Hunnebelle
	(Forwarding envelope)	P.P.	Arras Sept. 25 (2 ^e)	
ME1-5	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Audincourt	Revenchon
ME1-6	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Bavay	d'Audignier
ME1-7	(none)	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Bayonne	Deliot
	(Forwarding envelope)	Pau September 21 (2 ^e), red P.P.		
ME1-8	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e), red P.P.	Bordeaux	Lejeune
ME1-9	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (?)	Bourges	Protche
ME1-10	September 16	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Bourges	Protche
	(Forwarding envelope)	"Préfet du Cher", 20c Lauré	Bourges Sept. 21 (3 ^e)	
ME1-11	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Brest	Cosnefroy
ME1-12	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Brest	Lafaille
ME1-13	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17	Chartres	Chavandet
ME1-14	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17	Corbeil	Widmer
ME1-15	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17	Cour-Cheverny	de St Romans
	(Forwarding envelope)	(manuscript note), Blois September 21	Cour-Cheverny Sept. 22	
ME1-16	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Dijon	de Chanteau
ME1-17	(none)	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Dole	Ebau
ME1-18	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Étréchy	Auboin
ME1-19	September 16	Neufchâteau September 17	Le Blanc	(illegible)
	(Forwarding envelope)	P.P., Châteauroux September 20		
ME1-20	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17	L'Île d'Ouessant	(illegible)
ME1-21	September 16	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Lille	Bienard
ME1-22	September 16	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Lille	Deleflis
	(Forwarding envelope)		Lille Sept. 25 (2 ^e)	
ME1-23	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e), Triel March 21	Limoux	Trevant
ME1-24	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e), Arlon Jan. 31	Messancy (Belg.)	de Couet
ME1-25	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Montpellier	(illegible)
ME1-26	September 16	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e), Corbeil Mar. 15	Morsang-s-Seine	Barbier
ME1-27	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17	Nice	(illegible)
ME1-28	September ?	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Nogent le Rotrou	Dugue
	(Forwarding envelope)	(manuscript note), Chartres September 24 (1 ^e)		
ME1-29	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17	Paris	Les Internes
	(Forwarding envelope)	15 due	Paris RC Feb. 13 (5 ^e)	
ME1-30	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (2 ^e)	Paris Romainville	Baudoin
ME1-31	(none)	Neufchâteau September 17 (2 ^e)	Paris	Berthelin
ME1-32	September ?	Neufchâteau September 17	Paris	Dumont
ME1-33	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Paris	Engler
ME1-34	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (2 ^e)	Paris	Gondry
ME1-35	September 16	Neufchâteau September 17 (2 ^e)	Paris	Marit
ME1-36	September ?	Neufchâteau September 17	Paris	Sarrazin
ME1-37	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17	Paris	Tesse
ME1-38	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Plombières Sept 18	Colas
ME1-39	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17	Quimperlé	Evanno
ME1-40	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Remiremont	Guyot
ME1-41	September 16	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Rennes	Bouton

Metz Engineers' Balloon Mail (continued)

N°	Metz Date	Postmark	Destination	Addressee
1st Balloon (Continued)				
ME1-42	September ?	Neufchâteau September 17	La Rochelle	Bruneau
ME1-43	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	St Etienne	Bernier
ME1-44	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (2 ^e)	Ste Affrique	Guiraud
ME1-45	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Sombernon	Perraud
ME1-46	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Tournay	Gard
ME1-47	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e)	Valenciennes	Rogues
ME1-48	September 15	Neufchâteau September 17 (4 ^e), red P.P.	Yssingaux	Manet
3rd Balloon - left September 20 - captured (40-45,000 letters carried)				
ME3-1	September 18		Brest	Cosnefroy
ME3-2	September 19		Dijon	Perron
ME3-3	September 20		Dijon	Ropiteau
ME3-4	September 17		Etaules	Dermesse
ME3-5	September 20		Faverney	Liébaut
ME3-6	September 18		Haigneville	Cosnefroy
ME3-7	September 19		Layrac	de Maignas
ME3-8	September 19		Montélimar	Andra
ME3-9	September 19		Paris	Ameller
ME3-10	September 20		Remiremont	Guyot
ME3-11	September 20		Saumur	Delavu
ME3-12	September 19		Valenciennes	Rogues
ME3-13	September 18		Vibeuf	Seguin
4th Balloon - left September 21 – landed near Fresnes-en-Voëvre (25-30,000 letters carried)				
ME4-1	September ?		Beaune	Bernard
	<i>(Forwarding envelope) manuscript "arrivé en ballon"</i>		<i>Beaune Sept. 30 (1^e)</i>	
ME4-2	September 20	red P.P.	Bergerac	Bruzac
ME4-3	September 21	red P.P.	Bergerac	Bruzac
ME4-4	September 22	black P.P.	Bergerac	Bruzac
ME4-5	September 20		Bordeaux	Desjardins
ME4-6	September 21		Bourges	Marsac
ME4-7	September 21		Bousscat	Ricard
ME4-8	(none)		Bousscat	Puginier
	<i>(Forwarding envelope) Cursive, (enveloppe d'Admin. des Postes)</i>		<i>Bousscat Oct. 8 (1^e)</i>	
ME4-9	September 20	Bruxelles October 3, 5 due	Bruxelles (Belg.)	Caillaux
ME4-10	September 20	Bruxelles October 3, 5 due	Bruxelles (Belg.)	Gossart
ME4-11	September 20	Charleroi October 3, 5 due	Charleroi (Belg.)	Gérard
ME4-12	September 20		Galan	Mac
	<i>(Forwarding envelope) Paris-Bordeaux September 30, 20c Lauré</i>			
ME4-13	September 21		Hauteville	Martin
ME4-14	September 20	(October 15 receipt docket)	Hermé	Leclerc-Mauze
ME4-15	September 21	black P.P.	Lestang	
ME4-16	September 21	Lyon September 28	Lyon	Armand
ME4-17	September 21	Lyon 1 September 28	Lyon	Chapuis
ME4-18	September 21	Lyon 1 September 28	Lyon	d'Argenes
ME4-19	September 22	Lyon 1 September 28	Lyon	Fillion
ME4-20	September 21	Lyon 1 September 28	Lyon	Lecote
ME4-21	September 20	Lyon 1 September 28	Lyon	Louvier
ME4-22	September 20	Lyon 1 September 28	Lyon	Martel
ME4-23	September 21	Lyon 1 September 28	Lyon	Martel

Metz Engineers' Balloon Mail (continued)

N°	Metz Date	Postmark	Destination	Addressee
4th Balloon - left September 21 (continued)				
ME4-24	September 21	Lyon 1 September 28	Lyon	Michaud
ME4-25	September 21		Magnac-Bourg	de Neuville
ME4-26	September 21	manuscript 4 due	Messancy (Belg.)	de Couet
ME4-27	September 21		Mont-de-Marsan	du Fresnel
ME4-28	September 20		Montluçon	Rebière
	(Forwarding envelope)	<i>"Lettre de Metz"</i>	<i>Montluçon Sept. 30</i>	
ME4-29	September 22	Fresnes-en-Voëvre September 22 (1 ^e)	Mulhouse	Braun
ME4-30	September 21		Obercassel (Prus.)	de Francq
	(Forwarding envelope)	<i>Dijon Oct. 2 (2^e), P.P., Chur (Swit.) Oct. 4</i>	<i>Bonn October 7</i>	
ME4-31	September 21	Bonn October 6, manuscript 4 due	Obercassel (Prus.)	de Francq
ME4-32	September 21	blue manuscript 4 due, circled 4	Obercassel (Prus.)	de Francq
ME4-33	September 20		Paris	Marit
ME4-34	September 21		Paris	Marit
	(Forwarding envelope)	<i>cursive Ministère des Finances, Libourne Oct. 17</i>		
ME4-35	September 21		Paris	Ameller
ME4-36	September 21		Paris	Ameller
ME4-37	(none)		Paris	Poirou
	(Forwarding letter)	<i>manuscript Tours October 12, Don Gle des Postes</i>		
ME4-38	September 22		Poulaines	d'Henonville
	(Forwarding envelope)	<i>manuscript "28 7bre 1870" (Lyon)</i>		
ME4-39	September 20		Quimper	Avril
ME4-40	September 21		Sombernon	Perraud
	(Forwarding envelope)	<i>manuscript "Parvenu en Ballon," red P.P.</i>		
ME4-41	September 21	Fresnes-en-Voëvre September 22 (1 ^e), 6d	Southport (GB)	Robinson
	(Forwarding envelope)	<i>London September 30, manuscript 6 due</i>	<i>Southport Sept. 30</i>	
ME4-42	September 19	(message written on the balloon)	Southport (GB)	Robinson
ME4-43	September 19	(message written on the balloon)	Southport (GB)	Robinson
	(Forwarding envelope)	<i>cursive Ministère des Finances, Tours Oct. 1 (2^e)</i>		
ME4-44	September 21	St Genis-Laval September 28 (2 ^e)	St Genis-Laval	de Chassy
ME4-44a	September 18	Clermont-Ferrand September 29 (5 ^e)	Thiers Sept. 30	Gorce
ME4-45	September 21		Valenciennes	Rogues
ME4-46	September 20		Varsovie (Russe)	Trapszo
	(Forwarding envelope)	<i>Dijon Oct. 3 (2^e), Auxerre-Paris Oct. 4, 32 due</i>	<i>Barshava October 9</i>	
ME4-47	September 20	Yssingeaux September 30 (3 ^e)	Yssingeaux	Manet
5th Balloon - left September 23 – "Ballon de Dijon" – mail recovered near Dijon around October 7				
ME5-1	September 22	Anzin October 5 (1 ^e)	Anzin	Bernard
ME5-2	September 22		Chapelle-s-Erche	de Labrosse
ME5-3	September 22		Châteauroux	Daquet
ME5-4	(none)	Dijon October 7 (3 ^e), (forwarded)	Dijon	de Chateau
ME5-5	September 22	P.P.	Étampes	Bunel
ME5-6	September 22		Genève (Swit.)	Eberhardt
	(Forwarding envelope)	<i>Genève October 9, Direction..Postal..Genève</i>		
ME5-7	September 23	Gisors October 8 (1 ^e)	Gisors October 9	Foubert
ME5-8	September 23	(October 11 receipt docket)	Hermé	Leclerc-Mauze
ME5-9	September 22		Lyon	d'Argenes
ME5-10	September 22		Lyon	Louvier
ME5-11	September 22		Mas d'Agenais	Feslugiere
ME5-12	September 22		Paris	Ameller

Metz Engineers' Balloon Mail (continued)

N°	Metz Date	Postmark	Destination	Addressee
5th Balloon - left September 23 (continued)				
ME5-13	September 23		Paris	Ameller
ME5-14	September ?		Puttrelange	Schmitt
	(Forwarding envelope)	Longny October 22 (1 ^e), "Receveur des Postes"		
ME5-15	September 22		St Pierre-Albigny	Durbet
	(Forwarding envelope)	manuscript "Apporté..ballon recueilli..Besançon"		
ME5-16	September 22	Sully October 10 (1 ^e)	Sully-s-Loire	Bouard
ME5-17	September 22		Troyes	Basseville
	(Forwarding envelope)	manuscript "Ballon de Dijon"	Troyes Oct. 8 (1 ^e)	
ME5-18	September 22		Valenciennes	Rogues
6th Balloon - left September 24- mail recovered				
ME6-1	September 23		Avignon	Salard
	(Forwarding envelope)	manuscript "par ballon"	Avignon Oct. 6 (2 ^e)	
ME6-2	September 23	P.P.	Bergerac	Bruzac
ME6-3	September 24	P.P.	Bergerac	Bruzac
ME6-4	September 24	P.P.	Bergerac	Roustans
ME6-5	September 24		Brest	Cosnefroy
ME6-6	September 23		Dunkerque	Terquem
ME6-7	September 23	P.P.	Étréchy	Auboin
ME6-8	September 23	manuscript 6 due	Liverpool (GB)	Armstrong
ME6-9	September 23		Lyon	Lecote
ME6-10	September 24		Magnac-Bourg	de Neuville
ME6-11	September 24	(October 10 receipt slip)	Montmaur	du Terrail
ME6-12	September 23		Plombières	Colas
ME6-13	September 23		Radom (Poland)	Borkiewicz
ME6-14	September 23		St Omer	Gaimay
	(Forwarding envelope)	P.P.	St Omer Oct. 2 (1 ^e)	
ME6-15	September 24		Toulouse	Barral
ME6-16	September 23		Vannes	Tobit
7th Balloon - left September 25- mail captured near Amanvilliers				
ME7-1	September 25		Paris	Maignin
ME7-2	September 25		Radom (Poland)	Borkiewicz
8th Balloon - left September 27 – landed near Bayonville (15-17,000 letters) – processed through Lille				
ME8-1	September 26		Amiens	Décavé
ME8-2	September 26		Amiens	Depret
ME8-3	September 26		Amiens	Freson
ME8-4	September 26	(dm Lory, musicien au 48 ^e)	Amiens	Lancel
ME8-5	September 26		Amiens	Leroy
ME8-6	September 26		Amiens	Ringard
ME8-7	September 27		Avignon	Breton
ME8-8	September 26		Castelnaudary	Jean
ME8-9	September 26		Chinon	Demonchy
ME8-10	September 27		Lectoure	Gamot
ME8-11	September 26		(Somme)	Maclet
ME8-12	September 26	Lille October 4 (5 ^e), F.S.P., 6d due	Southport (GB)	Robinson
ME8-13	September 26		St Leger-des-Vignes	Potier
ME8-14	September 26		Penne-du-Tarn	Astie
ME8-15	September 27		Valenciennes	Rogues

Metz Engineers' Balloon Mail (concluded)

N°	Metz Date	Postmark	Destination	Addressee
9th Balloon - left September 28- mail captured at Verneville (32,000 letters carried)				
ME9-1	September 28		Abbeville	Robin
ME9-2	September 28		Auch	Dauat
ME9-3	September 28		Belfort	Bouritard
ME9-4	September 28		Birac	Boine
ME9-5	September 28		Chateaufvillain	de Montangon
ME9-6	September 28		Lorient	Lorteis
ME9-7	September 28		Paris	Lemoine
ME9-8	September 28		Suèvres	Lumasne
ME9-9	September 28		Valenciennes	Rogues
10th Balloon - left September 30- mail captured				
ME10-1	September 29		Amiens	Pirvillon
ME10-2	September 30		Bayonne	Pecqueux
ME10-3	September 30		Capelle-Marival	Biols
ME10-4	September 29		Châlons-s-Marne	Rivière
ME10-5	September 30		Docelles (Vosges)	Louis
ME10-6	September 30		Esternay	Crapart
ME10-7	September 29		Étampes	de St Perier
ME10-8	September 30		Guise	Lecerf
ME10-9	September 30		Lussac-les-Églises	Pillaud
ME10-10	September 29		Lyon	Beyerle
ME10-11	September 30		Lyon	Morel
ME10-12	September 30		Mont-de-Marsan	Gadillon
ME10-13	September 29		Paris	Mielly
ME10-14	September 29		Rouen	Lescuiller
ME10-15	September 29		Tlemcen (Algérie)	Aussenac
ME10-16	September 30		Vaison	Lyon
ME10-17	September 30		Vannes	Genet
11th Balloon - left October 3 at 3pm- mail captured (12,000 letters carried)				
ME11-1	October 1		Bruxelles (Belg.)	Gossart
ME11-2	October 1		Bruxelles (Belg.)	Gabet
ME11-3	October 1		Chalons	Rose-Vigy
ME11-4	October 1		Gepunsart	Roginard
ME11-5	October 2		Mézin	Berge
ME11-6	October 1		(Pas de Calais)	Monnier
ME11-7	October 1		Paris	Namur
ME11-8	October 1		Paris	Speybrouck
ME11-9	October 1		Point-Pitre (Guad.)	de Mesmauker
ME11-10	October 2		Port-Louis	Vannier
ME11-11	October 1		Richebourg-St-Waast	Martin
ME11-12	October 1		St Brieuc	Eveillard
ME11-13	October 2		St Etienne	Lalande
ME11-14	October 3		St Etienne	Mincker
ME11-15	October 3		St Etienne	Tapa
ME11-16	October 1		Tournay (Belg.)	Germiny
ME11-17	October 1		Versailles	Débordes

Total census for the Metz Engineers' Balloon Service: 203 papillons and 26 forwarding envelopes

Belfort Line-Crosser Mail (Chapter Four)

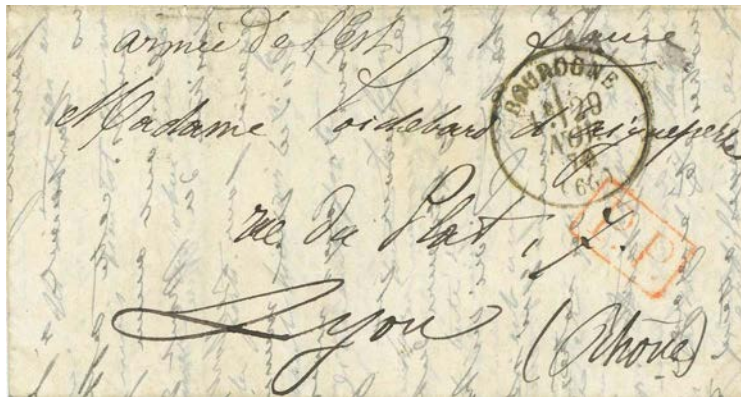
N°	Belfort Date	Postmark(s)	Destination	Addressee
BP-1	November 3	Belfort November 4 (5 ^e), P.P.	Lyon Nov. 15	Rollet
BP-2	November ?	Belfort November 4, P.P.	Lyon	Perret
BP-3	November 7	P.P., manuscript Armée de l'Est	Lyon Nov. 12	Rollet
BP-4	November 12	Beaucourt November 14 (1 ^e), red P.P.	Lyon Nov. 17	Duringe
BP-5	November 15	Fahy Nov. 17, Suisse Lyon Nov. 19, 5 due	Lyon Nov. 19	Perret
BP-6	November 16	Porrentruy Nov. 22, Suisse Mt Cenis Nov. 23, 5	Beaujeu Nov. 24	Poidebard
BP-7	November 17	Porrentruy (Suisse) November 20, 5 due	Chalon-s-S Nov. 22	Chardonnet
BP-8	November 19	Boncourt Dec. 8, Suisse Lyon Dec. 10, 5 due	St Maixent Dec. 14	D.R.
BP-9	November 22	Porrentruy Nov. 24, Suisse Lyon Nov. 26, 5 due	Belleville Nov. 27	Martel
BP-10	November 22	Hérimoncourt Nov. 28 (1 ^e), 20c Lauré	Belleville-s-S Dec. 1	Martel
BP-11	November 25	Bourogne Nov. 29 (1 ^e), red P.P.	Lyon Dec. 3	Poidebard
BP-12	November 27	Audincourt Jan. 23 (1 ^e), Besancon Feb. 15, P.P.	Chasselay Feb. 20	Bererd
BP-13	November 30	red P.P., ms. Armée de l'Est	Lyon Dec. 6	Poidebard
BP-14	December 4	red P.P.	Lyon Dec. 9	Rollet
BP-15	December 4	Delle Dec. 5 (1 ^e), 30 due	Tours Dec. 13	Gambetta
BP-16	December 5	Porrentruy Dec. 8, Suisse Lyon Dec. 10, 5 due	Vaugneray Dec. 14	Delorme
BP-17	December 12	blue ARMÉE DE L'EST, red P.P., Lyon Dec. 19	Laval Dec. 23	Juty
BP-18	December 11	blue ARMÉE DE L'EST	Lyon	Poidebard
BP-19	December 12	blue ARMÉE DE L'EST, red P.P.	Lyon Dec. 19	Rollet
BP-20	December 28	Porrentruy Jan. 1, Suisse Lyon Jan. 3, 5 due	Lyon Jan. 3	Poidebard
BP-21	January 2	Boncourt (Suisse) January 6, 5 due	Lyon Jan. 9	Duringe
BP-22	January 6	Porrentruy Jan. 21, Suisse Lyon Jan. 24, 5 due	Thonon Jan. 26	Martin
BP-23	January 10	Porrentruy Jan. 21, Suisse Lyon Jan. 24, 5 due	Chalon Jan. 25	Chardonnet
BP-24	December 5	Porrentruy Jan. 21, Suisse Lyon Jan. 24, 5 due	Lyon	Dutel
BP-25	January 11	Porrentruy Jan. 21, Suisse Lyon Jan. 24, 5 due	Lyon Jan. 24	Perret
BP-26	January 18	Porrentruy February 10, PD	Lyon Feb. 13	Poidebard
BP-27	January 28	Porrentruy February 9, PD	Belleville Feb. 13	Martel
BP-28	January 25	Eidgen. Feld-Post Feb. 9, Porrentruy Feb. 10	Chalon-s-Saône	Chardonnet
BP-29	January 29	Eidgen. Feld-Post Feb. 9, Porrentruy Feb. 10	Chalon-s-Saône	Chardonnet
BP-30	January 4	Courtemaiche Feb. 18, Suisse Lyon Feb. 21, 5	Lyon Feb. 21	Perret
BP-31	January 30	Courtemaiche Feb. 18, Suisse Lyon Feb. 21, 5	Lyon Feb. 21	Magnillat
BP-32	February 9	Porrentruy Feb. 19, Suisse Lyon Feb. 21, 5 due	Lyon	La Charrière
BP-33	February 14	Porrentruy February 18, 5 due	Chalon Feb. 21	Chardonnet

Belfort Letters Carried Out by the Red Cross (Chapter Four)

N°	Belfort Date	Postmark(s)	Destination	Addressee
BRC-1	January 30	Agence Int'l Bale, Société..Secours...St Louis	Lyon Feb. 27	Poidebard
BRC-2	January 26	Comité Lyonnais de Secours...Blessés., P.P.	Lyon Feb. 23 (5 ^e)	Perret
BRC-3	February 15	Comité Lyonnais de Secours...Blessés., P.P.	Lyon Feb. 23 (5 ^e)	Poidebard
BRC-4	February 15	Comité Lyonnais de Secours...Blessés., P.P.	Lyon Feb. 23 (5 ^e)	Magnillat
BRC-5	February 15	Comité Lyonnais de Secours...Blessés., P.P.	Lyon Feb. 23 (5 ^e)	Perret

Belfort Balloon Mail (Chapter Four)

N°	Belfort Date	Postmark(s)	Destination	Addressee
BB-1	December 24	Belfort December 25 (1 ^e), 3 due	Angoulême Jan. 10	Daras
BB-2	December 25		Chasselay Jan. 8	Bererd
BB-3	December 24	Belfort December 25, Saignelégier Jan. 6	Porrentruy (Suisse)	Touvet
BB-4	December 25	Belfort December 25	Roquemaure Jan. 7	Curninal
BB-5	December 24		St Genis-Laval Jan. 7	Moreau
BB-6	December 25	red P.P.	Thizy Jan. 8 (2 ^e)	Martin
BB-7	December 24	30 due	Thonon Jan. 9 (4 ^e)	Martin
BB-8	December 25	Belfort December 25, P.P.	Vesoul	Fachard



November 25, 1870 letter from Belfort carried by line-crosser to
Bourogne on November 29

Appendix C

Censuses of Armée de Paris Fieldpost Mail

13^e Corps d'Armée Fieldpost Mail

Census N°	Paris Date	Franking/Cancel	Other Markings	Location	Arrival	Addressee
Armée du Rhin Quartier Général 13^e Corps (Headquarters Bureau)						
13QG-1	Sep 20	20c Lau/ARAL			Bastia (Corse) 25 Sep	Filippi
13QG-2	Sep 22	franchise/50c due	"Intendance Militaire"		Montreux (Swit.) 21 Oct	Massu
13QG-3	Sep 23	franchise	"Intendance Militaire"		Chartre-s-Loir 22 Oct	Delaunay
13QG-4	Sep 23	franchise	"Intendance Militaire"		Havre 18 Oct	Blaz
13QG-5	Sep 26	franchise	"Intendance Militaire"		Neuillé-P-Pierre 4 Oct	Delaunay
13QG-6	Sep 26	(removed)/ARAL			St Calais 23 Oct	Hennet
13QG-7	Sep 27	franchise	Paris (5) 27 Sep		St Calais 2 Oct	Hennet
13QG-8	Sep 28	franchise	"Intendance Militaire"		Chartre-s-Loir 2 Oct	Delaunay
13QG-9	Sep 28	franchise			St Calais 18 Oct	Hennet
13QG-10	Sep 29	20c Lau/ARAL			St Calais 16 Oct	Hennet
13QG-11	Oct 1	20c Lau/ARAL			Bastia (Corse)	Filippi
13QG-12	Oct 2	20c Lau/ARAL			Bastia (Corse) 19 Oct	Filippi
13QG-13	Oct 2	20c Lau/ARAL			St Calais 15 Oct	Hennet
13QG-14	Oct 2	10c Lau/càd			St Calais 23 Oct	Hennet
13QG-15	Oct 3	2c Lau x 5/ARAL		"Paris"	Le Mans 24 Oct	Hennet
13QG-16	Oct 3	20c Lau/ARAL			St Calais	Hennet
13QG-17	Oct 4	20c Lau/ARAL			Chartre-s-Loir 16 Oct	Delaunay
13QG-18	Oct 5	10c Lau/Paris cds	Paris 5 Oct		Bastia (Corse) 21 Oct	Filippi
13QG-19	Oct 6	10c Lau/ARAL	Crécy-s-Serre 17 Oct		Le Mans 23 Oct	Hennet
13QG-20	Oct 9	10c Lau/ARAL			Bastia (Corse) 21 Oct	Filippi
13QG-21	Oct 10	10c Lau/ARAL			St Calais 21 Oct	Hennet
13QG-22	Oct 11	10c Lau/ARAL			Bastia (Corse) 16 Oct	Filippi
13QG-23	Oct 14	20c Lau/ARAL	Paris 14 oct		Bastia (Corse)	Filippi
13QG-24	Oct 15	20c Sge/ARAL	"Intendance Militaire"		Chartre-s-Loir 20 Oct	Delaunay
13QG-25	Oct 17	20c Lau x 2/ARAL			Bastia (Corse) 25 Oct	Filippi
13QG-26	Oct 19	20c Lau/ARAL			Béziers 3 Nov	Tindel
13QG-27	Oct 24	20c Lau/ARAL			Bastia (Corse) 6 Nov	Filippi
13QG-28	Oct 26	20c Lau/ARAL			Bastia (Corse) 4 Nov	Filippi
13QG-29	Oct 26	10c Sge x 2/ARAL			Chartre-s-Loir 2 Nov	Delaunay
13QG-30	Oct 27	20c Sge/ARAL			St Jean de Mont 3 Nov	Mourin
13QG-31	Oct 28	20c Lau/ARAL	P.P.		Bastia (Corse) 4 Nov	Filippi
13QG-32	Oct 28	20c Sge/ARAL			Tours 3 Nov	Delaunay
13QG-33	Oct 30	20c Lau/ARAL			Niort 4 Nov	Sommard
13QG-34	Oct 30	20c Sge/ARAL		"Paris"	Toulouse 4 Nov	Cotencin
13QG-35	Oct 31	franchise			Paris 31 Oct	Blondeau
13QG-36	Nov 2	20c Lau/ARAL			Niort 6 Nov	Sommard
13QG-37	Nov 3	20c Sge/ARAL			Bastia (Corse) 9 Nov	Filippi
13QG-38	Nov 3	20c Lau/ARAL			Lons-Saunier	Moncoup
13QG-39	Nov 5	20c Lau/ARAL		"Paris"	Bastia (Corse) 3 Nov	Filippi
13QG-40	Nov 6	20c Lau/ARAL			Lons-Saunier 12 Nov	Moncoup
13QG-41	Nov 6	20c Sge/ARAL	Paris 6 Nov	Paris le 6 Nov	Nîmes	Maysire
13QG-42	Nov 8	20c Lau/ARAL			Bastia (Corse)	Filippi
13QG-43	Nov 8	20c Lau/ARAL			Riom 27 Nov	Godernel
13QG-44	Nov 8	20c Lau/ARAL		"Paris"	Riom 27 Nov	Lerosier
13QG-45	Nov 9	20c Sge/ARAL			Ligny-le-Chatel	Pimbet
13QG-46	Nov 9	20c Lau/ARAL			Tours 30 Nov	Delaunay
13QG-47	Nov 12	20c Sge/ARAL			Chablis 30 Nov	Pimbet
13QG-48	Nov 12	20c Lau/ARAL			Neuillé-P-Pierre 2 Dec	Delaunay
13QG-49	Nov 14	20c Lau/ARAL		Montparnasse	Bastia (Corse) 28 Nov	Filippi
13QG-50	Nov 16	20c Lau/ARAL			Chartre-s-Loir 26 Nov	Delaunay

13^e Corps d'Armée Fieldpost Mail (continued)

Census N ^o	Paris Date	Franking/Cancel	Other Markings	Location	Arrival	Addressee
Armée du Rhin Quartier Général 13^e Corps (continued)						
13QG-51	Nov 17	franchise	P.P., "2 ^e Arm. 1 ^{er} C"	Montparnasse	Nantes 25 Nov	Proust
13QG-52	Nov 18	20c Lau/ARAL			Chartre-s-Loir 26 Nov	Delaunay
13QG-53	Nov 20	20c Sge/ARAL		Paris	Bastia (Corse) 28 Nov	Filippi
13QG-54	Nov 24	(accidenté)/ARAL	"Intendance Militaire"		Chartre-s-Loir 14 Dec	Delaunay
Armée du Rhin Bureau AL (13th Corps 1st Division Bureau)						
13AL-1	Sep 17	franchise	"1 ^{ere} Div."	Charenton 16 Sep	Auch 19 Sep	de Gauran
13AL-2	Sep 17	franchise	"1 ^{ere} Div."	Charenton 17 Sep	Auch 19 Sep	de Gauran
13AL-3	Sep 18	franchise	"1 ^{ere} Div."	Charenton 18 Sep	Auch 25 Sep	de Gauran
13AL-4	Sep 18	franchise			Rennes	La Fosse
13AL-5	Sep 22	franchise	"1 ^{ere} Div."	St Maur 21 Sep	Auch 21 Oct	de Gauran
13AL-6	Sep 28	franchise	red P.P.		Marseille	Pontèves
13AL-7	Sep 29	20c Lau/càd		Nogent 29 7bre	Amiens 6 Oct	de la Rocca
13AL-8	Sep 29	20c Lau/ AR13eC			Angers 15 Oct	Louis
13AL-9	Oct 2	franchise/30 due		Nogent	Amiens 14 Oct	de la Rocca
13AL-10	Oct 2	20c Lau/AR13eC			Lons-Saunier 10 Oct	
13AL-11	Oct 2	franchise		Nogent	Orléans 13 Nov	Chénault
13AL-12	Oct 2	20c Lau/AR13eC		Vincennes	Vendôme	
13AL-13	Oct 3	10c Lau/AR13eC			Chartres 27 Oct	Tarayre
13AL-14	Oct 4	franchise	Meung 20 Oct		Cléry 21 Oct	Moulinet
13AL-15	Oct 4	10c Lau/AR13eC		Nogent-Marne	Chartres	Tarayre
13AL-16	Oct 5	20c Lau/AR13eC			Arthon	de Méssy
13AL-17	Oct 5	20c Lau/AR13eC			Lons-Saunier 10 Oct	
13AL-18	Oct 5	20c Lau/AR13eC			Nancy 23 Oct	
13AL-19	Oct 5	20c Lau/AR13eC			Périgueux 17 Oct	Pinoteau
13AL-20	Oct 5	20c Lau/AR13eC			Valence 17 Oct	
13AL-21	Oct 6	franchise	to 9 ^e Chasseurs	Vincennes 5 8bre	Milaniah 21 Oct	Freymuller
13AL-22	Oct 8	20c Lau/AR13eC		Faisanderie	Bergerac 19 Oct	Delpy
13AL-23	Oct 9	20c Lau/AR13eC		Fontenay-s-Bois	Amiens 18 Oct	de la Rocca
13AL-24	Oct 9	20c Lau/AR13eC	Ajaccio 20 Oct		Corte 20 Oct	
13AL-25	Oct 9	20c Lau/AR13eC	Mars.-Lyon 21 Oct		Marseille	Pontèves
13AL-26	Oct 10	20c Lau/AR13eC		Vincennes	Marseille 17 Oct	Pontèves
13AL-27	Oct 10	10c Lau/AR13eC	Crécy-s-Serre 17 Oct		Rennes	Martel
13AL-28	Oct 10	10c Lau x 2/ AR13eC		Valréas 21 Oct	de Renaud	
13AL-29	Oct 11	20c Lau/AR13eC		Fontenay	Périgueux 17 Oct	Pinoteau
13AL-30	Oct 12	10c Lau/AR13eC		Charenton 11 Oct	Bains-Vosges 2 Apr	Piquet
13AL-31	Oct 12	20c Lau/AR13eC	Paris (6) 14 Oct	Fontenay	Chateaufort 19 Oct	Brichet
13AL-32	Oct 13	20c Lau/AR13eC			Amiens 15 Oct	de la Rocca
13AL-33	Oct 13	20c Lau/AR13eC			Lons-Saunier 18 Oct	
13AL-34	Oct 14	20c Lau/AR13eC			Ailly-Noye 19 Oct	Hermard
13AL-35	Oct 14	20c Lau/AR13eC			Avignon 21 Oct	Redon
13AL-36	Oct 15	20c Lau/AR13eC		Vincennes	Marseille 24 Oct	Pontèves
13AL-37	Oct 16	20c Lau/AR13eC			Lons-Saunier 23 Oct	
13AL-38	Oct 16	20c Lau/AR13eC			Marseille 23 Oct	Pontèves
13AL-39	Oct 19	10c Lau/AR13eC			Angers	Louis
13AL-40	Oct 19	20c Lau/AR13eC			Auch	de Gauran
13AL-41	Oct 20	20c Lau/AR13eC		Fontenay	Concarneau 3 Nov	Trochu
13AL-42	Oct 21	20c Lau/AR13eC			Besançon 1 Nov	Metzinger
13AL-43	Oct 21	10c Lau/AR13eC			Nolay 8 Nov	Martenot
13AL-44	Oct 21	10c Lau x 2/AR13eC		Nogent-s-Marne	Valréas 1 Nov	de Renaud
13AL-45	Oct 22	20c Lau/AR13eC			Melle	Marteau
13AL-46	Oct 23	20c Lau/AR13eC			Jumeaux	Fouer
13AL-47	Oct 24	20c Lau/AR13eC			Amiens 5 Nov	de la Rocca

13^e Corps d'Armée Fieldpost Mail (continued)

Census N ^o	Paris Date	Franking/Cancel	Other Markings	Location	Arrival	Addressee
Armée du Rhin Bureau AL (continued)						
13AL-48	Oct 24	20c Lau/AR13eC		Fontenay	Marseille 4 Nov	Arnoux
13AL-49	Oct 26	20c Lau/AR13eC			Marseille 2 Nov	Pontèves
13AL-50	Oct 26	20c Sge/AR13eC	P.P., blue '30'	Fontenay	Nancy	Boulangier
13AL-51	Oct 27	20c Lau, 20c Sge/AR13eC			Headford (GB) 11	St George
13AL-52	Oct 27	franchise			Lille	Durot
13AL-53	Oct 27	20c Lau/AR13eC			Rennes 2 Nov	Lafosse
13AL-54	Oct 28	20c Lau/AR13eC		Fontenay	Amiens 2 Nov	
13AL-55	Oct 28	20c Lau/AR13eC			Les Ormes 4 Nov	Gouron
13AL-56	Oct 28	20c Lau/càd	"Intendant-Chef"		Périgueux	Pinoteau
13AL-57	Oct 28	10c Lau/AR13eC		Vincennes	St Brieuc 2 Nov	Verde
13AL-58	Oct 28	20c Lau/AR13eC			St Péray 2 Nov	
13AL-59	Oct 28	20c Lau/AR13eC		Joinville-le-Pont	Usson Poitou 2 Nov	Guéronnière
13AL-60	Oct 29	(missing)	Paris (2) 29 Oct		Angers	Louis
13AL-61	(Oct 29)	20c Lau/AR13eC	Paris 29 Oct	Fontenay 28 Oct	Auch 4 Nov	de Gauran
13AL-62	Oct 30	20c Sge/AR13eC			Poitiers	Croussart
13AL-63	Nov 1	20c Lau/càd			Chambéry 5 Nov	Sauzède
13AL-64	Nov 2	10c Sge x 2/AR13eC			Availles 6 Nov	Delagrave
13AL-65	Nov 2	20c Lau/AR13eC	Paris (5) 2 Nov	Joinville	Besançon 8 Nov	Beneyton
13AL-66	Nov 2	10c Lau/AR13eC			Chartres	Tarayre
13AL-67	Nov 2	20c Lau/AR13eC	"Mobile de la Vienne"		Joue Tourraine 6 Nov	
13AL-68	Nov 3	20c Lau/AR13eC			Chambéry 8 Nov	Sauzède
13AL-69	Nov 4	20c Lau/AR13eC	blue '30'	Charenton	Laon	Curbaut
13AL-70	Nov 5	20c Lau/AR13eC	blue '30'	Nogent 2 Nov	Thiaucourt	Georgin
13AL-71	Nov 6	20c Dentelé x 2/AR13eC			Headford (GB) 11	St George
13AL-72	Nov 7	20c Lau/AR13eC		Fontenay-s-Bois	Périgueux 11 Nov	Pinoteau
13AL-73	Nov 7	20c Lau/AR13eC		Gravelle	Toulon 11 Nov	Loué
13AL-74	Nov 8	10c Lau x 2/AR13eC			Chambéry 11 Nov	Sauzède
13AL-75	Nov 8	10c Lau, 20c Lau/AR13eC			Jette (Belg.)	de Cléry
13AL-76	Nov 9	20c Lau/AR13eC		Fontenay 9 9bre	Périgueux 28 Nov	Pinoteau
13AL-77	Nov 10	20c Lau/AR13eC			St Brieuc	Vexlard
13AL-78	Nov 11	10c Sge x 2/AR13eC			Salon	Valotte
13AL-79	Nov 12	10c Lau, 20c Lau/AR13eC		Joinville 10 Nov	Jette (Belg.) 26 Nov	de Cléry
13AL-80	Nov 12	20c Lau/AR13eC	P.P., blue '30'		Menillat	Latasse
13AL-81	Nov 15	20c Lau/AR13eC		St Maur 14 9bre	Amiens 23 Nov	de la Rocca
13AL-82	Nov 15	(missing)			Angers	Louis
13AL-83	Nov 15	20c Lau/AR13eC			Besançon 27 Nov	Beneyton
13AL-84	(Nov 15)	10c Sgex2/AR13eC	(ms. date 15 Nov)		Brussels (Belg.)	de Luppe
13AL-85	Nov 15	20c Lau/AR13eC			Chambéry 27 Nov	Sauzède
13AL-86	Nov 15	10c Lau, 20c Lau/AR13eC			Jette (Bel.) 23 Nov	de Cléry
13AL-87	Nov 15	20c Lau/AR13eC			Rouen 23 Nov	Sergent
13AL-88	Nov 15	20c Lau/AR13eC			Usson Poit. 27 Nov	Guéronnière
13AL-89	Nov 16	10c Sge x 2/AR13eC			?	
13AL-90	Nov 17	10c Lau x 2/AR13eC			Valréas 27 Nov	de Renaud
13AL-91	Nov 18	20c Lau/AR13eC		Varenne St Maur	Availles 26 Nov	Huisonnay
13AL-92	Nov 18	20c Lau/AR13eC			Marseille 27 Nov	Pontèves
13AL-93	Nov 18	20c Lau/AR13eC			Périgueux 26 Nov	
13AL-94	Nov 20	10c Sge/AR13eC		Nogent-s-Marne	Chartres	Tarayre
13AL-95	Nov 21	10c Sge x 2/AR13eC			Caen 10 Nov	Bougarel
13AL-96	Nov 21	20c Lau/AR13eC			Toulon 21 Dec	Loué
13AL-97	Nov 22	10c Lau/càd	"13 ^e Corps Vinoy"		Paris	Tanpuy
13AL-98	Nov 23	20c Lau/AR13eC	"Bureau AL" wax seal		Nantes 22 Dec	Trochu
13AL-99	Nov 24	(accidenté)/AR13eC			Angers 23 Dec	
13AL-100	Nov 24	(accidenté)/AR13eC			Auch 24 Dec	de Gauran

13^e Corps d'Armée Fieldpost Mail (continued)

N°	Date	Frank./Cancel	Markings	Location	Arrival	Addressee
Armée du Rhin Bureau AM (13th Corps 2nd Division Bureau)						
13AM-1	Sep 30	franchise	red P.P.	Bicêtre	Moutiers 16 Oct	Durostu
13AM-2	Oct 1	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.	Bicêtre	Lille 13 Oct	Kauffmann
13AM-3	Oct 1	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.		Lille 13 Oct	Kauffmann
13AM-4	Oct 1	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P. (red càd)	Bicêtre 1er 8bre	Moutiers 17 Oct	Durostu
13AM-5	Oct 2	20c Lau/ARAM	"2 ^e Div 2 ^e Brigade"		Grenoble 16 Oct	Colson
13AM-6	Oct 2	franchise	"2 ^e Artillery 2 ^e Div"	Bicêtre 2 8bre	Moutiers 17 Oct	Durostu
13AM-7	Oct 3	franchise	red P.P.	Villejuif	Abbeville 13 Oct	
13AM-8	Oct 4	20c Lau/ARAM			Besançon 22 Oct	Metzinger
13AM-9	Oct 4	20c Lau/ARAM			Moutiers 19 Oct	Durostu
13AM-10	Oct 6	20c Lau/ARAM			Puy l'Évêque 18 Oct	Deltil
13AM-11	Oct 11	20c Lau/ARAM			Moutiers 16 Oct	Durostu
13AM-12	Oct 12	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.		Arzew (Alg.) 22 Oct	Lheritier
13AM-13	Oct 14	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.		Connerre 20 Oct	Malherbe
13AM-14	Oct 14	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.	Bicêtre 14 Oct	Oloron 20 Oct	LaCoste
13AM-15	Oct 14	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.	Bicêtre	Romans 21 Oct	LaCoste
13AM-16	Oct 14	10c, 20c Lau x 2	ARAM canc., red P.P.		Viterbo (Ital) 24 Oct	Rustichelli
13AM-17	Oct 16	20c Lau x 2/ARAM	P.P.	Villejuif	Genève (Swit)	Defferrière
13AM-18	Oct 17	20c Lau/ARAM			Arzew (Alg.)	Lheritier
13AM-19	Oct 17	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.		Dieppe 1 Nov	Letourneur
13AM-20	Oct 17	10c, 20c Lau/ARAM	"Auswartiges..."	Paris le 16 Xbre	Wiesbaden (Ger.)	Seel
13AM-21	Oct 24	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.	Fort de Bicêtre	Oloron	LaCoste
13AM-22	Oct 24	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.	Fort de Bicêtre	Rennes 4 Nov	LaCoste
13AM-23	Oct 24	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.		Romans 4 Nov	LaCoste
13AM-24	Oct 25	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P., Paris 25 Oct		Moutiers	Durostu
13AM-25	Oct 28	20c Lau/ARAM	P.P.		Moutiers	Durostu
13AM-26	Oct 29	20c Lau/ARAM	P.P.	Bicêtre 29 Oct	Arzew (Alg.) 9 Nov	Lheritier
13AM-27	Oct 29	20c Lau/ARAM	P.P.	Bicêtre 26 Oct	Montmerlé 5 Nov	Bichonmer
13AM-28	Oct 30	franchise	P.P.		Autun	Tainturier
13AM-29	Oct 30	20c Lau/ARAM	P.P.		Moutiers 5 Nov	Durostu
13AM-30	Oct 31	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P., blue '20'		Versailles	Louage
13AM-31	Nov 1	20c Lau/ARAM	P.P.		Moutiers 4 Nov	Durostu
13AM-32	Nov 1	20c Lau/ARAM	P.P., "21 ^e Regt"	Camp d'Ivry	Toulon 5 Nov	Bertrand
13AM-33	Nov 6	franchise	red P.P.		Montlurel 11 Nov	
13AM-34	Nov 7	10c Sge x 2/ARAM	red P.P.	Bicêtre Kremlin	Meximieux 12 Nov	Beraud
13AM-35	Nov 7	20c Sge/ARAM	red P.P., "2 ^e Div."	Bicêtre le 6 Nov	Oloron 11 Nov	LaCoste
13AM-36	Nov 8	20c Sge/ARAM	red P.P.		Lille 3 Dec	Kauffmann
13AM-37	Nov 8	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.		Moutiers	Durostu
13AM-38	Nov 9	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P., Marseille 28		Arzew (Alg.) 4 Dec	Lheritier
13AM-39	Nov 9	franchise	red P.P.	Bicêtre	Courbevoie (Paris)	Longwy
13AM-40	Nov 10	20c Sge/ARAM	red P.P.		Romorantin	Barbier
13AM-41	Nov 10	franchise	red P.P.		St Jean Vendée	Brassard
13AM-42	Nov 11	20c Sge/ARAM	red P.P.	"Yvrie" 2 Nov	Sables	Bourges
13AM-43	Nov 12	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.	Bicêtre	Moutiers	Durostu
13AM-44	Nov 13	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.	Bicêtre 12 Nov	Arzew (Alg.) 4 Dec	Lheritier
13AM-45	Nov 14	20c Lau/ARAM	"2 ^e Division"		Fécamp 23 Nov	Moreau
13AM-46	Nov 14	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.	Bicêtre	Moutiers 25 Nov	Durostu
13AM-47	Nov 17	franchise	red P.P., "11 ^e Regt"	Villejuif 17 Nov	Paris Auteuil 17 Nov	Faure
13AM-48	Nov 21	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.		Moutiers 11 Dec	Durostu
13AM-49	Nov 22	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.		Grenoble	Mignon
13AM-50	Nov 22	20c Lau/ARAM	Qr Gl 13 ^e 22 Nov		Romans 12 Dec	LaCoste
13AM-51	Nov 22	20c Sge/ARAM	red P.P., blue '20'	Hte Bruyères	Versailles	Louage
13AM-52	Nov 23	20c Lau/ARAM	red P.P.		Moutiers	Durostu
13AM-53	Nov 24	(accidenté)/ARAM	P.P.	Villejuif	Lille 6 Dec	Kauffmann
13AM-54	Nov 27	20c Sge/ARAM	red P.P., blue '20'		Versailles	Louage

13^e Corps d'Armée Fieldpost Mail (concluded)

Census N ^o	Paris Date	Franking/Cancel	Other Markings	Location	Arrival	Addressee
Armée du Rhin Bureau AN (13th Corps 3rd Division Bureau)						
13AN-1	Sep 25	franchise	red P.P.		Besançon 16 Oct	Metzinger
13AN-2	Sep 30	franchise	red P.P.		Bressuire 16 Oct	Tadreu
13AN-3	Oct 1	franchise	red P.P.	Vanves	Chateauroux 16 Oct	Mowat
13AN-4	Oct 2	20c Lau/ARAN		Vanves	Chassagne 16 Oct	Daneau
13AN-5	Oct 2	10c Lau x 2/ARAN			Lamarche 16 Oct	Rouge
13AN-6	Oct 5	20c Lau/ARAN		"Paris 6 ^e "	Vannes 18 Oct	
13AN-7	Oct 6	10c Lau/ARAN			Blaye 21 Oct	de Sarilly
13AN-8	Oct 8	10c Lau/ARAN			Lamarche 28 Mar 71	Rouge
13AN-9	Oct 8	10c Lau/ARAN		"Paris"	Vannes 19 Oct	
13AN-10	Oct 9	10c Lau/ARAN			Chateaulin 21 Oct	Kervenoael
13AN-11	Oct 14	20c Lau/ARAN		Montrouge 14 8bre	Alger (Alg.) 24 Oct	Gasson
13AN-12	Oct 15	10c Lau/ARAN			Vannes 23 Oct	Comte
13AN-13	Oct 25	20c Lau/ARAN			Montaigu 2 Nov	Dusand
13AN-14	Oct 26	10c Lau/ARAN			Bergerac 2 Nov	de Ligny
13AN-15	Oct 27	20c Lau/ARAN			Chateaulin 2 Nov	Kervenoael
13AN-16	Oct 27	20c Lau/ARAN			Landerneau 2 Nov	Berthelot
13AN-17	Oct 27	20c Lau/ARAN			Morlaix 2 Nov	Villesbret
13AN-18	Oct 27	20c Lau/ARAN			Nantes	Kervenoael
13AN-19	Oct 27	20c Lau/ARAN			Pont de Vaux	Morel
13AN-20	Oct 29	20c Lau/ARAN			Morlaix 4 Nov	Villesbret
13AN-21	Oct 31	20c Lau/ARAN			Morlaix 4 Nov	Villesbret
13AN-22	Nov 2	20c Lau/ARAN		Arcueil Cachan	Maçon 8 Nov	
13AN-23	Nov 3	20c Lau/ARAN			?	
13AN-24	Nov 7	20c Lau/ARAN		Arcueil	Pont de Vaux 12 Nov	Morel
13AN-25	Nov 9	(missing)/ARAN	"mobile de l'ain"	Arcueil	Bourg-Bresse	Prost
13AN-26	Nov 9	20c Lau/ARAN	Qr Gl 13 ^e 9 Nov		Chateaulin 1 Dec	Kervenoael
13AN-27	Nov 11	20c Sge/ARAN			St Servan	de la Chapal
13AN-28	Nov 12	20c Lau/ARAN		"Paris"	Alger (Alg.) 1 Dec	Brown
13AN-29	Nov 12	20c Lau/ARAN			Bordeaux 28 Nov	Guestier
13AN-30	Nov 12	20c Lau/ARAN	Qr Gl 13 ^e 13 Nov	Arcueil 12 Nov	Pont de Vaux 22 Nov	Morel
13AN-31	Nov 16	20c Lau/ARAN	Qr Gl 13 ^e 16 Nov	"Paris"	Bressuire 26 Nov	Tadreu
13AN-32	Nov 19	10c Lau x 2/ARAN	"Mobile de S & O"	Montrouge	Magny-Vexin	Ossent
13AN-33	Dec 12	20c Sge/ARAN			Toulouse	Fouille
13AN-34	Dec 13	20c Lau/ARAN	"Mobile...Hérault"	St. Maur	Montpellier 29 Dec	de Roux

Total census for the 13th Corps: 242 covers



October 1, 1870 letter with 13th Corps' Bureau AM red postmark

14^e Corps d'Armée Fieldpost Mail

Census N ^o	Paris Date	Franking/Cancel	Other Markings	Location	Arrival	Addressee
Armée Française Quart^r G^{al} (Headquarters Bureau) – datestamp used as cancel						
14QG-1	Oct 17	(missing)/càd	Paris 17 Oct	Neuilly	Grenoble 23 Oct	Corbin
14QG-2	Oct 21	20c Lau/càd	(red datestamp)		(Ain) 1 Nov	
14QG-3	Oct 24	20c Lau/càd		Courbevoie 23	Poitiers 4 Nov	Vaucelle
14QG-4	Oct 24	20c Lau/càd			Trevoux	
14QG-5	Oct 25	20c Lau/càd		Pte Maillot 24	Charité-Loire 1 Nov	Ducrot
14QG-6	Oct 25	20c Lau/càd	Paris-Lille 2 Nov	Neuilly	Dunkerque 3 Nov	Paris
14QG-7	Oct 25	10c Lau x 2/càd	Nantua 2 Nov		Izernore	Roccofort
14QG-8	Oct 25	20c Sge/càd			Pau 2 Nov	Mann
14QG-9	Oct 25	10c Lau x 2/càd			Rennes 2 Nov	Roger
14QG-10	Oct 25	20c Lau/càd	Paris 25 Oct		Rouen 2 Nov	Lacroix
14QG-11	Oct 25	20c Lau/càd	Paris 25 Oct		Sauveterre 2 Nov	
14QG-12	Oct 25	20c Lau/càd			Sens-Yonne 2 Nov	Perrin
14QG-13	Oct 26	20c Lau/càd	QG 27 Oct, Paris 27 Oct	Neuilly	Evreux	Euller
14QG-14	Oct 27	20c Lau/càd	Paris (2) 27 Oct		Dunkerque 3 Nov	Paris
14QG-15	Oct 28	20c Lau/càd		Courbevoie	Mirande 2 Nov	St Vincent
14QG-16	Oct 28	20c Lau/càd	“14 ^e Corps Etat-Maj.”	Pte Maillot 28	Vernon-Brenne	de l'Inferno
14QG-17	Oct 29	20c Lau/càd			Rouen 4 Nov	Lacroix
14QG-18	Oct 30	franchise		Neuilly	Grenoble 5 Nov	Corbin
14QG-19	Oct 30	20c Lau/càd			Bordeaux 4 Nov	Briol
14QG-20	Oct 31	20c Lau/càd	“14 ^e Corps Etat-Maj.”	Pte Maillot	Périgueux 4 Nov	Bernard
14QG-21	Nov 1	20c Lau/càd			Mirande 4 Nov	St Vincent
14QG-22	Nov 1	20c Sge/càd			Vannes	de la Barre
14QG-23	Nov 1	20c Lau/càd			Vernon-Brenne	de l'Inferno
14QG-24	Nov 2	20c Sge/càd	(119 ^e Regt)		Antibes 8 Nov	Angus
14QG-25	Nov 2	20c Lau/càd	“14 ^e Corps Etat-Maj.”	Pte Maillot 2	Charité-Loire 7 Nov	Ducrot
14QG-26	Nov 2	20c Lau/càd			Dunkerque 7 Nov	
14QG-27	Nov 2	20c Lau/càd	“14 ^e Corps Etat-Maj.”	Pte Maillot 2	Périgueux 7 Nov	Bernard
14QG-28	Nov 2	20c Sge/càd	Paris (6) 2 Nov		Rouen 6 Nov	de Warren
14QG-29	Nov 2	20c Lau/càd	Paris (6) 2 Nov		Vannes 5 Nov	Camas
14QG-30	Nov 5	10c Lau x 2/càd			Rennes 9 Nov	Roger
14QG-31	Nov 6	20c Sge/càd	(119 ^e Regt)		Antibes 11 Nov	Angus
14QG-32	Nov 6	20c Lau/càd			Bressières	Amélie
14QG-33	Nov 7	10c Lau x 2/càd			Fontaines-Saône 11 Nov	Decrozo
14QG-34	Nov 7	20c Lau/càd		Courbevoie 6	Mirande 10 Nov	St Vincent
14QG-35	Nov 8	20c Sge/càd	(119 ^e Regt)		Antibes	Angus
14QG-36	Nov 8	franchise	“14 ^e Corps Etat-Maj.”		La Brède 28 Nov	Briol
14QG-37	Nov 8	20c Lau/càd	“14 ^e Corps Etat-Maj.”	Pte Maillot 8	Périgueux 28 Nov	Bernard
14QG-38	Nov 9	10c Lau x 2/pen			Fontaines-Saône 28 Nov	Decrozo
14QG-39	Nov 9	20c Lau/càd		Neuilly	Grenoble 28 Nov	Corbin
14QG-40	Nov 9	franchise	“14 ^e Corps Etat-Maj.”		La Brède 28 Nov	Briol
14QG-41	Nov 9	20c Lau/càd			Thiberville 29 Nov	Touchard
14QG-42	Nov 9	20c Sge/càd			Toulouse 29 Nov	Aillery
14QG-43	Nov 10	20c Sge/càd		Levallois	Cher	Delafosse
14QG-44	Nov 10	20c Sge/càd			Lyon 28 Nov	Guichard
14QG-45	Nov 11	20c Sge/càd		Neuilly	Louvigne	Morel
14QG-46	Nov 11	20c Lau/càd			Nantes	Froment
14QG-47	Nov 12	20c Lau/càd			Antibes 28 Nov	Angus
14QG-48	Nov 12	20c Sge/càd			Lyon 29 Nov	Floquat
14QG-49	Nov 12	20c Sge/càd			Rouen	de Warren
14QG-50	Nov 13	20c Sge/càd			Rouen 26 Nov	de Warren
14QG-51	Nov 14	10c Lau x 2/càd			Vannes 28 Nov	Saguolot
14QG-52	Nov 14	20c Lau/càd		Courbevoie 14	Mirande 26 Nov	St Vincent
14QG-53	Nov 14	10c Lau x 2/càd		Courbevoie	Trouville 24 Nov	Tripier

14^e Corps d'Armée Fieldpost Mail (concluded)

Census N ^o	Paris Date	Franking/Cancel	Other Markings	Location	Arrival	Addressee
Armée Française Quart^r G^{al} (continued)						
14QG-54	Nov 14	franchise	Riscle 25 Nov	Mt Valérien	Viella 26 Nov	Rabel
14QG-55	Nov 15	20c Lau/càd	“Mobile Loire-Inf.”		Nantes 25 Nov	Penissaire
14QG-56	Nov 15	10c Lau x 2/càd			Rouen 23 Nov	Bellest
14QG-57	Nov 16	20c Lau/càd		“Paris”	Fontaine-Fran. 27 Nov	Robelot
14QG-58	Nov 16	20c Sge/càd	blue ‘30’		Laon	de Marsac
14QG-59	Nov 16	franchise	“GM Seine et Marne”		Paris	
14QG-60	Nov 16	20c Sge/càd			Rouen 23 Nov	de Warren
14QG-61	Nov 16	20c Sge/càd			Vannes 25 Nov	
14QG-62	Nov 17	20c Sge/càd	Orléans 27 Nov		Combleux	Beaumont
14QG-63	Nov 17	20c Lau/càd		Bois Colombes	Lavaur	Brésolles
14QG-64	Nov 18	20c Sge/càd			Antibes 28 Nov	Sardon
14QG-65	Nov 18	20c Sge/càd	Angoulême 26 Nov		Champagne Mou. 26 Nov	Fonfais
14QG-66	Nov 18	20c Sge/càd			Fontaines-Saône 27 Nov	Decrozo
14QG-67	Nov 18	20c Sge/càd	“2 ^e Armée Etat-Maj.”		La Brède 27 Nov	Briol
14QG-68	Nov 18	20c Lau/càd			Mirande 26 Nov	St Vincent
14QG-69	Nov 19	20c Lau/càd			Fontaine-Fran. 27 Nov	Robelot
14QG-70	Nov 19	20c Sge/càd			Herbignac 25 Nov	Choby
14QG-71	Nov 19	20c Sge/càd			Saintes 26 Nov	Barraud
14QG-72	Nov 20	20c Lau/càd			Cloyes	de Narcillac
14QG-73	Nov 20	20c Lau/càd			Lavaur	Brésolles
14QG-74	Nov 20	20c Lau/càd			Nantes	Ladmirault
14QG-75	Nov 21	20c Sge/càd		Neuilly	Limoges 12 Dec	Haulot
14QG-76	Nov 21	20c Sge/càd			Rouen	Lamoureux
14QG-77	Nov 23	20c Lau/càd			Libourne 11 Dec	Dérès
14QG-78	Nov 23	(accidenté)/càd			Montoir-Bret. 23 Dec	Buraliste
14QG-79	Nov 23	20c Lau/càd			Nantes 22 Dec	Ladmirault
14QG-80	Nov 23	(accidenté)/càd	P.P.		Sens-Yonne 4 Jan	Perrin
14QG-81	Nov 23	(accidenté)/càd			Vannes 23 Dec	Saguolot
14QG-82	Nov 28	20c Sge/càd			Sollacaro 11 Dec	d'Itria
14QG-83	Nov 28	20c Sge/càd	Laigle-Paris 3 Dec		Verneuil-Avre 4 Dec	d'Illroy
14QG-84	Nov 29	20c Sge/càd	“2 ^e Armée 2 ^e Corps”		Bourges 4 Dec	

Armée Française 14^e Corps A (14th Corps 1st Division Bureau) – postmarks in red

14A-1	Oct 23	franchise			Commentry	Vonique
14A-2	Oct 24	20c Lau/càd			Lyon 3 Nov	Grand
14A-3	Oct 24	20c Lau/càd			Macon 6 Nov	Crotier
14A-4	Oct 24	20c Lau/càd			Paimboeuf 4 Nov	Merson
14A-5	Oct 29	10c, 20c x 2 Lau/càd	Caen-Paris 4 Nov	Clichy-Garenne	Viterbo (Italie) 10 Nov	Rustichelli
14A-6	Nov 3	20c Lau/càd			Dieppe 6 Nov	Letourneur
14A-7	Nov 8	20c Lau/càd			Lugny 28 Nov	Bassecourt
14A-8	Nov 10	20c Lau/càd			Francescas	Toursie
14A-9	Nov 11	20c Lau/càd			Châteauroux	Billaud
14A-10	Nov 11	20c Lau/càd		Levallois	Limoges	Denardon
14A-11	Nov 11	20c Sge/càd			Lyon	Grand
14A-12	Nov 11	20c Sge/càd		Clichy-Garenne	Rostrenen	Deschamps

Armée Française 14^e Corps B (14th Corps 3rd Division Bureau) – datestamp used as cancel

14B-1	Nov 14	20c Lau/càd		Boulogne-Seine	St Servan 25 Nov	de Commaillé
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Total census for the 14th Corps: 97 covers

2^e Armée Fieldpost Mail from November 28 to December 19

Census N ^o	Paris Date	Franking/Cancel	Other Markings	Location	Arrival	Addressee
Armée Française A (Headquarters Bureau)						
2eA-1	Dec 9	20c Lau/AFA		Vincennes	Bourges	Charasson
2eA-2	Dec 9	20c Lau/AFA			St Malo 18 Dec	Hercouët
2eA-3	Dec 10	20c Lau/AFA		Nogent 10 Dec	Grenoble 21 Dec	Mignon
2eA-4	Dec 10	20c Lau/AFA			Lille 14 Dec	Jollivet
2eA-5	Dec 11	20c Sge/AFA			Clairac	de Peslouan
2eA-6	Dec 11	20c Lau/AFA			Compagne	Majoureau
2eA-7	Dec 11	20c Lau/AFA			Sorèze	Saisset
2eA-8	Dec 11	20c Sge/AFA			St Etienne	Callny
2eA-9	Dec 12	20c Sge/AFA	(42 ^e Regt)	St Maur	Fourchambault	Gobillet
2eA-10	Dec 12	20c Sge/AFA	“2 ^e Armée Etat-Maj.”		Tours	
2eA-11	Dec 13	franchise		St Mandé 13 Dec	Paris 13 Dec	Poitevin
2eA-12	Dec 14	20c Lau/AFA			Rouen	Lacroix
2eA-13	Dec 19	20c Sge/AFA	Paris-Havre 24 Dec		Rouen	Lacroix
2eA-14	Dec 19	20c Sge/AFA		St Mandé	Toulouse 26 Dec	Lasvignes
Armée Française C (1st Corps 1st Division Bureau) – postmarks in red						
2eC-1	Dec 19	20c Lau/càd			La Rochelle	Dubroca
Armée Française D (1st Corps 2nd Division Bureau)						
2eD-1	Nov 28	20c Sge/AFD	Roche-Yon 2 Dec		Moutiers 3 Dec	Durostu
2eD-2	Nov 30	20c Sge/AFD	Roche-Yon 2 Dec	Bicêtre 29 9bre	Moutiers 3 Dec	Durostu
2eD-3	Dec 6	20c Lau/AFD	Paris (5) 6 Dec		Moutiers 9 Dec	Durostu
2eD-4	Dec 8	20c Lau/AFD	red P.P.	Bicêtre	Moutiers	Durostu
2eD-5	Dec 19	20c Lau/AFD		“Paris”	Contras	Pillet
2eD-6	Dec 19	20c Sge/AFD			Elbeuf 26 Dec	Bellest
Armée Française E (1st Corps 3rd Division Bureau)						
2eE-1	Dec 14	franchise	red P.P.	Charenton 12 Dec	Compiègne 7 Feb	de Seroux
Armée Française F (2nd Corps Headquarters Bureau) – postmarks in black						
2eF-1	Dec 14	20c Sge/AFF			Périgueux 27 Dec	Pinoteau
2eF-2	Dec 14	20c Lau/AFF	Paris-Rennes 30 Dec	Fontenay	St Malo 30 Dec	Hercouët
2eF-3	Dec 15	20c Sge/AFF		Fontenay 14 Dec	Alger (Algérie) 2 Jan	Castex
2eF-4	Dec 16	20c Lau/AFF	Marseille 29 Dec		Embrun 31 Dec	Sutter
2eF-5	Dec 17	20c Sge/AFF			Angers	Louis
2eF-6	Dec 17	20c Sge/AFF		Fontenay 17 Dec	St Malo 28 Dec	Hercouët
2eF-7	Dec 18	20c Sge/AFF		Fontenay	St Malo	Hercouët
2eF-8	Dec 19	20c Sge/AFF			Angers 23 Dec	Louis
2eF-9	Dec 20	20c Lau/AFF			St Malo 24 Dec	Hercouët
Armée Française G (2nd Corps 1st Division Bureau)						
2eG-1	Dec 16	20c Lau/AFG			Narbonne 28 Dec	
2eG-2	Dec 19	20c Sge/AFG		Nogent	La Rochelle	Babut
Armée Française L (3rd Corps 1st Division Bureau)						
2eL-1	Dec 12	20c Sge/AFL	“garde mobile”		Vannes	de Kermen
Armée Française M (3rd Corps 2nd Division Bureau)						
2eM-1	Dec 7	franchise	Vincennes 8 Dec	Neuilly	Arm Fran M 13 Dec	Jouve
2eM-2	Dec 12	20c Sge/AFM	3 ^e Corps 2 ^e D ^{on}	Nogent	Toulouse	de Linertel
2eM-3	Dec 19	10c Lau/AFM	(105 ^e Regt)	Nogent	Riom 27 Dec	Lasnet

No covers are known from Bureaus B, H, J and K during this period. There was no Bureau I.

2^e Armée Fieldpost Mail from December 19 to January 28

Census N°	Paris Date	Franking/ Cancel	Other Markings	Location	Arrival	Addressee
Armée Française A (Headquarters Bureau)						
2eA-15	Dec 30	20c Sge/AFA			Lyon 7 Jan	Decroso
2eA-16	Dec 30	20c Lau/ càd	Paris (2) 30 Dec	Pantin 27 Dec	Toulouse 5 Jan	Lasvignes
2eA-17	Dec 31	20c Lau/AFA			Hennebont	Caris
2eA-18	Jan 4	franchise	“2 ^e Armée Etat-Maj.”	“Paris” 3 Jan	Puteaux	de Narcillac
2eA-19	Jan 5	20c Sge/ càd			Libourne	Dérès
2eA-20	Jan 8	20c Sge/AFA			Libourne 20 Jan	Dérès
2eA-21	Jan 10	20c Lau/ càd		“Paris”	Libourne 13 Jan	Dérès
2eA-22	Jan 10	franchise	“2 ^e Armée Etat-Maj.”		Paris	Detaille
2eA-23	Jan 12	20c Sge/AFA	Ste Foy 14 Jan	Romainville	Lyon 16 Jan	Dode
2eA-24	Jan 12	20c Sge/AFA		Romainville	Tournus 15 Jan	Dode
2eA-25	Jan 16	20c Lau/AFA		“Paris”	Quimperlé 23 Jan	Bougette
2eA-26	Jan 17	20c Sge/AFA		Pantin 17 Jan	Sablé-Sarthe 10 Mar	Simon
2eA-27	Jan 18	20c Lau/AFA			Revel 31 Jan	de Peslouan
Armée Française B (1st Corps Headquarters Bureau) – postmarks in red						
2eB-1	Jan 4	20c Sge/AFB	(6 ^e Chasseurs)	St Denis	Blanquefort 18 Jan	Vuillaume
2eB-2	Jan 13	20c Sge/AFB	(6 ^e Chasseurs)		Blanquefort 23 Jan	Vuillaume
2eB-3	Jan 14	20c Sge/AFB	Bordeaux 23 Jan	Paris 14 Jan	Blanquefort 23 Jan	St Quentin
2eB-4	Jan 22	10c Lau x 2/AFB			Dieppe 1 Feb	Letourneur
Armée Française C (1st Corps 1st Division Bureau) – datestamp used as cancel						
2eC-2	Jan 5	20c Sge/càd	(116 ^e Regt)		Mirande 19 Jan	de Touches
2eC-3	Jan 10	20c Sge/càd	Carcassonne 17 Jan		Montolieu 18 Jan	Burniquel
2eC-4	Jan 11	20c Sge/càd	Ste Foy 14 Jan		Algérie	
2eC-5	Jan 12	10c, 20c x 2 Sge/càd	Aubervilliers		Viterbo (Italie) 20 Jan	Rustichelli
2eC-6	Jan 28	20c Lau/càd			Châtellerault	Angamare
Armée Française D (1st Corps 2nd Division Bureau)						
2eD-7	Jan 4	20c Lau/AFD			Navarreux 18 Jan	Grivet
2eD-8	Jan 6	20c Sge/AFD			Lyon 18 Jan	Decroso
2eD-9	Jan 7	20c Lau/AFD	Paris (5) 8 Jan	Aubervilliers 7	Gavray 14 Jan	de Premesnil
2eD-10	Jan 10	20c Sge/AFD	(119 ^e Regt)		Antibes 15 Jan	Sardon
2eD-11	Jan 10	10c, 40c Lau/AFD	red PD	Paris 10 Jan	Brumath	Fischer
2eD-12	Jan 10	20c Lau/AFD	Ste Foy 14 Jan		Lyon 16 Jan	Carrichon
2eD-11	Jan 13	20c Sge/AFD			Lyon 24 Jan	Decroso
2eD-14	Jan 23	20c Sge/AFD			Paris	Blériot
Armée Française E (1st Corps 3rd Division Bureau)						
2eE-2	Jan 5	20c Sge/AFE		“Paris” 4 Jan	Péronne 10 Feb	Conti
2eE-3	Jan 11	franchise	(3 ^e Division)	Romainville	Paris 12 Jan	Le Roy
2eE-4	Jan 12	20c Sge/AFE		Romainville 11	Compiègne	de Seroux



December 26, 1870 letter mailed at Bureau G of the 2nd Army

2^e Armée Fieldpost Mail from December 19 to January 28 (continued)

Census N°	Paris Date	Franking/Cancel	Other Markings	Location	Arrival	Addressee
Armée Française F (2nd Corps Headquarters Bureau) – postmarks in red						
2eF-10	Dec 31	20c Sge/AFF			St Malo 10 Jan	Hercouët
2eF-11	Jan 1	20c Sge/AFF			Alger (Algérie) 10 Jan	Castex
2eF-12	Jan 2	20c Lau/(none)			St Malo 10 Jan	Hercouët
2eF-13	Jan 4	20c Lau/AFF		Montreuil 4 Jr	St Malo 20 Jan	Hercouët
2eF-14	Jan 6	20c Lau/AFF		Vincennes	St Malo 18 Jan	Hercouët
2eF-15a	Jan 7	20c Sge/AFF	(2e Corps HQ)		Angers 21 Jan	Louis
2eF-15	Jan 7	20c Lau/AFF	Paris star	Vincennes 7 Jan	St Malo 18 Jan	Hercouët
2eF-16	Jan 8	20c Sge/AFF			Périgueux 21 Jan	Pinoteau
2eF-17	Jan 13	20c Lau x 2/AFF			Brussels (Belg.) 16 Jan	
2eF-18	Jan 13	20c Lau/AFF		Vincennes	St Malo 20 Jan	Hercouët
2eF-19	Jan 14	20c Lau/AFF			St Malo 21 Jan	Hercouët
2eF-20	Jan 15	20c Lau/AFF		Vincennes 15 Jan	St Malo 26 Jan	Hercouët
2eF-21	Jan 16	20c Sge/AFF			Angers 28 Jan	Louis
2eF-22	Jan 16	20c Lau/AFF		Montreuil 14 Jan	Sauveterre 27 Jan	de Bignon
2eF-23	Jan 16	20c Lau/AFF		Vincennes	St Malo 26 Jan	Hercouët
2eF-24	Jan 17	20c Lau/AFF		Vincennes	St Malo 26 Jan	Hercouët
2eF-25	Jan 18	20c Lau/AFF	Paris 18 Jan	Vincennes	Auch 31 Jan	de Gauran
2eF-26	Jan 18	20c Lau/AFF		Vincennes	St Malo 29 Jan	Hercouët
2eF-27	Jan 20	20c Sge/AFF	Lyon-Paris 29 Jan	Les Lilas	Alger (Algérie)	Castex
2eF-28	Jan 20	20c Lau/AFF			St Malo 26 Jan	Hercouët
2eF-29	Jan 21	20c Lau/AFF			St Malo	Hercouët
2eF-30	Jan 22	20c Lau/AFF			Auch 31 Jan	
2eF-31	Jan 23	20c Lau/AFF	(108 ^e Regt)	Les Lilas	Amiens	de la Rocca
2eF-32	Jan 23	20c Lau/AFF			Périgueux	Pinoteau
2eF-33	Jan 23	20c Lau/AFF		Les Lilas	St Malo 30 Jan	Hercouët
2eF-34	Jan 24	(accidenté)/AFF	La Tremblade 13 Feb	Les Lilas 23 Jan	Alger (Algérie) 25 Feb	Castex
2eF-35	Jan 26	(accidenté)/AFF	France Ouest 22 Feb	Les Lilas 25 Jan	Jette (Belg.) 23 Feb	de Cléry
2eF-36	Jan 26	(accidenté)/AFF			Périgueux 14 Feb	Pinoteau
Armée Française G (2nd Corps 1st Division Bureau)						
2eG-3	Dec 26	20c Lau/AFG		Noisy 26 Xbre	St Malo 31 Dec	Hercouët
2eG-4	Dec 27	20c Sge/AFG			Alger (Algérie) 5 Jan	Castex
2eG-5	Dec 27	20c Sge/AFG			Bastia (Corse) 9 Jan	Filippi
2eG-6	Dec 27	20c Sge/AFG			Le Havre 2 Jan	Dupaquier
2eG-7	Dec 28	20c Sge/AFG		Noisy	Auch 4 Jan	de Gauran
2eG-8	Dec 28	20c Sge/AFG	(Morbihan Mobile)	Noisy 28 Xbre	Gacilly 31 Dec	Robert
2eG-9	Dec 28	20c Sge/AFG			St Malo 1 Jan	Hercouët
2eG-10	Jan 11	franchise		Bagnolet	Paris	Dumaine
2eG-11	Jan 25	franchise		Pte Maillot	Paris	Roger



January 25, 1871 local letter mailed at Bureau G of the 2nd Army

2^e Armée Fieldpost Mail from December 19 to January 28 (concluded)

Census N ^o	Paris Date	Franking/Cancel	Other Markings	Location	Arrival	Addressee
Armée Française H (2nd Corps 2nd Division Bureau)						
2eH-1	(Dec 19)	20c Sge/AFH	(107 ^e Regt)		Valréas 2 Jan	de Renaud
2eH-2	Dec 19	20c Lau/AFH	(Tarn Mobile)	Neuilly-Marne	Castres-l'Agout 27 Dec	de Juge
2eH-3	Dec 20	20c Lau/AFH	(108 ^e Regt)	Perreux	Amiens	de la Rocca
2eH-4	Dec 24	20c Lau/càd			Blois	Simon
2eH-5	Dec 25	20c Lau/càd	Havre-Paris 31 Dec	"Paris"	Dieppe 2 Jan	de Bourgeois
2eH-6	Dec 25	20c Sge/càd			Gray 3 Jan	Moveaux
2eH-7	Dec 26	20c Lau/càd		Noisy	St Malo 31 Dec	Hercouët
2eH-8	Dec 27	20c Sge/càd			Angers 31 Dec	Louis
2eH-9	Dec 30	20c Lau/càd			Thouars	Gasser
2eH-10	Jan 1	20c Lau/AFH	(108 ^e Regt)		Amiens	de la Rocca
2eH-11	Jan 1	20c Lau/AFH			Besançon	Beneyton
2eH-12	Jan 2	10c, 20c Lau/AFH	Brussels 13 Jan	Fontenay	Jette (Belg.) 13 Jan	de Cléry
2eH-13	Jan 2	20c Sge/AFH	(107 ^e Regt)		Valréas 14 Jan	de Renaud
2eH-14	Jan 6	20c Lau/AFH	(Tarn Mobile)		Castres-l'Agout 19 Jan	de Juge
2eH-15	Jan 6	20c Lau/AFH	(Tarn Mobile)	Noisy 2 Jan	Castres-l'Agout 19 Jan	Vené
2eH-16	Jan 7	20c Sge/AFH	(107 ^e Regt)	Fontenay	Chartres	Tarayre
2eH-17	Jan 12	10c, 20c Lau/AFH	(108 ^e Regt)	Fontenay	Jette (Belg.) 21 Jan	de Cléry
2eH-18	Jan 17	10c Lau x 2/AFH			Bordeaux	Farine
2eH-19	Jan 19	10c Lau, 20c Sge/AFH		Bagnolet	Jette (Belg.) 25 Jan	de Cléry
2eH-20	Jan 20	20c Lau/càd	"2 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division"		Thouars	Simon
2eH-21	Jan 21	franchise			Paris St Denis	Boulet
Armée Française J (Reserve Division)						
2eJ-1	Dec 19	10c Lau x 2/AFJ	(122 ^e Regt)	Vincennes	Bordeaux 25 Dec	Cau
2eJ-2	Jan 2	20c Lau/AFJ			Nantes	Kervenoael
2eJ-3	Jan 6	20c Sge/AFJ		Pantin	Grenoble 21 Jan	Corbin
2eJ-4	Jan 6	20c Lau/AFJ			Toulouse 27 Jan	Lasvignes
2eJ-5	Jan 8	20c Lau/AFJ			Bourg-Bresse 19 Jan	de Lapérouse

No covers were mailed at Bureaus K, L and M during this period, since they were discontinued on December 19. There was no Bureau I.

Total census for the 2nd Armée from November 30 to January 28: 133 covers



January 20, 1871 letter with private cachet mailed at Bureau H of the 2nd Army

Progression of Armée de Paris Fieldpost Bureaus

Unit	Initial Fieldpost	Known Dates	Nov. 8 2nd Army Re-Organ.	Nov. 28 Fieldpost	Known Dates	Dec. 4 2nd Army Re-Organ.	Dec. 19 Fieldpost
13 th Corps 1 st Division 5 ^e -8 ^e Rgts	Arm Rhin Bau AL	9/17-11/24	3 rd Corps 2 nd Division 105 ^e -108 ^e Rgts	Arm Fran M	12/13-16	2 nd Corps 2 nd Division 105 ^e -108 ^e Rgts	Arm Fran H
13 th Corps 2 nd Division 9 ^e -12 ^e Rgts	Arm Rhin Bau AM	9/30-11/27	1 st Corps 2 nd Division 109 ^e -112 ^e Rgts	Arm Fran D	11/28-12/19	3 rd Army Maud'huy Div. 109 ^e -112 ^e Rgts	(none)
13 th Corps 3 rd Division 13 ^e -14 ^e , 35 ^e , 42 ^e Rgts	Arm Rhin Bau AN	9/25-12/13	1 st Corps 3 rd Division 113 ^e -114 ^e , 35 ^e , 42 ^e Rgts	Arm Fran E	12/14	Reserve Division 113 ^e -114 ^e , 35 ^e , 42 ^e Rgts	Arm Fran J
13 th Corps Headquarters	Arm Rhin Qr Gl 13 ^e C	9/20-11/24	1 st Corps Headquarters	Arm Fran B	(unknown)	1 st Corps Headquarters	Arm Fran B
14 th Corps 1 st Division 15 ^e -18 ^e Rgts	Arm Fran 14 ^e A	10/23-11/11	2 nd Corps 1 st Division 115 ^e -118 ^e Rgts	Arm Fran G	12/16-19	1 st Corps 1 st Division 115 ^e -118 ^e Rgts	Arm Fran C
14 th Corps 2 nd Division 19 ^e -20 ^e Rgts	(none)		2 nd Corps 2 nd Division 119 ^e -120 ^e Rgts	Arm Fran H	(unknown)	1 st Corps 2 nd Division 119 ^e -120 ^e Rgts	Arm Fran D
14 th Corps 2 nd Division 21 ^e -22 ^e Rgts	Arm Rhin Bau AM		1 st Corps 1 st Division 121 ^e -122 ^e Rgts	Arm Fran C	12/19	Reserve Division 121 ^e -122 ^e Rgts	Arm Fran J
14 th Corps 3 rd Division 23 ^e -26 ^e Rgts	Arm Fran 14 ^e B	11/14	2 nd Corps 3 rd Division 123 ^e -126 ^e Rgts	Arm Fran J	(unknown)	1 st Corps 3 rd Division 123 ^e -126 ^e Rgts	Arm Fran E
14 th Corps Headquarters	Arm Fran Quart ^r G ^{al}	10/17-11/29	2 nd Corps Headquarters	Arm Fran F	12/14-20	2 nd Corps Headquarters	Arm Fran F
			3 rd Corps 1 st Division 136 ^e , 4 ^e Zouaves	Arm Fran L	12/12	2 ^e Corps 1 st Division 136 ^e , 4 ^e Zouaves	Arm Fran G
			3 rd Corps Headquarters	Arm Fran K	(unknown)	(disbanded)	(none)
			2 nd Army Headquarters	Arm Fran A	12/9-19	2 nd Army Headquarters	Arm Fran A

Appendix D

French Regimental Listings

Line Infantry Regiments (“Régiments d’Infanterie de Ligne”)

All mobilized line infantry regiments were organized as follows.

- One company was made up of 112 men
- One battalion (670 men) was made up of six companies during wartime
- One regiment (2,000 men) was made up of three battalions (1st through 3rd Battalions)

There were 100 line infantry regiments (numbered from one to 100), eight regiments in the Garde Impériale, the Régiment Étranger, and six regiments of Zouaves and Tirailleurs Algériens from the Armée d’Afrique. In total, there were 115 pre-war line infantry regiments.¹

Regimental depots were the focal points for the training and equipping of mobilized soldiers. After the mobilization order, active duty companies were sent directly from depots to assembly areas near the German frontier. Reserves and soldiers on leave were routed from their homes through the regimental depots to the front line. Battalions were made up of eight companies in peacetime, but only six companies in wartime. The 7th and 8th Companies of each of the three mobilized battalions, consisting mostly of the least experienced soldiers, were left in the regimental depot. They stayed behind to collect additional reserves and recruits as they came in.

On August 7, Napoléon III decreed that four of the depot companies (typically the 7th and 8th Companies of the 1st Battalion plus the 7th Companies of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions) were to be formed into 4th Battalions. These 4th Battalions, generally augmented by two new companies of recent arrivals in the depot, were formed into “Régiments de Marche” (see below) for the Armée de Chalons, Armée de Paris, Armée de la Loire, Armée de Belfort and Bourbaki’s 1^e Armée. Only 100 of the line regiments formed 4th Battalions, and 11 of those battalions were trapped as garrisons in besieged cities other than Paris.² Finally, the remaining two companies (the 8th Companies of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions), along with new companies formed in the depot, were mobilized later into new march infantry regiments composed of from 6 to 25 companies drawn from as many as 18 different depots.

Conscripts from the class of 1869 (80,000 men) were called early to the depots on August 8-12, and the class of 1870 (100,000 men) was called early on October 29.³ Various decrees also recalled former soldiers aged 26-40 to the colors. In addition, many escaped French soldiers and officers from the Sedan and Metz disasters flowed into a number of depots. The 2^e Régiment de Ligne provides a good example.⁴ Throughout the war, this depot in southern France provided 4,872 soldiers, of which 1,730 left in the July initial mobilization. The 3,142 men received after July came from reserves of the conscription classes of 1863-68 (868 men), young soldiers from the classes of 1869 (528 men) and 1870 (478 men), former soldiers (850 men) and 418 volunteers.

The table below lists the line infantry regiments, the division into which they were incorporated, their fate, and the location of the regimental depot at the start of the war.⁵ The last column identifies the march regiment into which the regiment’s 4th Battalion was incorporated. The seven line regiments that were still available for service in the field after the surrenders at Sedan, Metz, and Strasbourg are highlighted in bold.

Régiments d'Infanterie de Ligne

Regiment Number	Army Unit	Notes	Depot	4 th Battalion Régiment de Marche
1	4 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	Châlons	1 ^{er} – Armée de Châlons
2	2 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Tulle	5 ^e – Armée de Paris
3	7 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Sedan	Grenoble	23 ^e – Armée de Paris
4	6 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	St. Etienne	34 ^e – Armée de la Loire
5	7 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Toulon	21 ^e – Armée de Paris
6	4 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	Mézières	1 ^{er} – Armée de Châlons
7	3 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Troyes	1 ^{er} – Armée de Châlons
8	2 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Orléans	2 ^e – Armée de Châlons
9	6 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Blois	5 ^e – Armée de Paris
10	6 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	Limoges	15 ^e – Armée de Paris
11	5 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Sedan	Poitiers	5 ^e – Armée de Paris
12	6 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	Bourges	6 ^e – Armée de Paris
13	4 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Romans	23 ^e – Armée de Paris
14	12 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division ¹	Captured at Sedan	Angers	15 ^e – Armée de Paris
15	4 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Laon	6 ^e – Armée de Paris
16	15^e Corps 3^e Division²	Armée de la Loire	Le Puy	19 ^e – Armée de Paris
17	5 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Foix	27 ^e – Armée de la Loire
18	1 ^{er} Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Sedan	Strasbourg	Strasbourg garrison
19	3 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Alençon	6 ^e – Armée de Paris
20	12 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division ¹	Captured at Sedan	Tours	7 ^e – Armée de Paris
21	7 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Sedan	Annecy	23 ^e – Armée de Paris
22	12 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division ²	Captured at Sedan	Perpignan	53 ^e – 1 ^{re} Armée
23	2 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Dijon	7 ^e – Armée de Paris
24	2 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Cambrai	2 ^e – Armée de Châlons
25	6 ^e Corps 4 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Vannes	7 ^e – Armée de Paris
26	6 ^e Corps 4 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Cherbourg	15 ^e – Armée de Paris
27	5 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Bourg	19 ^e – Armée de Paris
28	6 ^e Corps 4 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Nantes	13 ^e – Armée de Paris
29	3 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Paris	8 ^e – Armée de Paris
30	5 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Montauban	24 ^e – Armée de Paris
31	12 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division ¹	Captured at Sedan	Bordeaux	24 ^e – Armée de Paris
32	2 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	St. Maixent	13 ^e – Armée de Paris
33	4 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Arras	2 ^e – Armée de Châlons
34	12 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division ²	Captured at Sedan	Mirande	24 ^e – Armée de Paris
35	13^e Corps 3^e Division³	Armée de Paris	Tarbes	16 ^e – Armée de Paris
36	1 ^{er} Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Salon	34 ^e – Armée de la Loire
37	7 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Villefranche	21 ^e – Armée de Paris
38	15^e Corps 1^{re} Division⁴	Armée de la Loire	Issoudun	16 ^e – Armée de Paris
39	15^e Corps 2^e Division⁴	Armée de la Loire	Albi	16 ^e – Armée de Paris
40	2 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Givet	3 ^e – Armée de Châlons
41	3 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Évreux	8 ^e – Armée de Paris
42	13^e Corps 3^e Division³	Armée de Paris	Agen	17 ^e – Armée de Paris
43	4 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Amiens	8 ^e – Armée de Paris
44	3 ^e Corps 4 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Metz	Thionville garrison
45	1 ^{er} Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Sedan	Huningue	35 ^e – Belfort garrison
46	5 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Sedan	Rodez	17 ^e – Armée de Paris

Régiments d'Infanterie de Ligne (continued)

Regiment Number	Army Unit	Notes	Depot	4 th Battalion Régiment de Marche
47	7 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Sedan	Chambéry	25 ^e – Armée de Paris
48	1 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Marseille	25 ^e – Armée de Paris
49	5 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Angoulême	25 ^e – Armée de Paris
50	1 ^{er} Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Langres	Langres garrison
51	3 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	Dreux	9 ^e – Armée de Paris
52	7 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Narbonne	27 ^e – Armée de la Loire
53	7 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Gap	27 ^e – Armée de la Loire
54	4 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Napoléon-Ven.	9 ^e – Armée de Paris
55	2 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	Montluçon	14 ^e – Armée de Paris
56	1 ^{er} Corps 4 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Nîmes	21 ^e – Armée de Paris
57	4 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	Verdun	Verdun garrison
58	12 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division ²	Captured at Sedan	Pau	19 ^e – Armée de Paris
59	3 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Paris	9 ^e – Armée de Paris
60	3 ^e Corps 4 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Nancy	Metz garrison
61	5 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Sedan	Aurillac	25 ^e – Armée de Paris
62	3 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	Beauvais	3 ^e – Armée de Châlons
63	2 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Épinal	Phalsbourg garrison
64	4 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Calais	3 ^e – Armée de Châlons
65	4 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Valenciennes	4 ^e – Armée de Châlons
66	2 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Privas	26 ^e – Armée de Paris
67	2 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Nevers	14 ^e – Armée de Paris
68	5 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Guéret	17 ^e – Armée de Paris
69	3 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Laval	10 ^e – Armée de Paris
70	6 ^e Corps 4 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	St. Briec	10 ^e – Armée de Paris
71	3 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Le Mans	10 ^e – Armée de Paris
72	7 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Toulouse	22 ^e – Armée de Paris
73	4 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	Maçon	20 ^e – Armée de Paris
74	1 ^{er} Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Neuf-Brisach	Neuf-Brisach garrison
75	6 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Lille	11 ^e – Armée de Paris
76	2 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	Avignon	22 ^e – Armée de Paris
77	2 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	Bayonne	34 ^e – Armée de la Loire
78	1 ^{er} Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Besançon	47 ^e – 1 ^{re} Armée
79	12 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division ²	Captured at Sedan	Ajaccio	Algeria
80	3 ^e Corps 4 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Bar-le-Duc	Verdun garrison
81	3 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	Fontainebleau	11 ^e – Armée de Paris
82	7 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	La Rochelle	18 ^e – Armée de Paris
83	7 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Clermont-Ferr.	20 ^e – Armée de Paris
84	5 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division ⁵	Captured at Metz	Lons-le-Saunier	35 ^e – Belfort garrison
85	3 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Gray	50 ^e – 1 ^{re} Armée
86	5 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Sedan	St Malo	11 ^e – Armée de Paris
87	1 ^{er} Corps 4 ^e Division	Cap. at Strasbourg	Montpellier	20 ^e – Armée de Paris
88	5 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Cahors	18 ^e – Armée de Paris
89	7 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Sedan	Draguignan	26 ^e – Armée de Paris
90	3 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Paris	12 ^e – Armée de Paris
91	6 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Lille	4 ^e – Armée de Châlons
92	18 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division ⁴	Armée de la Loire	Digne	53 ^e – 1 ^{re} Armée

Régiments d'Infanterie de Ligne (continued)

Regiment Number	Army Unit	Notes	Depot	4 th Battalion Régiment de Marche
93	6 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Caen	12 ^e – Armée de Paris
94	6 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Rouen	4 ^e – Armée de Châlons
95	3 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	Auxerre	12 ^e – Armée de Paris
96	1 ^{er} Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Sedan	Strasbourg	Strasbourg garrison
97	5 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division ⁵	Captured at Metz	Quimper	18 ^e – Armée de Paris
98	4 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Captured at Metz	Lyon	26 ^e – Armée de Paris
99	7 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Sedan	Aix	22 ^e – Armée de Paris
100	6 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Captured at Metz	Périgueux	14 ^e – Armée de Paris

¹ Unable to join the 6^e Corps 2^e Division at Metz, and incorporated into the 12^e Corps.

² Recalled from guarding Spanish border and Corsica.

³ Recalled from garrison duty in Rome.

⁴ Recalled from Algeria.

⁵ Separated from the 5^e Corps during the retreat from Saarguemines and attached to 2^e Corps at Metz.

Algerian Regiment	Army Unit	Notes	Depot	4 th Battalion Régiment de Marche
1 ^{er} Zouaves	1 ^{er} Corps 1 ^{re} Div.	Captured at Sedan	Coléah	(not formed)
2 ^e Zouaves	1 ^{er} Corps 3 ^e Div.	Captured at Sedan	Oran	(not formed)
3 ^e Zouaves	1 ^{er} Corps 4 ^e Div.	Captured at Sedan ¹	Philippeville	(not formed)
1 ^{er} Tirailleurs	1 ^{er} Corps 2 ^e Div.	Captured at Sedan	Blidah	(not formed)
2 ^e Tirailleurs	1 ^{er} Corps 3 ^e Div.	Captured at Sedan	Mostaganem	(not formed)
3 ^e Tirailleurs	1 ^{er} Corps 4 ^e Div.	Captured at Sedan	Constantine	(not formed)
Étranger	15^e Corps 2^e Div.	Armée de la Loire	Mascara	(not formed)

¹ 440 soldiers from the 3^e Zouaves escaped from Sedan and joined the Régiment de Marche de Zouaves at Paris.

Garde Impériale Regiments	Notes ¹
1 ^{er} Voltigeurs	Garde Impériale 1 ^{re} Division captured at Metz
2 ^e Voltigeurs	Garde Impériale 1 ^{re} Division captured at Metz
3 ^e Voltigeurs	Garde Impériale 1 ^{re} Division captured at Metz
4 ^e Voltigeurs	Garde Impériale 1 ^{re} Division captured at Metz
Zouaves de la Garde	Garde Impériale 2 ^e Division captured at Metz
1 ^{er} Grenadiers	Garde Impériale 2 ^e Division captured at Metz
2 ^e Grenadiers	Garde Impériale 2 ^e Division captured at Metz
3 ^e Grenadiers	Garde Impériale 2 ^e Division captured at Metz

¹ The Garde Impériale did not form 4th Battalions. Its depot companies formed the 28^e Régiment de Marche at Paris.

The experience of the 75^e Régiment de Ligne depot at Lille shows how companies were formed and mobilized during the course of the war.⁶

- July 22 to August 4: The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions (1st-6th Companies of each battalion) were formed into the 75^e Régiment de Ligne in the 6th Corps. These 2,120 men and 69 officers left for the Châlons camp and ultimately surrendered at Metz on October 27. They left the 7th and 8th Companies of each of the three battalions behind in the depot.
- August 12: Per an August 7 Imperial Decree, the 4th Battalion (four companies) was formed in the depot at Lille. It was composed of the 7th and 8th Companies of the 1st Battalion and the 7th Companies of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions.

- August 14: The 5th and 6th Companies of the 4th Battalion were formed from recently arrived soldiers in the depot. The 4th Battalion (now 810 men and 18 officers in six companies) departed for Paris to be incorporated into the 11^e Régiment de Marche in the 13th Corps.
- August 29: The 8th Company of the 2nd Battalion (200 men and 3 officers) departed for Paris. In October, it was incorporated into the 35^e Régiment de Marche.
- September 12: Per a September 2 Decree, the 1st and 2nd Provisional Companies were formed in the depot from new arrivals, so these two companies plus the 8th Company of the 3rd Battalion were in the depot.
- September 18: The 8th Company of the 3rd Battalion (200 men and 3 officers) departed for Le Mans to be incorporated into the 31^e Régiment de Marche in the 16th Corps of the Armée de la Loire.
- October 6: The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Depot Companies were formed in the depot from new arrivals.
- October 20: The 1st Depot Company (216 men and 2 officers) departed to join the 40^e Régiment de Marche in the 16th Corps of the Armée de la Loire.
- October 29: The 4th and 5th Depot Companies were formed, so six companies were present in the depot: the 1st and 2nd Provisional Companies and the 2nd through 5th Depot Companies.
- November 1: The 6th Depot Company was formed in the depot.
- November 9: The 1^{er} Bataillon de Marche du 75^e de Ligne (800 men and 15 officers) was formed from the 2nd through 6th Depot Companies and incorporated into the Corps d'Armée du Nord.
- November 19: The 2^e Bataillon de Marche du 75^e de Ligne (800 men and 15 officers) was formed from the 7th through 11th Depot Companies and incorporated into the Corps d'Armée du Nord.
- December 28: The 3^e Bataillon de Marche du 75^e de Ligne (700 men and 14 officers) was formed from the 12th through 16th Depot Companies, but remained in the depot.
- January 23: All six companies (12th through 16th Depot Companies) of the 3^e Bataillon de Marche du 75^e de Ligne left for garrison duties in several northern cities.
- February 10: The 4^e Bataillon de Marche du 75^e de Ligne (700 men and 13 officers) was formed from the 17th through 20th Depot Companies. This battalion was sent to garrison Lille.
- March 1: 545 men and 10 officers of the 1st and 2nd Provisional Companies remained in the depot.

Throughout the war, 7,071 men and 162 officers (48 companies and 8 battalions) were processed by this regimental depot alone, including about 5,000 men after the initial mobilization.



Infantry Officers in the Armée du Rhin

Line Chasseurs Battalions (Chasseurs à Pied)

A line battalion of light infantry Chasseurs consisted of eight companies, of which six participated in the initial mobilization. A Chasseurs battalion was typically attached to each infantry division, although there was only one in the 6th and 7th Corps and none in the 12th Corps. After the mobilization of the six war companies, the battalion left its 7th and 8th Companies in the depot. These, along with new companies formed in the depot, were later distributed to a number of different Chasseurs march battalions, although some depots provided complete march battalions (four to six companies each). Chasseurs battalions were not formed into regiments, but the twenty-one line battalions represented the equivalent of seven regiments.

Battalion	Depot	Army Unit	Captured	Depot Battalion(s)
Chasseurs de la Garde	Paris	Garde Impériale 1 ^{re} D ^{on}	Metz	n/a
1 ^{er} Chasseurs	St. Omer	1 ^{er} Corps 4 ^e Division	Sedan	18 ^e de Marche
2 ^e Chasseurs	Douai	4 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Metz	19 ^e and 24 ^e de Marche
3 ^e Chasseurs	Grenoble	2 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Metz	n/a
4 ^e Chasseurs	Chambéry	5 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Sedan	n/a
5 ^e Chasseurs	Rennes	4 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Metz	11 ^e and 12 ^e de Marche
6 ^e Chasseurs	Arles	7 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Sedan	n/a
7 ^e Chasseurs	Paris	3 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Metz	n/a
8 ^e Chasseurs	Toulouse	1 ^{er} Corps 3 ^e Division	Sedan	n/a
9 ^e Chasseurs	Grenoble	6 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Metz	n/a
10 ^e Chasseurs	Strasbourg	2 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Metz	n/a
11 ^e Chasseurs	Metz	3 ^e Corps 4 ^e Division	Metz	n/a
12 ^e Chasseurs	Auxonne	2 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Metz	14 ^e de Marche
13 ^e Chasseurs	Strasbourg	1 ^{er} Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Sedan	n/a
14 ^e Chasseurs	Auxonne	5 ^e C attached to 2 ^e Corps	Metz	14 ^e de Marche
15 ^e Chasseurs	Paris	3 ^e Corps 2 ^e Division	Metz	n/a
16 ^e Chasseurs	Besançon	1 ^{er} Corps 2 ^e Division	Sedan	15 ^e de Marche
17 ^e Chasseurs	Douai	7 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Sedan	17 ^e de Marche
18 ^e Chasseurs	Paris	3 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Metz	n/a
19 ^e Chasseurs	Toulouse	5 ^e Corps 3 ^e Division	Sedan	n/a
20 ^e Chasseurs	Boulogne	4 ^e Corps 1 ^{re} Division	Metz	20 ^e de Marche



Officers of the 2^e Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied

Line Cavalry Regiments

Line cavalry regiments consisted of five or six squadrons of about 120 to 140 men each.⁷ One squadron was left in the depot after mobilization, leaving the mobilized regiment at 550 to 800 men. There were six types of regiments. Chasseurs à Cheval and Hussards were considered light cavalry, and were made up of five mobilized squadrons. Dragons and Lanciers were considered line cavalry, and were made up of four mobilized squadrons. Finally, Cuirassiers were considered reserve cavalry, and were made up of four squadrons. Two cavalry regiments made up a brigade, and three brigades made up a division. Regiments were grouped into one division per corps, or in a general army cavalry reserve. There were 60 pre-war regiments, of which 13 (highlighted in bold) were available after the defeats at Sedan and Metz.

Régiments de Cavalerie de Ligne

Regiment	Depot	Army Unit	# of Squadrons
1^{er} Chasseurs	Algeria	14 ^e Corps (Paris)	Formed with 4 in Algeria
2 ^e Chasseurs	Auch	3 ^e Corps, captured at Metz	5
3 ^e Chasseurs	Paris	6 ^e Corps, captured at Metz	5
4 ^e Chasseurs	Colmar	2 ^e Corps, captured at Metz	5
5 ^e Chasseurs	Verdun	2 ^e Corps, captured at Metz	5
6 ^e Chasseurs	Tarascon	Reserve, captured at Sedan	5
7^e Chasseurs	Carcassonne	12 ^e Corps, escaped from Sedan	5, re-formed with 4 in September
8 ^e Chasseurs	Tarbes	12 ^e Corps, captured at Sedan	5
9^e Chasseurs	Algeria	14 ^e Corps (Paris)	Formed with 4 in Algeria
10 ^e Chasseurs	Paris	6 ^e Corps, captured at Metz	5
11^e Chasseurs	Avignon	1 ^{er} Corps, escaped from Sedan	5, re-formed with 4 in September
12^e Chasseurs	Joigny	5 ^e Corps, escaped from Sedan	5, re-formed with 4 in September
1 ^{er} Cuirassiers	Nancy	Reserve, captured at Sedan	4
2 ^e Cuirassiers	Épinal	Reserve, captured at Sedan	4
3 ^e Cuirassiers	Toul	Reserve, captured at Sedan	4
4 ^e Cuirassiers	Toul	Reserve, captured at Sedan	4
5 ^e Cuirassiers	Vendôme	12 ^e Corps, captured at Sedan	4
6 ^e Cuirassiers	Le Mans	12 ^e Corps, captured at Sedan	4
7 ^e Cuirassiers	Chartres	Reserve, captured at Metz	4
8 ^e Cuirassiers	Vesoul	1 ^{er} Corps, captured at Sedan	4
9^e Cuirassiers	Belfort	1 ^{er} Corps, re-fitted at Paris	4, re-formed with 4 in September
10 ^e Cuirassiers	Châlons	Reserve, captured at Metz	4
1 ^{er} Dragons	Tours	Reserve, captured at Metz	4
2 ^e Dragons	Cambrai	3 ^e Corps, captured at Metz	4
3 ^e Dragons	Pont à Mouss.	4 ^e Corps, captured at Metz	4
4 ^e Dragons	Lille	3 ^e Corps, captured at Metz	4
5 ^e Dragons	Maubeuge	3 ^e Corps, captured at Metz	4
6^e Dragons	Libourne	15 ^e Corps	4
7 ^e Dragons	Rouen	2 ^e Corps, captured at Metz	4
8 ^e Dragons	Abbeville	3 ^e Corps, captured at Metz	4
9 ^e Dragons	Poitiers	Reserve, captured at Metz	4
10 ^e Dragons	Limoges	1 ^{er} Corps, captured at Sedan	4
11 ^e Dragons	Thionville	4 ^e Corps, captured at Metz	4
12 ^e Dragons	Valenciennes	2 ^e Corps, captured at Metz	4

Régiments de Cavalerie de Ligne (continued)

Regiment	Depot	Army Unit	# of Squadrons
1 ^{er} Hussards	Niort	Reserve, captured at Sedan	5
2 ^e Hussards	Beauvais	4 ^e Corps, captured at Metz	5
3^e Hussards	Chambéry	1 ^{er} Corps, escaped from Sedan	5, re-formed with 4 in September
4 ^e Hussards	Clermont-Ferr.	7 ^e Corps, captured at Sedan	5
5 ^e Hussards	Joigny	5 ^e Corps, captured at Sedan	5
6^e Hussards	Castres	15 ^e Corps	4 (left a squadron at Lyon)
7 ^e Hussards	Senlis	4 ^e Corps, captured at Metz	5
8^e Hussards	Algeria	21 ^e Corps	Formed with 4 in Algeria
1 ^{er} Lanciers	Pontivy	Reserve, captured at Sedan	4
2^e Lanciers	Hagenau	1 ^{er} Corps, escaped from Sedan	4, re-formed with 4 in September
3 ^e Lanciers	St Mihiel	5 ^e Corps, captured at Sedan	4
4 ^e Lanciers	Vienne	7 ^e Corps, captured at Sedan	4
5^e Lanciers	Provins	5 ^e Corps, escaped from Sedan	4, re-formed with 4 in September
6^e Lanciers	Schlestadt	1 ^{er} Corps, escaped from Sedan	4, re-formed with 4 in October
7 ^e Lanciers	Moulins	Reserve, captured at Sedan	4
8 ^e Lanciers	Vienne	7 ^e Corps, captured at Sedan	4

Garde Impériale Cavalry Regiments

Guides	Melun	Garde, captured at Metz	5
Chasseurs	Fontainebleau	Garde, captured at Metz	5
Lanciers	Meaux	Garde, captured at Metz	5
Dragons	Meaux	Garde, captured at Metz	5
Cuirassiers	St Germain	Garde, captured at Metz	5
Carabiniers	Compiègne	Garde, captured at Metz	5

Chasseurs d'Afrique Regiments

1 ^{er}	Algeria	Reserve, captured at Sedan	4
2 ^e	Algeria	Reserve, captured at Metz	4
3 ^e	Algeria	Reserve, captured at Sedan	4
4 ^e	Algeria	Reserve, captured at Metz	4

On November 2, the five Parisian Régiments de Cavalerie de Marche were renamed Régiments de Cavalerie de Ligne.



“French Cavalryman” by Edouard Detaille (1871)

March Infantry Regiments (“Régiments d’Infanterie de Marche”)

A total of 100 march infantry regiments were created during the war,⁸ 34 of which were formed from 4th Battalions (one to three per regiment) that had been left behind in depots by line infantry regiments after the July 1870 mobilization. Later march infantry regiments were assembled from depot companies (6 to 25 per regiment) formed in depots after the departure of the 4th battalions.

The last telegraph connection between besieged Paris and the provincial government at Tours was cut on September 27.⁹ Until then, the new march regiments had been numbered sequentially, whether formed in Paris or outside of Paris. Because communications had been cut, duplicate march regiment numbers were assigned at Paris and in the provincial armies for the 34^e through 39^e Régiments de Marche.¹⁰

Régiments d’Infanterie de Marche

Regiment ¹	Army Unit	Composition
1 ^{er} de Marche	Armée de Châlons 1 ^{er} Corps	4 th Battalions from 1 ^{er} , 6 ^e , 7 ^e Régiments
2 ^e de Marche	Armée de Châlons 1 ^{er} Corps	4 th Battalions from 8 ^e , 24 ^e , 33 ^e Régiments
3 ^e de Marche	Armée de Châlons 12 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 40 ^e , 62 ^e , 64 ^e Régiments
4 ^e de Marche	Armée de Châlons 12 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 65 ^e , 91 ^e , 94 ^e Régiments
5 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 13 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 2 ^e , 9 ^e , 11 ^e Régiments
6 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 13 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 12 ^e , 15 ^e , 19 ^e Régiments
7 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 13 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 20 ^e , 23 ^e , 25 ^e Régiments
8 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 13 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 29 ^e , 41 ^e , 43 ^e Régiments
9 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 13 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 51 ^e , 54 ^e , 59 ^e Régiments
10 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 13 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 69 ^e , 70 ^e , 71 ^e Régiments
11 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 13 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 75 ^e , 81 ^e , 86 ^e Régiments
12 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 13 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 90 ^e , 93 ^e , 95 ^e Régiments
13 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 13 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 28 ^e , 32 ^e , 49 ^e Régiments
14 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 13 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 55 ^e , 67 ^e , 100 ^e Régiments
15 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 14 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 10 ^e , 14 ^e , 26 ^e Régiments
16 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 14 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 35 ^e , 38 ^e , 39 ^e Régiments
17 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 14 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 42 ^e , 46 ^e , 68 ^e Régiments
18 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 14 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 82 ^e , 88 ^e , 97 ^e Régiments
19 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 14 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 16 ^e , 27 ^e , 58 ^e Régiments
20 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 14 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 73 ^e , 83 ^e , 87 ^e Régiments
21 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 14 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 5 ^e , 37 ^e , 56 ^e Régiments
22 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 14 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 72 ^e , 76 ^e , 99 ^e Régiments
23 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 14 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 3 ^e , 13 ^e , 21 ^e Régiments
24 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 14 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 30 ^e , 31 ^e , 34 ^e Régiments
25 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 14 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 47 ^e , 48 ^e , 61 ^e Régiments
26 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris 14 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 66 ^e , 89 ^e , 98 ^e Régiments
27 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 15 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 17 ^e , 52 ^e , 53 ^e Régiments
28 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris	25 companies from 9 Garde Impériale depots
29 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 15 ^e Corps	23 companies from 20 depots
30 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 15 ^e Corps	18 companies from 18 depots
31 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 16 ^e Corps	19 companies from 18 depots
32 ^e de Marche	Armée de l’Est	20 companies from 20 depots
33 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 15 ^e Corps	18 companies from 18 depots
34 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris	13 companies from 12 depots
34 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 15 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 4 ^e , 36 ^e , 77 ^e Régiments
35 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris	14 companies from 14 depots
35 ^e de Marche	Armée de Belfort	4 th Battalions from 45 ^e and 84 ^e Régiments

Régiments d'Infanterie de Marche (continued)

Regiment	Army Unit	Composition
36 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris	18 companies from 18 depots
36 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 16 ^e Corps	19 companies from 17 depots
37 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris	6 companies from 6 depots
37 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 16 ^e Corps	19 companies from 18 depots
38 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris	17 companies from 17 depots
38 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 16 ^e Corps	22 companies from 19 depots
39 ^e de Marche	Armée de Paris	17 companies from 17 depots
39 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 16 ^e Corps	23 companies from 20 depots
40 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 16 ^e Corps	15 companies from 13 depots
41 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 17 ^e Corps	17 companies from 9 depots
42 ^e de Marche	1 ^{re} Armée 18 ^e Corps	22 companies from 10 depots
43 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 17 ^e Corps	20 companies from 15 depots
44 ^e de Marche	1 ^{re} Armée 18 ^e Corps	18 companies from 12 depots
45 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 17 ^e Corps	18 companies from 12 depots
46 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 17 ^e Corps	18 companies from 16 depots
47 ^e de Marche	1 ^{re} Armée 20 ^e Corps	4 th Battalion from 78 ^e Régiment and 2 companies
48 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 17 ^e Corps	18 companies from 14 depots
49 ^e de Marche	(Auxonne garrison)	7 companies from 2 depots
50 ^e de Marche	1 ^{re} Armée 20 ^e Corps	4 th Battalion from 85 ^e Régiment and 5 companies
51 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 17 ^e Corps	16 companies from 12 depots
52 ^e de Marche	1 ^{re} Armée 18 ^e Corps	14 companies from 10 depots
53 ^e de Marche	1 ^{re} Armée 18 ^e Corps	4 th Battalions from 22 ^e , 56 ^e , ² 92 ^e Régiments
54 ^e de Marche	(never formed)	
55 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 19 ^e Corps	18 companies from 9 depots
56 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 21 ^e Corps	12 companies from 10 depots
57 ^e de Marche	Division Cremer	17 companies from 7 depots
58 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 21 ^e Corps	17 companies from 13 depots
59 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 21 ^e Corps	18 companies from 13 depots
60 ^e de Marche	1 ^{re} Armée 24 ^e Corps	17 companies from 5 depots
61 ^e de Marche	1 ^{re} Armée 24 ^e Corps	18 companies from 14 depots
62 ^e de Marche	(Lyon garrison ?)	18 companies from 14 depots
63 ^e de Marche	1 ^{re} Armée 24 ^e Corps	18 companies from 3 depots
64 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 19 ^e Corps	18 companies from 14 depots
65 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 19 ^e Corps	17 companies from 11 depots
66 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 19 ^e Corps	18 companies from 11 depots
67 ^e de Marche	Armée du Nord 22 ^e Corps	22 companies from 3 depots
68 ^e de Marche	Armée du Nord 22 ^e Corps	15 companies from 2 depots
69 ^e de Marche	Armée du Nord 22 ^e Corps	10 companies from 1 depot
70 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 19 ^e Corps	17 companies from 13 depots
71 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 19 ^e Corps	15 companies from 12 depots
72 ^e de Marche	Armée du Nord 22 ^e Corps	15 companies from 2 depots
73 ^e de Marche	Armée du Nord 23 ^e Corps	19 companies from 3 depots
74 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 25 ^e Corps	16 companies from 15 depots
75 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 25 ^e Corps	17 companies from 17 depots
76 ^e de Marche	(never formed)	
77 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 25 ^e Corps	15 companies from 15 depots
78 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 25 ^e Corps	14 companies from 13 depots
79 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 25 ^e Corps	21 companies from 12 depots
80 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 26 ^e Corps	11 companies from 9 depots
81 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 26 ^e Corps	12 companies from 10 depots

Régiments d'Infanterie de Marche (continued)

Regiment	Army Unit	Composition
82 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 26 ^e Corps	15 companies from 14 depots
83 ^e de Marche	(never formed)	
84 ^e de Marche	(never formed)	
85 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 26 ^e Corps	15 companies from 15 depots
86 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 26 ^e Corps	19 companies from 18 depots
87 ^e de Marche	Armée de la Loire 26 ^e Corps	17 companies from 13 depots
88 ^e de Marche	Armée de Versailles	17 companies from 14 depots
89 ^e de Marche	Armée de Versailles	19 companies from 17 depots
90 ^e de Marche	Armée de Versailles	18 companies from 18 depots
91 ^e de Marche	Armée de Versailles	16 companies from 13 depots
92 ^e de Marche		16 companies from 14 depots
Zouaves de Marche	Armée de Paris	Elements of 1 ^{er} , 2 ^e , and 3 ^e Zouaves
1 ^{er} Zouaves de Marche	1 ^{re} Armée 15 ^e Corps	21 companies
2 ^e Zouaves de Marche	1 ^{re} Armée 15 ^e Corps	18 companies
3 ^e Zouaves de Marche	1 ^{re} Armée 20 ^e Corps	8 companies
4 ^e Zouaves de Marche	1 ^{re} Armée 18 ^e Corps	21 companies
Tirailleurs Algériens	Armée de la Loire 15 ^e Corps	17 companies

¹ 29 Parisian Régiments de Marche were re-designated as more prestigious Régiments de Ligne on October 28.

² The battalion from the 56^e Régiment was the 3rd, which had escaped from Sedan.



“Bataille de Champigny” by Édouard Detaille

Garde Nationale Mobile Regiments

The Minister of the Interior mobilized the Garde Nationale Mobile (“Garde Mobile”) on July 17, 1870. It consisted of men aged 21 to 25 who had avoided conscription into the regular army. The length of their service was five years, so the classes of 1864-68 were mobilized (about 115,000 men per year, which represented 575,000 men on paper). One battalion consisted of eight companies of 100 men each, or about 800 men. The class of 1869 was called in August, and the class of 1870 was called on November 13. Officers were elected by the men, but were usually retired regular army or naval officers. Garde Mobile battalions were ordered to be organized into regiments on July 18, but there were not enough officers or supplies for them, so the mobilization was halted from August 4 to August 17. Regiments were formed from three battalions, starting on July 18 with the 18 battalions of the Garde Mobile de la Seine. On August 9, the government decreed a universal call-up, so all unmarried or childless men between 25 and 35 years were incorporated into the Garde Mobile.

By September 4, there were 321 Garde Mobile battalions in formation, of which 174 had already formed 58 regiments. 93 battalions were sent to Paris from August 17 to September 17, 25 were in other besieged cities, and 203 were forming in the provincial armies. Of the 203 provincial battalions, 111 were initially organized into 38 regiments. Of the 92 remaining provincial battalions, 70 were later joined by 44 new battalions to form 42 new regiments (not all of three battalions). The remaining 22 plus 32 newly-formed battalions remained unregimented. In total, 397 battalions were raised, from which 109 regiments were formed.¹¹ The table below lists the Garde Mobile regiments formed during the war.

Garde Nationale Mobile Regiments

Regiment	Department	Army	Battalions	Formed	Disbanded
1	Seine	Paris	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	18-Jul	7-Mar
2	Seine	Paris	4 th , 5 th , 6 th	18-Jul	7-Mar
3	Seine	Paris	7 th , 8 th , 9 th	18-Jul	7-Mar
4	Seine	Paris	10 th , 11 th , 12 th	18-Jul	7-Mar
5	Seine	Paris	13 th , 14 th , 15 th	18-Jul	7-Mar
6	Seine	Paris	16 th , 17 th , 18 th	18-Jul	7-Mar
7	Tarn	Paris	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	17-Aug	18-Mar
8	Charente-Inférieure	16 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	19-Aug	26-Mar
9	Allier	Algérie	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	22-Aug	Jul-71
10	Côte-d’Or	Paris	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th	22-Aug	17-Mar
11	Loire	20 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	26-Aug	15-Mar
12	Nièvre	15 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	22-Aug	23-Mar
13	Saône-et-Loire	Paris	1 st , 3 rd , 5 th	24-Aug	7-Mar
14	Yonne	24 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	22-Aug	21-Mar
15	Calvados	21 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	26-Aug	18-Mar
16	Rhône	Belfort	2 nd , 3 rd , 5 th	22-Aug	26-Mar
17	Aisne	Soissons	2 nd , 6 th	28-Aug	7-Mar
18	Charente	15 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	28-Aug	25-Mar
19	Cher	18 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	28-Aug	16-Mar
20	Côtes-du-Nord	Paris	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th	28-Aug	7-Mar
21	Creuse	Algérie	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	28-Aug	15-Jul
22	Dordogne	16 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 4 th	28-Aug	29-Mar
23	Finistère	Paris	2 nd , 4 th , 5 th	29-Aug	7-Mar
24	Haute-Garonne	20 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	28-Aug	30-Mar
25	Gironde	15 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 4 th	28-Aug	22-Mar
26	Ille-et-Vilaine	Paris	1 st , 2 nd , 4 th	28-Aug	13-Mar

Garde Nationale Mobile Regiments (continued)

Regiment	Department	Army	Battalions	Formed	Disbanded
27	Isère	16 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	28-Aug	20-Mar
28	Loire-Inférieure	Paris	3 rd , 4 th , 5 th	28-Aug	7-Mar
29	Maine-et-Loire	15 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	28-Aug	19-Mar
30	Manche	21 ^e Corps	1 st , 4 th , 5 th	28-Aug	19-Mar
31	Morbihan	Paris	1 st , 2 nd , 5 th	28-Aug	19-Mar
32	Puy-de-Dôme	15 ^e Corps	2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th	28-Aug	19-Mar
33	Sarthe	16 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 4 th	28-Aug	16-Mar
34	Deux-Sèvres	20 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	28-Aug	21-Mar
35	Vendée	Paris	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	28-Aug	7-Mar
36	Vienne	Paris	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	28-Aug	7-Mar
37	Loiret	Paris	2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th	28-Aug	7-Mar
38	Seine-et-Marne	Paris	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th	30-Aug	6-Mar
39	Eure	19 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	2-Sep	20-Mar
40	Ain	Paris	2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th	2-Sep	12-Mar
41	Ardèche	19 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	2-Sep	18-Mar
42	Aveyron	Vosges	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	2-Sep	17-Mar
43	Bouches-du-Rhône	Algérie	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	2-Sep	17-Mar
44	Gard	22 ^e Corps	2 nd , 3 rd , 5 th	2-Sep	7-Apr
45	Hérault	Paris	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	2-Sep	24-Mar
46	Nord	22 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	2-Sep	7-Apr
47	Nord	23 ^e Corps	4 th , 5 th , 6 th	2-Sep	7-Apr
48	Nord	23 ^e Corps	7 th , 8 th , 9 th	2-Sep	21-Mar
49	Orne	21 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th	2-Sep	1-Apr
50	Seine-Inférieure	Paris	1 st , 4 th , 5 th	2-Sep	7-Mar
51	Seine-et-Oise	Paris	4 th , 5 th , 6 th	2-Sep	6-Mar
52	Somme	Paris	1 st , 2 nd , 5 th	2-Sep	7-Mar
53	Oise	Havre	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	2-Sep	28-Mar
54	Doubs	Besançon	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	2-Sep	20-Mar
55	Jura	20 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	3-Sep	19-Mar
56	Haute-Marne	Langres	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	3-Sep	21-Mar
57	Haute-Saône	Belfort	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	3-Sep	6-Apr
58	Vosges	20 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd	3-Sep	21-Mar
59	Aube	Paris	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	7-Sep	7-Mar
60	Seine-et-Oise	Paris	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	7-Sep	6-Mar
61	Somme/Marne	Paris	3 rd , 6 th , 1 st	10-Nov	12-Mar
62	Ille-et-Vilaine/Finistère	Paris	3 rd , 6 th , 1 st	10-Nov	14-Mar
63	Eure-et-Loir	21 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	7-Sep	17-Mar
64	Indre/Aisne/Puy-de-D.	Paris	1 st , 1 st , 1 st	10-Nov	23-Mar
65	Rhône	Belfort	1 st , 4 th	12-Sep	25-Mar
66	Mayenne	16 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	12-Sep	18-Mar
67	Haute-Loire	16 ^e /20 ^e C.	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	16-Sep	22-Mar
68	Haut-Rhin	20 ^e Corps	1 st , 4 th , 5 th	25-Sep	21-Mar
69	Ariège	15 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	4-Oct	25-Mar
70	Lot	17 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	14-Oct	23-Mar
71	Haute-Vienne	16 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	14-Oct	20-Mar
72	Cantal/Yonne	17 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 4 th	7-Oct	17-Mar
73	Loiret/Isère	18 ^e Corps	1 st , 6 th , 4 th	23-Oct	17-Mar
74	Lot-et-Garonne/Sarthe	17 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 2 nd	23-Oct	18-Mar
75	Loire-Cher/Maine-Loire	16 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 4 th	25-Oct	22-Mar
76	Ain/Aude/Isère	17 ^e Corps	1 st , 3 rd , 5 th	7-Nov	18-Apr

Garde Nationale Mobile Regiments (continued)

Regiment	Department	Army	Battalions	Formed	Disbanded
77	Tarn/Allier/Maine-Loire	18 ^e Corps	4 th , 4 th , 5 th	2-Nov	21-Mar
78	Lot-et-G./Vend./Gironde	21 ^e Corps	3 rd , 5 th , 5 th	30-Oct	17-Mar
79	Mayenne	21 ^e Corps	5 th , 6 th	6-Nov	17-Mar
80	Isère/Deux Sev./Ardèche	18 ^e Corps	6 th , 4 th , 4 th	(never formed)	
81	Charente Inf./Cher/Indre	18 ^e Corps	4 th , 4 th , 3 rd	25-Nov	21-Mar
82	Vaucluse/Var	18 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 2 nd	25-Nov	23-Mar
83	Aude/Gers	Crémér	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	14-Nov	21-Mar
84	Morbihan/Indre	Nièvre	3 rd , 4 th , 2 nd	26-Nov	25-Mar
85	Gers/Vienne	17 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 4 th	28-Nov	17-Apr
86	Saône-et-Loire	Crémér	6 th , 7 th , 8 th	22-Nov	Mar-71
87	Basses-Pyrénées/Lozère	24 ^e Corps	1 st , 3 rd	23-Nov	17-Mar
88	Indre-et-Loire	16 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	24-Nov	17-Mar
89	Loire/Var	24 ^e Corps	5 th , 1 st	25-Nov	18-Mar
90	Sarthe/Corrèze	21 ^e Corps	5 th , 1 st , 2 nd	26-Nov	17-Mar
91	Pas-de-Calais	22 ^e Corps	5 th , 6 th , 7 th	25-Nov	19-Mar
92	Manche/Calvados	21 ^e Corps	2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th	28-Dec	19-Mar
93	Pas-de-Calais/Loire-Inf.	Havre	1 st , 8 th , 1 st	8-Jan	24-Mar
94	Seine-Inférieure/Marne	Havre	2 nd , 6 th , 2 nd	8-Jan	18-Mar
95	Hautes-Pyrénées/Landes	Havre	1 st , 2 nd , 2 nd	8-Jan	26-Mar
96	Gironde/Charente	19 ^e Corps	6 th , 4 th	9-Jan	16-Mar
97	Haute-Savoie	Langres	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	15-Jan	6-Apr
98	Nièvre/Tarn-et-Garonne	Nièvre	4 th , 2 nd , 3 rd	12-Jan	Mar-71
99	Loire/Aveyron/Dordogne	Cotentin	6 th , 4 th , 5 th	31-Jan	17-Mar
100	Nord	Isnard	10 th , 11 th , 12 th	9-Dec	?
101	Somme/Marne	22 ^e Corps	4 th , 3 rd	8-Dec	12-Apr
102	Nord	Isnard	(mixed)	2-Jan	21-Mar
103	Aisne	Isnard	4 th , 5 th	20-Jan	20-Mar
104	Loire/Isère/(mixed)	n/a	7 th , 7 th	21-Feb	21-Mar
n/a	Alpes-Maritimes	Vosges	1 st , 2 nd	16-Nov	23-Mar
n/a	Corse	20 ^e Corps	1 st , 2 nd	31-Dec	12-Jan
n/a	Ardennes	Isnard	1 st , 2 nd	9-Jan	29-Mar
n/a	1 ^e régiment mixte	24 ^e Corps	3 Bons	7-Jan	16-Mar
n/a	2 ^e régiment mixte	15 ^e Corps	3 Bons	7-Jan	29-Mar

Endnotes

¹ Rousset, Léonce, *Histoire Générale de la Guerre Franco-Allemande (1870-1871)*, (Librairie Illustrée: Paris, 1911), Vol. I, pages ii-xiv.

² Martinien, Aristide, *La Guerre de 1870-1871, La Mobilisation de l'Armée, Mouvements des Dépôts (Armée Active) du 15 Juillet 1870 au 1^{er} Mars 1871*, (L. Fournier: Paris, 1911).

³ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume II, pages 2-3.

⁴ Martinien, *Op. Cit.*, page 29.

⁵ Many depots were forced to move due to the advance of the German armies.

⁶ Martinien, *Op. Cit.*, page 149.

⁷ Regulation size was 164 men, but this was not attained in 1870. Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 23.

⁸ *Ibid.*, page 447. The last regiment formed was #92, but there were 6 duplicate numbered regiments formed in besieged Paris, and regiments #54, #76, #83 and #84 were never formed. Six Algerian march regiments also served, for a total of 100.

⁹ Howard, Michael. *The Franco-Prussian War*, Methuen, Londres, 1981, page 239.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, page 444.

¹¹ Martinien, Aristide, *Corps Auxiliaires Créés Pendant la Guerre 1870-1871: Garde National Mobile, Volume 1*, (Librairie Militaire Edmond Dubois : Paris, 1897).

Appendix E

German Fieldpost Relay System

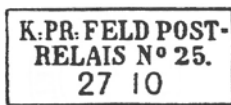
Introduction

The North German Confederation military postal service was mobilized on July 19, 1870. It consisted of the mobile fieldpost bureaus that are the principal focus of this book, and a relay (“relais”) system of fixed-location fieldpost bureaus that transmitted mail to and from the mobile fieldpost bureaus. The advanced relay bureaus operated a day’s march behind the army corps headquarters, and linked them with the German postal system. Both the mobile and the relay bureaus were under military orders.¹

As the German armies advanced, the relay system filled in behind them, so it began operations on July 30 at Mannheim, Baden. After the German armies penetrated into France in early August, the feldpost relais system opened about 100 relay bureaus in France. In addition to the North German Confederation relay system, the Bavarian army established a network for its two corps, as did Baden for its division. Feldpost relais postmarks never appear on mail to or from the mobile fieldpost bureaus (except during the 1871-1873 occupation period), but were used on some civilian or military mail received directly at the relay bureau. The various postmarks, which all include the word “Relais,” are illustrated below.



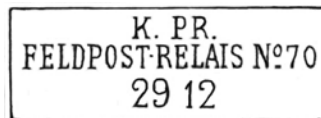
Baden Division



Prussian type 2



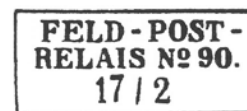
Bavarian fieldpost



Prussian type 2a



Prussian type 1



Prussian type 3

The Baden and Bavarian relais postmarks are listed in the table below.

German Military Unit	Fieldpost Relais Postmark	Location
Bavarian Relais No. 1	K.B.FELDPOST RELAIS I.	Paris
Bavarian Relais No. 2	K.B.FELDPOST RELAIS II.	Wissembourg
Bavarian Relais No. 3	K.B.FELDPOST RELAIS III. III	Nancy
Baden Relais No. 1	FELDPOSTRELAIS N°. I D.BAD.DIVISION	Épinal (?)
Baden Relais No. 2	FELDPOSTRELAIS N°. II D.BAD.DIVISION	Vesoul (?)

Four types of North German relais postmarks were used. Types 1, 2 and 2a include the prefix “K:PR.” (King of Prussia), while type 3 does not.

The North German Confederation Feldpost Relais Bureau Listing

The relay bureaus were opened according to a series of Fieldpost Orders,² so the relay bureaus are listed below in chronological order.³ An examination of the list shows that the earliest bureaus in France were opened on August 9-12 near the August 6 battlefields of Wörth and Forbach. When the German armies

E – German Fieldpost Relay System

began the siege of Metz, additional offices were established around Metz. After the September 1 German victory at Sedan and the subsequent advance on Paris, a series of fixed feldpost relais bureaux were established along the central supply line from Metz to Châlons-s-Marne via Nancy and Bar-le-Duc. Then, as the German siege armies took positions around Paris, the line was extended to Meaux and Versailles. Much of the later new bureau formation was along these lines.

August 1870 Fieldpost Orders #36 and #37

Relais	Location	Opened	Closed	Pmk Type	Re-used Later at
I	Nancy	16 August	20 July 1871	1	
II	Lunéville (southwest of Nancy)	18 August	28 July 1873	1	
III	Soultz-sous-Forêts (east of Wörth)	9 August	20 November 1870	1	
4	Sarrebouurg (west of Strasbourg)	16 August	16 November 1870	2	Longwy
5	Corny-s-Moselle (southwest of Metz)	19 August	4 November 1870	1	Metz
6	<i>(assigned to Crépy-en-Valois in November)</i>				
7	Pont-a-Mousson (north of Nancy)	18 August	29 August 1870	1	in March
8	Courcelles (southeast of Metz)	28 August	6 November 1870	1	Verdun
9	Boulay (east of Metz)	13 August	3 November 1870	1	Briey
10	St Mihiel (southwest of Metz)	25 August	15 January 1871	1	FP #99
11	Gorze (southwest of Metz)	22 August	16 November 1870	1	Pithiviers
12	Ligny-en-Barrois (west of Nancy)	26 August	1 October 1870	1	Étampes
13	Bar-le-Duc (west of Nancy)	27 August	6 June 1871	1	
14	Blesme (west of Nancy)	4 September	26 September 1870	1	
15	Sarreguemines (east of Forbach)	12 August	16 November 1870	1	Montmédy
16	Remilly (southeast of Metz)	27 August	3 November 1870	1	Nuits
17	Hagenau (north of Strasbourg)	22 August	20 November 1870	1	
18	<i>(not reported in Feldpost Orders)</i>				
45	Herny (southeast of Metz)	28 August	9 November 1870	2	Blesme

September 1870 Fieldpost Orders #42 through #53

Relais	Location	Opened	Closed	Pmk Type	Re-used Later at
19	Châlons-s-Marne	7 September	2 June 1871	1	FP #92
20	Toul (west of Nancy)	24 September	31 July 1873	1	
21	Tournan (southeast of Paris)	15 September	12 June 1871	1	
22	Vitry-le-François (west of Nancy)	5 September	22 June 1871	2	
23	Épernay (south of Reims)	12 September	25 May 1871	2	
24	Vouziers (south of Sedan)	8 September	1 Dec. 1870	1	St. Denis
25	Reims	11 September	15 June 1871	2	Blesme
26	Clermont (west of Verdun)	14 September	21 April 1871	2	Belfort
27	Sedan	9 September	23 July 1873	2	
28	Rethel (northeast of Reims)	9 September	15 July 1873	2	
29	<i>(assigned to Creil in December)</i>				
30	<i>(Assigned to Étain in November)</i>				
31	<i>(assigned to Nanteuil in October)</i>				
32	Neuilly-St-Front (near Soissons)	16 September	30 November 1870	2	Beaumont
33	<i>(assigned to Villers-Cotterêts in November)</i>				
34	<i>(assigned to Chartres in November)</i>				
35	Coulommiers (east of Paris)	18 September	8 June 1871	2	
36	Corbeil (southeast of Paris)	22 September	14 March 1871	2	
37	Château-Thierry (near of Reims)	16 September	6 July 1871	2	Commercy

September 1870 Fieldpost Orders #42 through #53 (continued)

Relais	Location	Opened	Closed	Pmk Type	Re-used Later at
38	<i>(assigned to Rambouillet in November)</i>				
39	<i>(assigned to Charmes in October)</i>				
40	(not reported in Feldpost Orders)				
41	<i>(assigned to Versailles in October)</i>				
42	(not reported in Feldpost Orders)				
43	<i>(assigned to Argenteuil in October)</i>				
44	Nanteuil (northeast of Reims)	21 September	10 March 1871	2	
46	Dammartin (northeast of Paris)	20 September	19 June 1871	2	
47	Fismes (west of Reims)	1 September	15 January 1871	2	Épernay
48	Neufchâtel (north of Reims)	11 September	10 November 1870	2	Chantilly
49	Lagny (east of Paris)	27 September	5 May 1871	2	
50	Villeneuve-St-Georges (SE of Paris)	27 September	12 March 1871	2	
51	Gonesse (northeast of Paris)	24 September	23 May 1871	2	Crépy
52	<i>(assigned to Pontoise in December)</i>				
53	(not reported in Feldpost Orders)				
54	(not reported in Feldpost Orders)				
55	(not reported in Feldpost Orders)				
56	(not reported in Feldpost Orders)				
57	<i>(assigned to Troyes in November)</i>				
58	Meaux (east of Paris)	25 September	24 September 1871	2	Sézanne
59	(not reported in Feldpost Orders)				
60	(not reported in Feldpost Orders)				
61	(not reported in Feldpost Orders)				
62	(not reported in Feldpost Orders)				
63	<i>(assigned to Esbly in December)</i>				
64	<i>(assigned to Brie-Comte-Robert in January)</i>				

October 1870 Fieldpost Orders #55 through #63

Relais	Location	Opened	Closed	Pmk Type	Re-used Later at
12	Étampes (east of Chartres)	12 October	15 March 1871	1	
31	Nanteuil (southwest of Reims)	9 October	21 March 1871	2	
39	Charmes (south of Nancy)	10 October	18 September 1871	2	Neufchâteau
41	Versailles	10 October	10 March 1871	2	
43	Argenteuil (northwest of Paris)	24 September	31 October 1870	2	St Germain
65	Charmes (south of Nancy)	19 October	16 May 1871	2a	

November 1870 Fieldpost Orders #69 through #81

Relais	Location	Opened	Closed	Pmk Type	Re-used Later at
5	Metz	2 November	5 December 1870	1	Longuyon
6	Crépy-Valois (southwest of Soissons)	6 November	21 April 1871	1	
8	Verdun	12 November	2 March 1871	1	FP #9
9	Briey (northwest of Metz)	5 November	19 January 1871	1	Verdun
11	Pithiviers (northeast of Orléans)	24 November	6 December 1870	1	
30	Étain (east of Verdun)	11 November	2 March 1871	2	
33	Villers-Cotterêts (SE of Soissons)	6 November	8 March 1871	2	
34	Chartres (southwest of Versailles)	24 November	10 March 1871	2	

November 1870 Fieldpost Orders #69 through #81 (continued)

Relais	Location	Opened	Closed	Pmk Type	Re-used Later at
38	Rambouillet (southwest of Versailles)	18 November	4 March 1871	2	
43	St Germain-Laye (northwest of Paris)	1 November	10 March 1871	2	
45	Blesme (southeast of Châlons)	13 November	12 April 1871	2	
48	Chantilly (north of Paris)	20 November	16 May 1871	2	St Dizier
57	Troyes	10 November	28 March 1871	2	FP #90
66	Épinal (south of Nancy)	22 October	16 May 1871	2a	
67	Neufchâteau (southwest of Nancy)	8 November	18 December 1870	2a	Vendôme
68	Chaumont	12 November	4 November 1872	2a	Blamont
69	St Loup (northeast of Vesoul)	2 November	23 May 1871	2	
70	Vesoul (north of Besançon)	18 November	1 November 1871	2a	
71	<i>(assigned to Rouen in December)</i>				
72	Sens (west of Troyes)	16 November	23 March 1871	2a	
73	Pithiviers (south of Versailles)	24 November	6 December 1870	2	Toury
74	<i>(assigned to Soissons in March)</i>				
75	<i>(assigned to Beauvais in December)</i>				
76	Laon (northwest of Reims)	24 November	1 December 1871	2	
77	Compiègne (west of Reims)	24 November	21 April 1871	2	
78	Amiens	1 December	19 June 1871	2	
79	Nemours (west of Troyes)	24 November	21 March 1871	2	
80	<i>(assigned to Orléans in December)</i>				
81	<i>(assigned to Châtillon in December)</i>				
82	Gray (northeast of Dijon)	18 November	4 January 1871	3	St Dié
83	<i>(assigned to Xertigny in February)</i>				
84	Blainville (southeast of Nancy)	28 November	1 November 1871	3	

December 1870 Fieldpost Orders #83 through #96

Relais	Location	Opened	Closed	Pmk Type	Re-used Later at
5	Longuyon (northwest of Thionville)	21 December	16 August 1871	1	
16	Nuits-Armançon (northwest of Dijon)	30 December	24 March 1871	1	
29	Creil (north of Paris)	19 December	10 June 1871	2	FP #101
52	Pontoise (northwest of Paris)	26 November	8 March 1871	2	Bar-le-Duc
63	Esbly (east of Paris)	28 December	24 March 1871	1	
71	Rouen	10 December	27 July 1871	2	
73	Toury (north of Orléans)	7 December	19 March 1871	2	
75	Beauvais (east of Rouen)	26 December	21 April 1871	2	
80	Orléans	7 December	21 March 1871	2	
81	Châtillon (northwest of Dijon)	10 December	30 March 1871	2	
92	<i>(assigned to Châlons-s-Marne in June)</i>				
93	Beaugency (southwest of Orléans)	21 December	24 January 1871	3	Le Mans
94	Blois (northeast of Tours)	21 December	12 March 1871	3	

January 1871 Fieldpost Orders #101 through #109

Relais	Location	Opened	Closed	Pmk Type	Re-used Later at
32	Beaumont-Oise (north of Paris)	13 January	8 March 1871	2	
64	Brie-Comte-Robert (SE of Paris)	10 January	10 March 1871	1	La Ferte
67	Vendôme (north of Tours)	7 January	10 March 1871	2	Bar-s-Aube

January 1871 Fieldpost Orders #101 through #109 (continued)

Relais	Location	Opened	Closed	Pmk Type	Re-used Later at
85	St Quentin (east of Amiens)	28 January	28 April 1871	3	
86	(not reported in Feldpost Orders)				
87	La Fère (north of Soissons)	2 January	19 June 1871	3	
88	Ham (north of Soissons)	24 January	27 July 1871	3	
89	Péronne (east of Amiens)	24 January	21 March 1871	3	
90	Charleville (west of Sedan)	9 January	28 April 1871	3	Troyes
91	Montargis (east of Orléans)	7 January	21 March 1871	3	
93	Le Mans	24 January	10 March 1871	3	
95	St Calais (east of Le Mans)	13 January	10 March 1871	3	St Dizier

Fieldpost Occupation Orders #110 to #204 (February 1871-July 1873)

Relais	Location	Opened	Closed	Pmk Type	Re-used Later at
4	Longwy (northwest of Thionville)	17 February	29 July 1873	2	
7	Pont à Mousson (north of Nancy)	28 March	31 July 1873	1	
9	Verdun	24 March	12 September 1873	1	
15	Montmédy (north of Verdun)	10 February	20 October 1871	1	
19	Rambervillers (southeast of Nancy)	17 Nov. 1872	31 July 1873	1	
24	St Denis-Seine (north of Paris)	15 March	19 September 1871	1	
25	Blesme (southeast of Châlons)	20 June	17 November 1872	2	Ligny
25	Ligny-Barrois (west of Nancy)	17 Nov. 1872	31 July 1873	2	
26	Belfort	22 April 1871	31 July 1873	2	
37	Commercy (west of Nancy)	22 July	31 July 1873	2	
39	Neufchâteau (southwest of Nancy)	17 Nov. 1872	31 July 1873	2	
45	Joinville-Marne (east of Troyes)	20 March	17 November 1872	2	
47	Épernay (south of Reims)	12 June	17 November 1872	2	
48	St Dizier (southeast of Châlons)	21 June	23 October 1872	2	St Nicolas
48	St Nicolas-Port (near Nancy)	17 Nov. 1872	31 July 1873	2	
51	Crépy-Valois	23 May	1 July 1871	2	
52	Bar-le-Duc (southeast of Châlons)	22 June	17 November 1872	2	Raon
52	Raon l'Étape (northeast of Épinal)	17 Nov. 1872	31 July 1873	2	
58	Sézanne (east of Paris)	30 September	2 May 1872	2	
64	La Ferté-s-Jouarre (east of Paris)	12 March	24 September 1871	1	Mourmelon
64	Mourmelon (southeast of Reims)	1 November	10 November 1872	1	Vouziers
64	Vouziers (northeast of Reims)	17 Nov. 1872	17 July 1873	1	
67	Bar-s-Aube (east of Troyes)	26 March	15 April 1871	2a	
68	Blamont (east of Nancy)	17 Nov. 1872	31 July 1873	2a	
74	Soissons (northeast of Paris)	26 March	28 April 1871	2	FP #105
82	St. Dié (northeast of Épinal)	1 November	31 July 1873	3	
83	Xertigny (south of Épinal)	17 February	2 March 1871	3	Lure
83	Lure (west of Belfort)	21 March	28 April 1871	3	Rougemont
83	Rougemont (west of Belfort)	5 May	25 May 1871	3	
90	Troyes (south of Châlons)	12 June	14 August 1871	3	
92	Châlons-s-Marne	6 June	17 November 1872	3	
92	Charmes (south of Nancy)	17 Nov. 1872	31 July 1873	3	
95	St Dizier (west of Nancy)	21 March	28 April 1871	3	
96	Neufchâteau (Vosges)	8 February	15 June 1871	3	Vitry
96	Vitry-Francois (southeast of Châlons)	22 July	17 November 1872	3	

Fieldpost Occupation Orders #110 to #204 (continued)

Relais	Location	Opened	Closed	Pmk Type	Re-used Later at
97	Tours	2 March	10 March 1871	3	
98	(not reported in Feldpost Orders)				
99	St. Mihiel (southwest of Metz)	12 December	31 July 1873	3	
100	Montmédy (southeast of Sedan)	19 December	31 July 1873	3	
101	Dôle (southeast of Dijon)	6 February	28 April 1871	3	Creil
101	Creil (north of Paris)	27 July	10 October 1871	3	Chantilly
101	Chantilly (south of Creil)	6 June	27 July 1871	3	
102	Dijon	10 February	22 April 1871	3	Lagny
102	Lagny (east of Paris)	6 June	24 September 1871	3	
103	Vaucouleurs (southwest of Nancy)	17 Nov. 1872	31 July 1873	3	
104	Charmes (south of Nancy)	2 June	15 June 1871	3	
105	Soissons (northeast of Paris)	2 June	24 October 1871	2	

Examples of Feldpost Relais Covers

Figure E-1 illustrates an example of the Prussian type 1 postmark.



Figure E-1. March 17, 1871 letter mailed at FP Relais Bureau #20

Prepaid for the ten centimes⁴ rate within occupied France, this letter from the German post office at Toul was postmarked at the nearby Feldpost Relais #20 on March 17.

Illustrated below is an example of the Prussian type 2 postmark. This letter was posted at the Feldpost Relais #41 at Versailles on November 30, and arrived on December 19.



Figure E-2. November 30, 1870 letter mailed at FP Relais Bureau #41

Figure E-3 shows an example of the Prussian type 2a postmark.

Figure E-3. March 4, 1871 letter postmarked at FP Relais Bureau #65



This letter was mailed on March 4 in occupied Mirecourt, which used a provisional postmark on outgoing mail. It was prepaid 20 centimes⁵ occupation postage to Paris and postmarked in transit at the Feldpost Relais #65 bureau at nearby Charmes. The letter was taxed for 20 centimes French postage on its March 10 arrival in Paris.

The North German type 3 postmark is illustrated in Figure E-4.



Figure E-4. February 12, 1871 letter mailed at FP Relais Bureau #93

Prepaid 20 centimes for the postage to unoccupied Nantes, this letter was posted at the Le Mans Feldpost Relais bureau #93 on February 12. The 20 centimes French franking⁶ was accepted by both the German and French post offices. It arrived on February 14.

Figure E-5 is an example of the Bavarian feldpost relais postmark. This letter was posted at the Bavarian relay bureau III at Nancy on November 6. It arrived in Munich on November 8.



Figure E-5.
November 6, 1870
letter mailed at the
Bavarian FP Relais
Bureau III

Figure E-6 shows a rare example of the Baden feldpost relais postmark. This letter from the relay headquarters (“Etappen Direction”) was posted on October 2 at the fieldpost relay bureau. Due perhaps to the French style of address, it was mistakenly sent to France. It then received an October 5 “Bade Strasbourg 5” entry postmark at Lyon, where the error was discovered. The letter was marked “PD” and sent to Bavaria via Baden, which marked it “B.S.P.” to indicate a free frank. It arrived on October 7.



Figure E-6. October
2, 1870 letter mailed at
the Baden FP Relais
Bureau I

Endnotes

¹ Grand État-Major Prussien, Section Historique, *La Guerre Franco-Allemande de 1870-71 Seconde Partie Volume III : Les Événements dans le Sud-Est de la France depuis le Milieu de Janvier jusqu'à la Cessation des Hostilités. Les Communications avec l'Arrière, l'Armistice. Marche Rétrograde et Occupation. Coup d'Œil Rétrospectif*, (J. Dumaine : Paris, 1882), page 1329.

¹ *Ibid.*, Seconde Partie Volume III, page 1377.

² Schild, Georges, “Les Relais Prussiens des Postes de Campagne (1870/73),” *Centex Catalog*, Fribourg, 1970, pages 49-61.

³ Mehrtens, Georg, “Some Remarks on the Public German Post Offices in France with Special Reference to Foreign Mails,” Paper presented to the International Postal History Fellowship, (Louvain, September 2015), pages 11-14.

⁴ A 10 centimes stamp of the 1870 “Alsace-Lorraine” Issue.

⁵ A 20 centimes type I stamp of the 1870 “Alsace-Lorraine” Issue.

⁶ A 20 centimes type I, report 1, position 13 stamp of the 1870 “Bordeaux” Issue.

Appendix F

Naval Mail

Introduction

The French and German navies did not play a significant role at sea during the war. The German navy retreated behind the Wilhelmshaven port defenses for the duration of the war, and took part in no significant offensive actions. The French navy did maintain a brief blockade of the Baltic and North Sea coasts at the start of the war, but its major contribution to the war was the manpower that it sent to the French field armies. No fieldpost system was provided to either navy, but some mail is known from and to the French navy at sea. That mail is described and illustrated in this appendix.

Upon the outbreak of the war, the French high command planned for a blockade of the German coasts and an amphibious landing on the German Baltic coast. Figure F-1¹ shows the area of operations off the German Baltic and North Sea coasts.



Figure F-1. Map of the German coastline

The Formation of the French Squadrons

The French navy immediately began to arm squadrons of ships to operate in the Baltic and North Seas. At the same time, they began to assemble the marine troops necessary for the amphibious landing on the Baltic coast. On July 24, only five days after the declaration of war, the Baltic Squadron left Cherbourg under the command of Vice Admiral Bouët-Willaumez. The fleet of transports with troops for the amphibious landing would follow as soon as they were ready. Bouët left with 15 ships:²

Armored frigate *Surveillante* (Bouët flagship)

Armored frigates *Gauloise* (Rear Admiral Dieudonné), *Flandre*, *Guyenne* and *Océan*

Armored corvettes *Thétis* and *Jeanne d'Arc* (the *Reine-Blanche* and the *Armide* joined later)

Armored monitor *Rochambeau*

Corvette *Cassard* (the *Desaix* joined later)

Avisos *Bourayne*, *Forfait*, *Limier*, *Hirondelle*, *l'Hermitte* and *Prégent* (the *d'Estrées* joined later)

Bouët's squadron proceeded to the Sund (easternmost channel off of the Cattegat) where it detached the *Thétis* at Copenhagen, and then returned to the North Sea off of Wilhelmshaven to initiate the blockade of the Prussian fleet. Bouët then proceeded to the Baltic Sea with most of his ships, but left a division under Rear Admiral Dieudonné off of Wilhelmshaven. Dieudonné remained on blockade duty there until additional ships arrived in the North Sea.³

Meanwhile, the Mediterranean Squadron, under Vice Admiral Fourichon, was ordered to Brest, where it arrived on July 26.⁴ This squadron consisted of 14 ships and was ordered to maintain the blockade of the German North Sea coast. It left Brest on August 7 with the following ships:⁵

Armored frigate *Magnanime* (Fourichon flagship)
 Armored frigate *Héroïne* (with Rear Admiral Jauréguiberry)
 Armored frigate *Provence* (with Rear Admiral Devoulx)
 Armored frigates *Valerense*, *Invincible*, *Couronne* and *Revanche*
 Armored corvette *Atalante*
 Corvettes *Château-Renaud*, *Cosmao* and *Decrès*
 Avisos *Reine-Hortense*, *Renard* and *Dayot*

The Jauréguiberry division covered the mouth of the Weser River (Wilhelmshaven and Bremen), while the Devoulx division covered the mouth of the Elbe River (Hamburg).⁶ Upon Fourichon's August 11 arrival, the Dieudonné division left the North Sea to rejoin Bouët's squadron in the Baltic Sea.

Mail to and from the French Squadrons

The July 24 military free frank law (described in Chapter Two) applied to the crews of these two squadrons, as well as to sailors incorporated into the French armies. There were no fieldpost bureaus assigned to the naval squadrons, however, so the requirement for a military postmark on outgoing mail could not be satisfied on the ships. An August 2 clarification of the law permitted the free frank on outgoing mail so long as a ship marking was applied, and the letter was counter-signed by a designated officer. In practice, the officer signature was rarely applied to this mail.⁷

To satisfy the requirement for the ship marking, a series of existing "Service de la Flotte" markings were used. These all initially contained the imperial eagle in the center of the marking, but that was sometimes removed or replaced by a variety of anchor designs after the September 4 fall of the empire. Examples of the "Service de la Flotte" ship markings are illustrated below.



Imperial Eagle



Blank Center



Small Anchor

This free frank was not initially granted to crews on ships not actively engaged in the war, such as those at foreign stations. It was finally extended to all crews at sea on September 24.⁸

August postal instructions clarified the handling of mail to and from the fleet.⁹ Mail addressed to the North Sea Squadron was sent directly to Dunkerque, where it was given to the port admiral, who arranged for further transport by avisos or supply ships to the North Sea. Mail to the Baltic Squadron or to the ships *Reine Blanche* and *Le d'Estrées* (which were patrolling between Scotland and Skagerrak Bay) was also typically sent via the port admiral at Dunkerque, but could be alternatively be prepaid for the more expensive route via England.¹⁰ The latter mail was forwarded by British packet to Copenhagen for the Baltic Squadron or to Christianssand, Norway for the *Reine Blanche* and *Le d'Estrées*.¹¹ Mail from both squadrons was carried by supply ships or avisos to French ports and placed in the mails there. The patrolling ships *Reine Blanche* and *Le d'Estrées* could also forward their outgoing mails via Christianssand, but that mail was not eligible for a military free frank. Figure F-2 shows an example.



Figure F-2. Letter from the aviso *Le d'Estrées*, mailed at Christianssand on August 27, 1870

This letter was counter-signed “vu: l’officier délégué” on the reverse and marked “Service de la Flotte/Aviso Le d’Estrées” in accordance with the August 2 postal regulation, even though the free frank did not apply to this letter. It was postmarked in Christianssand on August 27, and carried by British ship to Hull, England on August 29. England rated the letter unpaid per the “GB 1^{re} 60^c” tray marking, and it was charged 10 décimes postage due at Bordeaux on August 31.¹²

Figure F-3 shows an example from the Baltic Squadron.

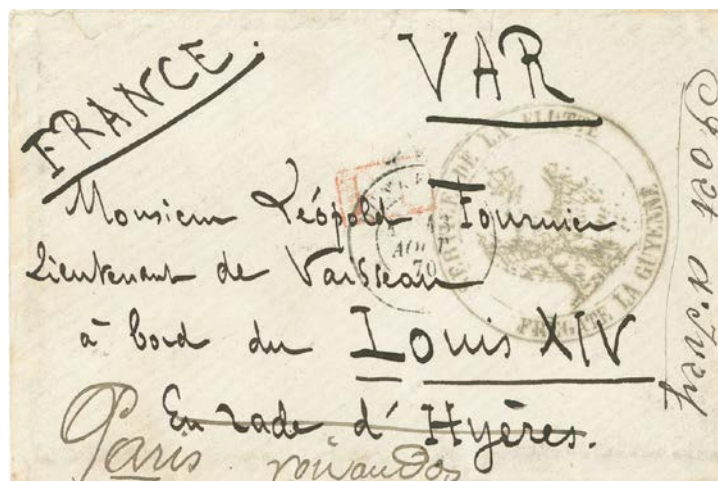


Figure F-3. August 2, 1870 letter from the frigate *La Guyenne*

Dated from Cattégat Bay (northeast of Denmark) on August 2, this letter received the “Service de la Flotte/Frégate La Guyenne” ship marking and was forwarded by supply ship or aviso to Dunkerque. It was postmarked there on August 13 and rated for a military free frank, per the red “P.P.” marking. At this time, the Baltic Squadron was at sea in the Cattégat, waiting for orders to enter the Baltic Sea. Those orders were received on August 2, so the squadron was in the western Baltic five days later.¹³

Figure F-4 shows an example from the North Sea Squadron. This letter was written aboard the armored frigate *Invincible* and postmarked at Cherbourg on August 8, shortly after the squadron left Brest. It received the “Service de la Flotte/Frégate Cuirassée L’Invincible” ship marking for the free frank, and was received in Paris on August 8.

Figure F-4. Letter from the frigate *Invincible*, mailed at Cherbourg on August 8, 1870



Mail to ships at foreign stations was allowed a free frank starting on September 24. Figure F-5 shows an extraordinary example (partially unfolded to show the markings on the back).



Figure F-5. Letter sent from Paris on January 12, 1871 to the *Belliqueuse* at New Caledonia

Addressed to Lucien Berryer on the armored corvette *Belliqueuse* at New Caledonia, this *Gazette des Absents* No. 26 news-letter was posted in besieged Paris on January 12 and prepaid the reduced 20 centimes military rate for balloon mail.¹⁴ It was carried by the balloon *Général Faidherbe*, which left on January 13 and landed at Ste.-Foy-la-Grande. The letter was postmarked at the landing point on January 14 and sent via

Marseille on January 16 to catch the sailing of the Ligne V steamship *Moeris* for Alexandria, Egypt. It was transferred in Egypt to the P&O steamship *Candia*, which left on February 4 and arrived in Sydney, Australia on March 18. That same day, the steamer *Havilah* left Sydney for New Caledonia with this letter. It was postmarked at Nouméa on March 26, but just missed Berryer.

Berryer had been transferred to the aviso *Bruat* and had received permission to return to France, so the letter was forwarded by naval transport to Toulon on June 10. Once there, it was discovered that Berryer and the *Bruat* were actually at Saigon, so the well-travelled letter left Marseille on June 17, again on the Ligne V steamship *Moeris* to Alexandria. It finally left Hong-Kong aboard the Ligne N steamer *Tigre* on July 15 (per the “Ligne N Paq. Fr. No 6” transit postmark) for Saigon, where it arrived on July 19. The 20 centimes franking paid for the entire six months’ journey. A six décimes due marking was scratched out in recognition of the military free frank.

Figure F-6 (unfolded to show the reverse) was also prepaid the 20 centimes reduced military rate in besieged Paris on October 20.¹⁵ It was carried by the balloon *Garibaldi*, which left on October 22 and landed in occupied territory east of Paris. This letter reached the Atlantic port of St Nazaire on November 7 and left from there aboard the Ligne B steamer *Floride* on November 16, as confirmed by the “Ligne B Paq. Fr. No. 1” postmark on the reverse. Since the *Floride* sailed for the Antilles and Mexico, this was likely a misdirection. The Ligne J serviced Montevideo from Bordeaux, and that would have been a more natural routing.



Figure F-6. Letter sent from Paris on October 20, 1870 to the *Curieux* at Montevideo, Uruguay

The Recall of the French Blockade Squadrons

The August 4-6 French defeats at the frontier changed the French high command’s strategic plans. Confronted by three German armies advancing rapidly into French territory, they called off the Baltic amphibious landing on August 7, and transferred the marine troops to Paris for eventual incorporation into the Armée de Châlons. Sailors not already committed to the active squadrons were called to Paris to man the outer forts, and many other crews were incorporated into the provincial armies.

Meanwhile, the Baltic and North Sea Squadrons had successfully blockaded the German coast, but bad weather was rolling in. This made re-supply and coaling extremely difficult, so the North Sea Squadron returned to France on September 13,¹⁶ and the Baltic Squadron moved into the North Sea on September 25. Four days after that, the Baltic Squadron arrived in Cherbourg.¹⁷

To continue the blockade, the two squadrons were re-organized on September 29. Rather than keep ships on station in the stormy seas, the squadrons were to alternate steaming up to the North Sea to watch that coastline, and the Baltic coast blockade was abandoned.¹⁸ Vice Admiral de Gueydon was given command of Fourichon's old North Sea Squadron at Dunkerque. His 12 ships left on October 1 for their first tour in the North Sea.¹⁹ Rear Admiral Penhoat was given command of the remains of Bouët's old Baltic Squadron, and his 11 ships left Dunkerque on October 10 to relieve de Gueydon off Wilhelmshaven.²⁰ This alternating schedule continued through November, when it was apparently abandoned. Admirals Penhoat and Jauréguiberry were called to commands in the French provincial armies, and eight ships from de Gueydon's squadron were transferred to the Mediterranean to form a new squadron under Vice-Admiral Jurien de la Gravière.²¹ The remainder of the two North Sea squadrons maintained a presence in the English Channel.

Figure F-7 illustrates a letter sent from an armored frigate in Admiral de Gueydon's squadron just before it left on its first voyage to the North Sea. To qualify for the military free frank, this letter received a "Service de la Flotte/Frégate Cuirassée L'Invincible" ship marking. It was received at the Dunkerque post office on September 24 and arrived in western France on October 1.

Figure F-7. Letter from the frigate *Invincible*, mailed at Dunkerque on September 24, 1870



Figure F-8 is from an armored corvette in Admiral Penhoat's North Sea Squadron. This letter received a "Service de la Flotte/Corvette Cuirassée La Reine Blanche" ship marking with the eagle removed, and was processed by the Lorient post office on November 8. It arrived in nearby Brest on the same day.



Figure F-8. Letter from the corvette *Reine Blanche*, mailed at Lorient on November 8, 1870

Figure F-9 shows a letter from a frigate in the English Channel Squadron.

Figure F-9. Letter from the frigate *Gauloise*, mailed at Dunkerque on January 27, 1871



This letter received a faint “Service de la Flotte/Frégate La Gauloise” ship marking to justify a military free frank. This marking shows the replacement of the imperial eagle in the center with a large anchor design. Postmarked at Dunkerque on January 27, the letter was addressed to a naval officer serving in the 2^e Armée de la Loire at Laval.

Figure F-10 shows a letter from the Mediterranean Squadron.



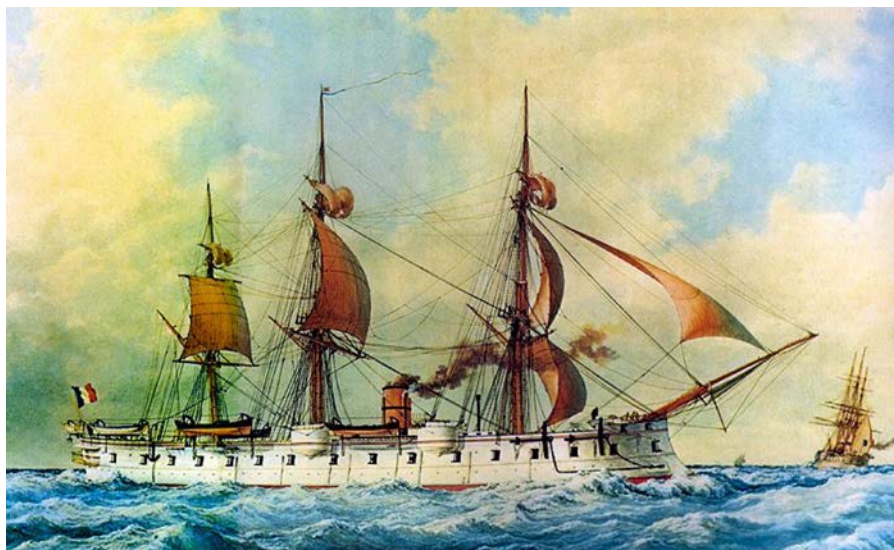
Figure F-10. Letter from the *Provence*, mailed at Toulon on December 14, 1870

Dated December 14 at Toulon, this letter from the son of Admiral Julien de la Gravière was marked “Service de la Flotte/Frégate La Provence” for a military free frank. The ship marking, unusually applied in blue ink, shows the removal of the imperial eagle from the center. The *Provence* was the flagship of the Mediterranean Squadron, and had previously served with Fourichon’s North Sea Squadron. This letter was postmarked at Toulon on December 14, and was received in eastern France a day later.

An April 3, 1871 post office order revoked the naval free frank.²²

Endnotes

- ¹ The map is reproduced from Rousset, Léonce, *Histoire Générale de la Guerre Franco-Allemande (1870-1871)*, Volume 2, (Librairie Illustrée: Paris, 1911), page 448.
- ² Chevalier, Édouard, *La Marine Française et la Marine Allemande pendant la Guerre de 1870-1871*, (Henri Plon: Paris, 1873), page 32.
- ³ Pont-Jest, René de, *Les Escadres Françaises dans la Mer du Nord et la Baltique*, (Librairie Hachette: Paris, 1871), page 13.
- ⁴ Chevalier, *Op. Cit.*, page 36.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, page 37.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, page 37.
- ⁷ Parlange, Michel, “La Marine Française dans la Guerre de 1870/71,” *Centex Catalog* (Fribourg 1970), pages 76-77.
- ⁸ Bulletin Mensuel des Postes, No. 28, October 1870, page 52.
- ⁹ Per an August 22, 1870 Ordre de Service from the Direction Générale des Postes.
- ¹⁰ The prepaid rate was 60 centimes per 10 grams.
- ¹¹ Parlange, *Op. Cit.*, page 78.
- ¹² Per the September 24, 1856 Franco-British Treaty, unpaid mail to France was exchanged at a bulk rate of 1 franc 60 centimes per 30 grams (40 centimes per 7.5-gram letter), as evidenced by the “GB 1^{re} 60^c” debit marking. France collected 10 décimes per 7.5 grams from the recipient, which included the 40 centimes due to England.
- ¹³ Julien, Félix, *L’Amiral Bouët-Willamez et l’Expédition dans la Baltique*, (Henri Plon: Paris, 1872), page 100.
- ¹⁴ The non-military rate to New Caledonia was 70 centimes per 7.5 grams.
- ¹⁵ The non-military rate to Uruguay was 80 centimes per 7.5 grams.
- ¹⁶ Chevalier, *Op. Cit.*, page 91.
- ¹⁷ Pont-Jest, *Op. Cit.*, page 51.
- ¹⁸ Rousset, *Op. Cit.*, Volume 2, page 450.
- ¹⁹ Mordal, Jacques, “La Marine dans la Guerre de 1870,” *Icare* No. 83, (Hiver 1977-78), page 29.
- ²⁰ Pont-Jest, *Op. Cit.*, page 52.
- ²¹ Chevalier, *Op. Cit.*, page 93.
- ²² Sinais, Bertrand, “Le Courier de la Marine Pendant la Guerre de 1870-1871,” *Bulletin de l’Association Internationale d’Histoire Postale de la Guerre de 1870-1871*, No. 15/16, 1998, page 27.



Armored frigate *Océan*

Appendix G

Prisoner-of-War and Red Cross Mail

Introduction

Communications with wounded soldiers and prisoners-of-war are important elements of the postal history of the Franco-German War. No fieldpost system was provided for the prisoners or the Red Cross societies that assisted them, but a free frank was generally extended to those types of mail. That mail is described and illustrated in this appendix.

Prisoner-of-War Mail

The August 4-6 battles on the French frontier generated the first significant numbers of wounded soldiers and prisoners. Within three months, the crushing French defeats at Sedan and Metz added many more wounded and prisoners. It is estimated that a total of 383,000 French soldiers were held in German prisons, while only 4,000 German soldiers were imprisoned in France.¹

The earliest prisoner-of-war letters came after the French defeats at Wissembourg and Wörth. During the latter action, French cuirassier cavalry regiments made several dramatic but unsuccessful charges on August 6 to stem the German advance, as shown in Detaille's well-known painting of the battle.



“La Charge des Cuirassiers à Wörth” by Édouard Detaille (1874)

Figure G-1 shows a letter from the captured commander of the French 4th Regiment of Cuirassiers.



Figure G-1. August 11, 1870 letter from the captured Colonel of the 4^e Cuirassiers

This letter was written by Colonel Auguste Billet,² who was captured during the cavalry charge at Wörth. He wrote this letter on August 11 from prison at Custrin, Prussia, where it received a Custrin censor marking,³ and was postmarked on August 13. Routed via Belgium per the sender's endorsement, it entered northern France via Erquelines and reached its destination on August 17. No postage was collected by either Germany or France.

The French post office was the first to act formally with respect to prisoners' mail. On August 6, it decreed that letters to German prisoners in France would be forwarded free of any postal charges, but had to be sent first to the War Ministry in Paris for censoring.⁴ The next day, the North German Confederation post office extended a free frank on mail to or from French prisoners, so long as the inscription "Portofrei laut Verfügung vom 7 August 1870" (free frank according to the law of August 7, 1870) was marked on the letter.⁵ Bavaria followed with its own prisoners' free frank decree on August 14.⁶

Perhaps because of the large numbers of French prisoners taken at Sedan on September 2, the North German Confederation post office reversed its policy on the free frank for letters to French prisoners in Germany. On September 8, the French post office reported that the Germans had eliminated all prisoner free franks, so the French correspondingly stopped the free frank on mail to German prisoners in France.⁷ The French report was corrected on October 10 to observe that the German free frank had been eliminated on mail to French prisoners in Germany, but that mail from French prisoners in Germany was still being delivered to French exchange offices free of any German postal charges.⁸ Figure G-2 illustrates the Prussian postal charge on a letter to a French prisoner.



Figure G-2. Letter sent from Paris on October 19, 1870 to a prisoner in Prussia

Endorsed "franc de port en vertu de l'ordonnance du 7 Août Feld Post" per regulations, this unfranked letter was posted in besieged Paris on October 19. It was carried out of Paris on the balloon *Garibaldi*, which left on October 22 and landed in occupied territory east of Paris. The *Garibaldi's* mail was smuggled south to Nogent on October 29, so this letter arrived in Stettin, Prussia on November 4. The sender tried to avoid German postal charges by the "franc de port" endorsement, but the Germans had discontinued the free frank on letters to French prisoners, so they charged 2½ groschen (about 30 centimes) due for the postage over Prussian territory.

Figure G-3 is a typical example of mail from a French prisoner in Germany. It shows one of many different types of "portofrei" handstamps and camp cachets. A full listing of these camp markings is beyond the scope of this book, but a partial listing can be found in Bauër's 1938 book.



Figure G-3. Letter sent from a prisoner at Wesel, Prussia on December 27, 1870

This unfranked letter from Wesel prison was rated free of German postal charges per the “Portofr.lt.Verfig.7/8.70” handstamp, and postmarked at Wesel on December 27. It was also struck with the cachet of the commander at Wesel prison as a censorship mark. It shows no arrival mark in German-occupied Reims.

With respect to German prisoners in France, the French postal delegate also reported on October 10 that, “The Administration sends letters, which are delivered from the War Ministry, from German prisoners without French postal charges. Letters addressed to German prisoners are not entitled to any reduction in postal charges on French territory.”⁹

Letters to or from the German prisoners in France are very rare. Figure G-4 shows an example.



Figure G-4. Letter posted in Bordeaux on December 26, 1870 from a German prisoner at Mont-Louis

Endorsed “Prisonnier de la guerre,” this letter originated at the Mont-Louis prison camp near Perpignan. The sender was from the German X Corps’ 56th Regiment, and had been captured on November 28 during the battle of Beaune-la-Rolande. In accordance with regulations, the letter was forwarded under cover from the camp to the War Ministry at Bordeaux, where it was examined. It was then passed to the postal service, which applied the red cursive “Ministère des Finances Directeur Général des Postes” marking for a postal free frank, and posted it at the Bordeaux post office on December 26. It arrived in Cassel on January 12. The camp at Mont-Louis held only 336 German prisoners.¹⁰

After September 8, French postage was required to be prepaid on letters to German prisoners in France. Figure G-5 shows an example of mail to a German prisoner.



Figure G-5. Letter sent from Berlin on September 28, 1870 to a German prisoner at Dax

Prepaid 8.5 groschen¹¹ in Berlin on September 28, this registered letter was addressed to a captured Prussian lieutenant at Dax. It entered France through Belgium to Douai on September 30, and reached Dax on October 4. The prisoner was not there, so the letter was successively forwarded to Moulins-sur-Allier, Clermont-Ferrand, Tours and Vierzon. It found the addressee at Vierzon on October 10, but a French note on the front explains that, “although registered, this letter contains nothing of value.”

The French Rates on Mail to Prisoners in Germany

Postal connections between France and Prussia were governed by a May 21, 1858 Treaty, which designated two exchange points.¹² The first was on the northeast frontier between Forbach and Saarbrücken, while the second was via Liege, Belgium between the French Erquelines-Paris travelling exchange office and the Prussian Cologne-Verviers travelling exchange office No. 10. The Cologne-Verviers travelling bureau also connected with French offices at Douai, Givet, Lille, Valenciennes and Quiévrain-Paris. A July 18, 1870 French postal order directed that all mail for the North German Confederation (and to countries beyond Prussia, such as Russia) was to be forwarded via Belgium.¹³

The 1858 treaty also set three different rates on letters to Prussia, based on distances in Prussia. Rates to other German states were set by bi-lateral treaties with France, as shown below.¹⁴

France-Prussia rates of July 1, 1858:

- Frontier (up to 30 kilometers via Trier): 25 centimes per 10 grams
- 1st Rayon (Aachen, Cassel, Coblenz, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, Mainz, Saarbrücken, Trier and Wiesbaden): 40 centimes per 10 grams
- 2nd Rayon (rest of Prussia): 50 centimes per 10 grams

France-Hesse rate of April 1, 1862: 40 centimes per 10 grams

France-Baden rates of January 1, 1857 (different weight progressions in France and Baden):

- Frontier (less than 30 kilometers): 10 centimes per 7.5 grams plus 10 centimes per 15 grams = 20 centimes
- Rest of Baden: 20 centimes per 7.5 grams plus 10 centimes per 15 grams = 30 centimes

France-Bavaria rates of July 1, 1858:

- Frontier (less than 30 kilometers): 20 centimes per 10 grams
- Rest of Bavaria: 40 centimes per 10 grams

France-Württemberg rates of January 1, 1857 (different weight progressions in France and Württemberg):

- 1st Rayon: 20 centimes per 7.5 grams plus 10 centimes per 15 grams = 30 centimes
- 2nd Rayon: 20 centimes per 7.5 grams plus 20 centimes per 15 grams = 40 centimes
- 3rd Rayon: 20 centimes per 7.5 grams plus 30 centimes per 15 grams = 50 centimes

Figure G-6 shows a letter with the correct full prepayment to Prussia.



Figure G-6. Letter sent from Paris on December 30, 1870 to a prisoner in Aachen, Prussia

This letter to a 6th Corps officer captured at Metz was prepaid 40 centimes¹⁵ in Paris on December 30. This was the correct rate to Aachen, Prussia,¹⁶ so the letter was rated fully-paid (per the small red “P.D”) in Paris. It was carried out of Paris on the balloon *Armée de la Loire*, which left on December 31 and landed near Le Mans. The letter bears no Aachen arrival marks.

Determining the correct prepayment on mail to French prisoners in Germany was further complicated by the French free frank for the portion of the postage over French territory. Consequently, per the September 1870 circular, letters prepaid with only foreign postage are known. Thus, the Prussian rates, per ten grams, were 15 centimes for the 1st Rayon and 30 centimes for the rest of Prussia.¹⁷



Figure G-7. Letter sent from Landerneau on January 22, 1871 to a prisoner in Hesse

The letter in Figure G-7 was addressed to an officer in the 31^e Régiment de Ligne (6th Corps) who was captured at Metz. It was prepaid 30 centimes¹⁸ at the Landerneau train station on January 22 and endorsed “Par la Belgique”. The soldier was imprisoned at Giessen, Hesse so full prepayment should have been 40 centimes. In recognition of the free frank over French territory, however, the post office accepted the 30 centimes as full prepayment, as evidenced by the large “P.D.” mark. The letter was received on February 10 at Giessen, which opened it for censoring and re-sealed it with a strip of paper tied to the letter by the Giessen garrison commander cachet. No German postage due was assessed. Figure G-8 shows a partially paid letter where German postage due was assessed.

Figure G-8. Letter sent from Paris on December 10, 1870 to a prisoner at Coblenz



Prepaid 20 centimes in besieged Paris on December 10, this letter to a 6th Corps soldier captured at Metz was endorsed “Frei-laut ordre vom 7 august 1870” in an attempt to qualify for a German free frank. The Paris rue St. Dominique post office initially rated it insufficiently paid to Coblenz per the red “Affr. Insuff. P. 20” mark, but that was corrected at the central post office by the application of the rare “F.S.P” (France Service Public) marking. The letter was carried out of Paris on the balloon *Général Renault*, which left on December 11 and landed in occupied territory near Rouen. After a sea detour around the German occupation area, the mail was processed through Cherbourg on December 16. Upon its arrival at Coblenz, it was rated 2½ groschen due for Prussian postage, but did not receive a Coblenz postmark.

To simplify the cost of sending mail to prisoners, the French post office issued a service order on January 28. They reported that mail to prisoners was being routed via Switzerland, which granted a free frank over Swiss territory for such mail. Accordingly, only the prepayment of postage to Germany from Switzerland was required. This meant that full prepayment was 15 centimes per 15 grams, as shown in Figure G-9.



Figure G-9. Letter sent from Lyon on February 6, 1871 to a prisoner at Dresden

This letter was prepaid 15 centimes¹⁹ at Lyon on February 6 and marked fully-paid per the “P.D.” The Swiss “FRANCO” postmark also confirmed full payment. It was received at Dresden on February 14.

Mail from French Soldiers Interned in Belgium

A large number of French soldiers escaped capture at Sedan on September 1 by crossing over the nearby frontier with Belgium. Once in Belgium, they were disarmed and interned for the duration of the war. This situation was very similar to the French 1^e Armée, which crossed into Switzerland to evade capture by the German Sud Army in February 1871, as described in Chapter Nine.

A September 25 Belgian postal order stipulated that letters from internees were subject to prepayment of only ten centimes for Belgian postage, instead of the normal 30 centimes rate to France.²⁰ Figure G-10 shows a letter sent just before the application of this special ten centimes rate. This letter from a 5th Corps soldier was prepaid 30 centimes²¹ at Laeken on September 26. It arrived in Tours on October 1.



Figure G-10. September 26, 1870 letter from Laeken, Belgium to Tours

Figure G-11 shows an example of the special ten centimes rate.



Figure G-11. January 27, 1871 letter from Liège, Belgium to Montmarault

Prepaid the special ten centimes rate,²² this letter was posted by a former 1st Corps soldier in Liège, Belgium on January 27. As indicated by the January 30 Montcenis-Mâcon transit postmark, it was routed via Italy to central France, where it arrived on February 1.

Red Cross Mail

The Comité Internationale de Secours aux Blessés, future Comité Internationale de la Croix-Rouge (CICR), was formed in 1863 by Henri Dunant and Gustave Moynier to provide assistance and protection for soldiers wounded in battle. Shortly after war broke out between France and Germany, the Geneva-based CICR opened a special “Agence Internationale de Secours aux Militaires Blessés” at Bâle (Basel), which was on the border of both France and Germany.²³

On August 5, the Swiss Federal Postal Decree No. 105 extended a postal free frank to international relief societies set up in Switzerland for the benefit of soldiers in the Franco-Prussian War. The phrase “Society for the Aid to War Wounded” (or something similar) was required for the free frank, or the society’s special adhesive labels were to be applied, if available. Figure G-12 shows an early example from Geneva.



Figure G-12. August 15, 1870 letter from Geneva with a Red Cross label

Endorsed “Officiel G. Moynier,” this letter was postmarked in Geneva on August 15 and sent to Chateau d’Oex, Switzerland.²⁴ The die-cut oval “Comité International Genève” adhesive label was applied for a free frank and was inadvertently cancelled by the Geneva postmark. The letter arrived on August 16.

Most of the actual relief work was carried out by the Bâle office, which was slow to obtain free frank labels of its own. Figure G-13 (unfolded to show the reverse) shows the provisional use of a Genève label at Bâle. Written by a wounded soldier near Hagenau, this letter was entrusted to Red Cross representatives from the Bâle office. Although the letter was franked with sufficient postage²⁵ from Switzerland to Versailles, the Red Cross applied a modified oval Genève label on the reverse – the word Genève was crossed out in ink, and “Agence de Bâle” was written below the label. The letter was posted at Basel on August 10 and entered France through St. Louis, the French suburb of Basel. It was received in Versailles on August 11.

The letter is from Lieutenant Paul de Villers, a cavalry lieutenant in the 9th Cuirassiers Regiment of the 1st Corps. Along with the 4th Cuirassiers Regiment (see Figure G-1), his regiment was ordered to charge the advancing enemy at Wörth on August 6, and his letter described the result. “I am only lightly wounded...well cared for in a village near Hagenau...my poor Regiment was decimated... I write you by way of the ambulances.” He was wounded in the arm and captured on the battlefield. Shortly after that, he was taken to a temporary hospital at nearby Walburg. The decimated 9th Cuirassiers Regiment was sent to Versailles for re-fitting, and served later in the war with the Armée de la Loire.



Figure G-13. August 10, 1870 letter from Bâle with a modified Geneva Red Cross label

Shortly after this, the Bâle Agency received oval labels, with “Agence Internationale Bâle” around a red cross. The first labels were not cut into ovals. Only four letters with these uncut square labels are known, all used in the August 13-16 timeframe. Figure G-14 shows the earliest known of these.



Figure G-14. August 13, 1870 letter from Basel with an uncut Bâle Red Cross label

This letter was sent from Basel on August 13 to another Swiss aid society at Neuchâtel, Switzerland. The uncut Bâle label entitled the letter to a free frank.

The Bâle Agency also used an adhesive advertising label on some of the letters that it handled. Figure G-15 (unfolded to show the label on the reverse) shows one of the nine examples known.

Figure G-15. August 30, 1870 letter from Bischwiller with a special Bâle label



Datelined at Bischwiller (near the Wörth battlefield) on August 30, this letter from a 7th Corps soldier who was wounded and captured during the August 6 battle was entrusted to representatives of the Agence de Bâle. They applied their “L’Agence internationale de secours aux militaires blessés à Bâle se charge de faire parvenir à leurs adresses les réponses”²⁶ label on the reverse to inform the recipients that replies to the wounded soldiers could be sent via the Bâle Agency. The agency then applied its red “Agence Internationale Bâle” cachet for a free frank, and transmitted the letter to the French international aid society at nearby St. Louis. The French agency applied its blue “Société Française de Secours aux Blessés des Armées de Terre et de Mer/Comité Auxiliaire de St. Louis” cachet, and posted the letter with a free frank at St. Louis on September 4. It arrived in eastern France two days later. The arrival postmark was atypically struck on the label, tying it to the letter.

The red “Agence Internationale Bâle” cachet effectively replaced the oval Bâle label in September-October 1870, although some labels are known used after that date.

In November, the Bâle Agency’s mandate was formally expanded to include the facilitation of correspondence to and from prisoners-of-war, whether they were wounded or not. In addition, the agency handled inquiries about prisoners from families and French aid agencies. Figure G-16 shows an example with a die-cut oval Bâle label.

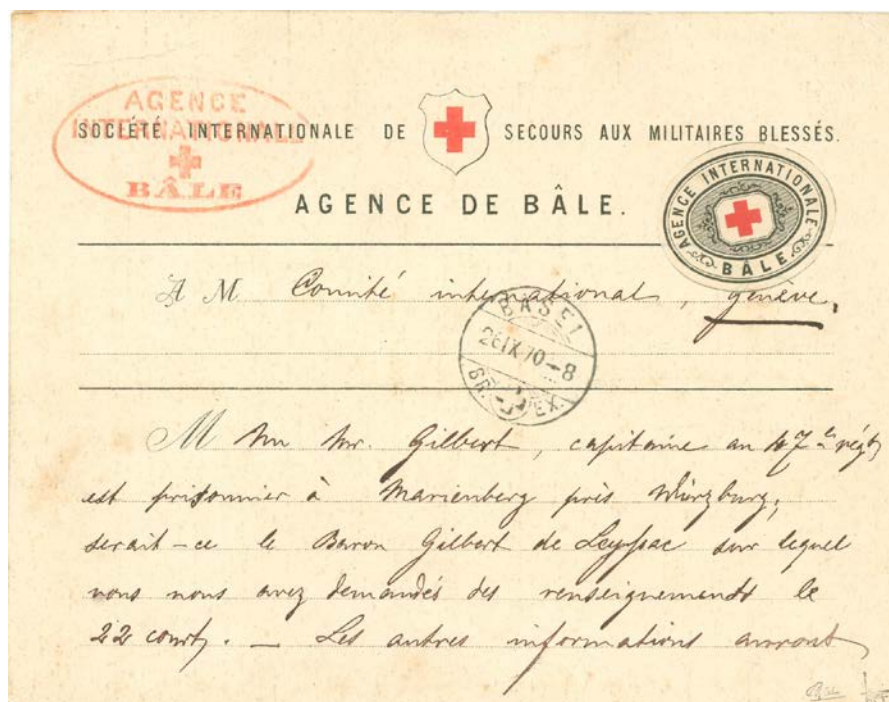


Figure G-16. September 26, 1870 card from Basel with an oval Bâle Red Cross label

This special Bâle Agency postcard was postmarked in Basel on September 26. The postcard inscription, red “Agence Internationale Bâle” cachet and oval Bâle label all qualified to give the card a free frank to Geneva. This card is an inquiry about the identity of a 7th Corps officer captured at Sedan and imprisoned at Marienburg.

As a part of their expanded mandate to help prisoners, the Swiss societies prepared preprinted response letters. Upon a request from a family, the Bâle Agency would send a response letter to a prisoner so that he could communicate with his family. Figure G-17 shows an example.

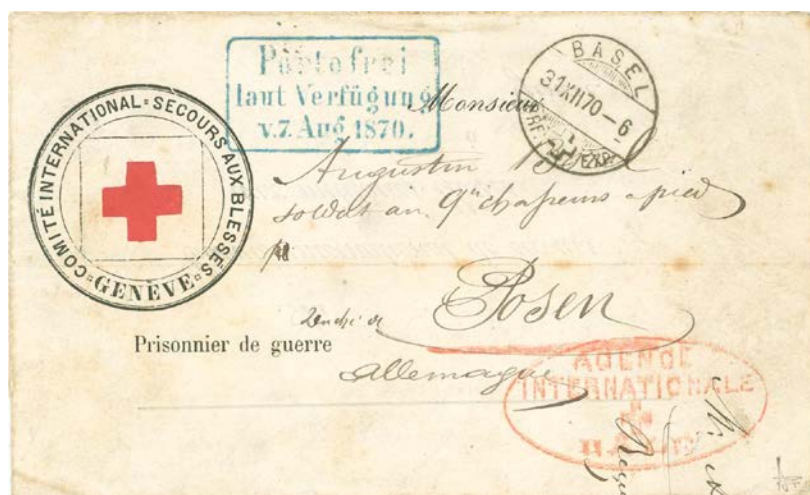


Figure G-17. December 31, 1870 response-letter from Basel to a prisoner-of-war

This response letter from the Geneva Red Cross Society was transmitted through Basel on December 31 to a 6th Corps soldier imprisoned at Posen, Prussia. The Bâle Agency added its red cachet and a square blue “Portofrei laut Verfügung v. 7. Aug. 1870” cachet to obtain a German free frank. The prisoner

responded on the letter-form on February 4, and returned it to the Bâle Agency. It was docketed as received by the family on February 15.

Auxiliary Swiss aid agencies were also established at Lausanne and Vevey. They prepared special adhesive labels for their correspondence. All of the known Swiss labels are illustrated below.



Genève



Basel



Vevey



Lausanne



Lausanne (PAIX)



Lausanne (Strasbourg)

As described above, the Basel label is known as an uncut square and as a die-cut oval.

Figure G-18 shows one of the six known postally-used Vevey labels.



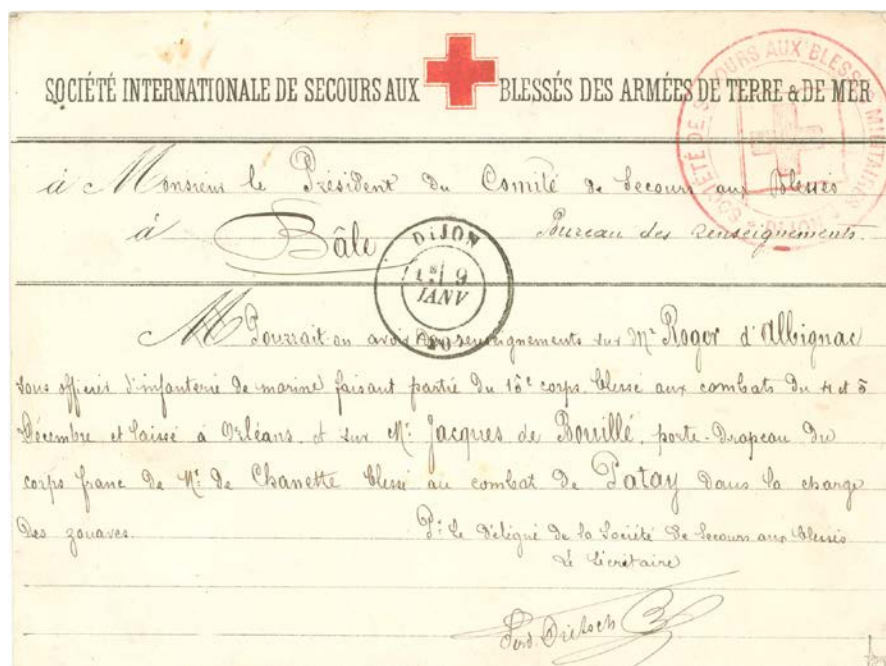
Figure G-18. October 3, 1870 letter from Vevey with a Red Cross label

This letter was postmarked in Vevey on October 3 and addressed to Lausanne, Switzerland. The “Comité de Secours aux Blessés Vevey” label was applied for a free frank.

French aid committees were also formed to aid the wounded and the prisoners. They created a number of red society cachets that were used on correspondence with the Bâle Agency and other French committees.

Figure G-19 shows a Dijon Red Cross card used to inquire about two French soldiers who were wounded during the December 2-5 battles around Orléans.

Figure G-19. January 9, 1871 card from Dijon to the Bâle Agency



This special Red Cross card was marked with the large format “Société de Secours aux Blessés Militaires Dijon” cachet and posted in Dijon on January 9. It was directed to the Bâle Agency, where it arrived on January 12. The card was sent free of any postal charges.

Figure G-20 is an inquiry from Lyon about a 3rd Corps soldier captured at Metz.

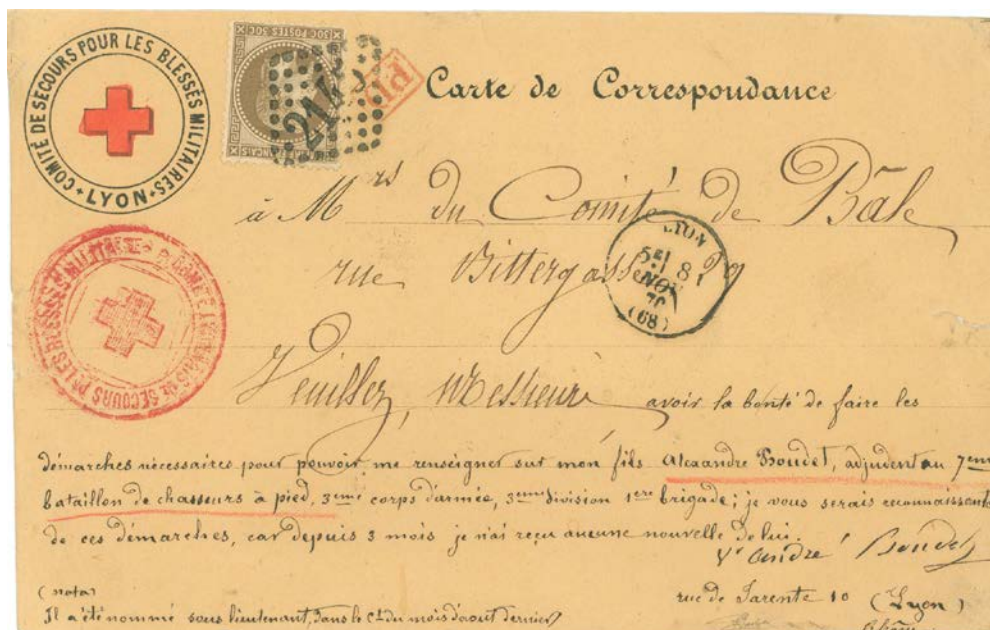


Figure G-20. November 8, 1870 postcard from Lyon to Bâle

Prepaid 30 centimes,²⁷ this Red Cross card received the small format “Comité Lyonnais de Secours Pr les Blessés Militaires” cachet and was postmarked in Lyon on November 8. It was received in Bâle on November 10.

Endnotes

¹ Carnevale-Mauzan, Marino, “Les Prisonniers de Guerre Allemands en France pendant le Conflit 1870-1871,” *Association Internationale d'Histoire Postale de la Guerre de 1870-1871*, No. 12, (December 1997), pages 9-11.

² Colonel Billet returned from captivity in 1871, but was killed on April 4, 1871 while suppressing a revolt at Limoges.

³ “Koeniglich Preussisch Commandantur von Custrin” (Commander at Custrin).

⁴ Chauvet Michèle and Brun, Jean-François, *Introduction à l'Histoire Postale de 1848 à 1878*, (Brun et Fils: Paris, 2007), page 721.

⁵ Per the August 6 Feldpost Order No. 24. Gutekunst, Edmond, “Prisonniers Français en Allemagne,” S.P.A.L. Série Études XVI/VI sur *l'Occupation et Annexion de l'Alsace-Lorraine par l'Allemagne 1870-1872*, (Association des Spécialistes en Marques Postales d'Alsace-Lorraine: 1977), page 11.

⁶ Per an endorsement on a January 4 prisoner's letter in the author's collection from Ansbach, Bavaria which reads, “Franc Port par Décision du ministre Royal du Commerce du 14 Août 1870.”

⁷ Chauvet and Brun, *Op. Cit.*, page 721.

⁸ *Ibid.*, page 721.

⁹ *Ibid.*, page 721.

¹⁰ Carnevale-Mauzan, *Op. Cit.*, page 11.

¹¹ North German Confederation 1869 Issue ½ groschen and four 2 groschens stamps paying the 1858 rate of 4.5 groschens from the 2nd Rayon plus 4 groschens registration.

¹² The May 21, 1858 Treaty became effective on July 1.

¹³ Alexandre, Jean-Pierre, “L'Échange des Correspondances entre la France et la Prusse durant la Guerre de 1870,” *Association Internationale d'Histoire Postale de la Guerre de 1870-1871*, Number 5, (March 1996), page 5.

¹⁴ Bourgouin, Jean, “Les Tarifs Français,” (www.jean-bourgouin.pagesperso-orange.fr/index.htm).

¹⁵ 40 centimes stamp of the 1870 “Siège de Paris” Issue.

¹⁶ Known as Aix-la-Chapelle in French, as seen in the address on the letter.

¹⁷ French Tarif Général No. 1185, section 89, page 19.

¹⁸ Ten centimes type II and 20 centimes type II stamps of the 1863 “Empire Lauré” Issue.

¹⁹ Five centimes report 2, position 1 and ten centimes report 2 of the 1870 “Bordeaux” Issue.

²⁰ Chauvet and Brun, *Op. Cit.*, page 722.

²¹ 30 centimes buff stamp of the Belgian 1870 Issue.

²² Ten centimes green stamp of the Belgian 1869 Issue.

²³ The Basel agency was opened on July 22. Thomas, Max-Marc, *La Croix-Rouge et la Poste 1864-1871*, Étude No. 70, (Monde des Philatélistes: Paris, 1965), page 7.

²⁴ The authenticity of this letter was challenged by Raymond Pittier in “Vignettes de Franchise du CICR à Genève 1870-1884,” *Association Internationale d'Histoire Postale de la Guerre de 1870-1871*, No. 13, (Mars 1998), pages 29-31. He opined that Geneva labels were not available in mid-August 1870, but did not know of the existence of Figure G-13, which shows an earlier genuine use of the label. In addition, he incorrectly believed that Gustave Moynier did not endorse his letters until well after the war, but most known letters with Geneva labels show an “Officiel G.M.” endorsement, contradicting that opinion.

²⁵ A 30 centimes ultramarine stamp of the Swiss 1867 Issue.

²⁶ “The international aid agency for wounded soldiers at Bâle will undertake to forward responses to their addresses.”

²⁷ 30 centimes stamp of the 1863 “Empire Lauré” Issue. 30 centimes was the rate to Switzerland from France.



English Red Cross Ambulance in 1870

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