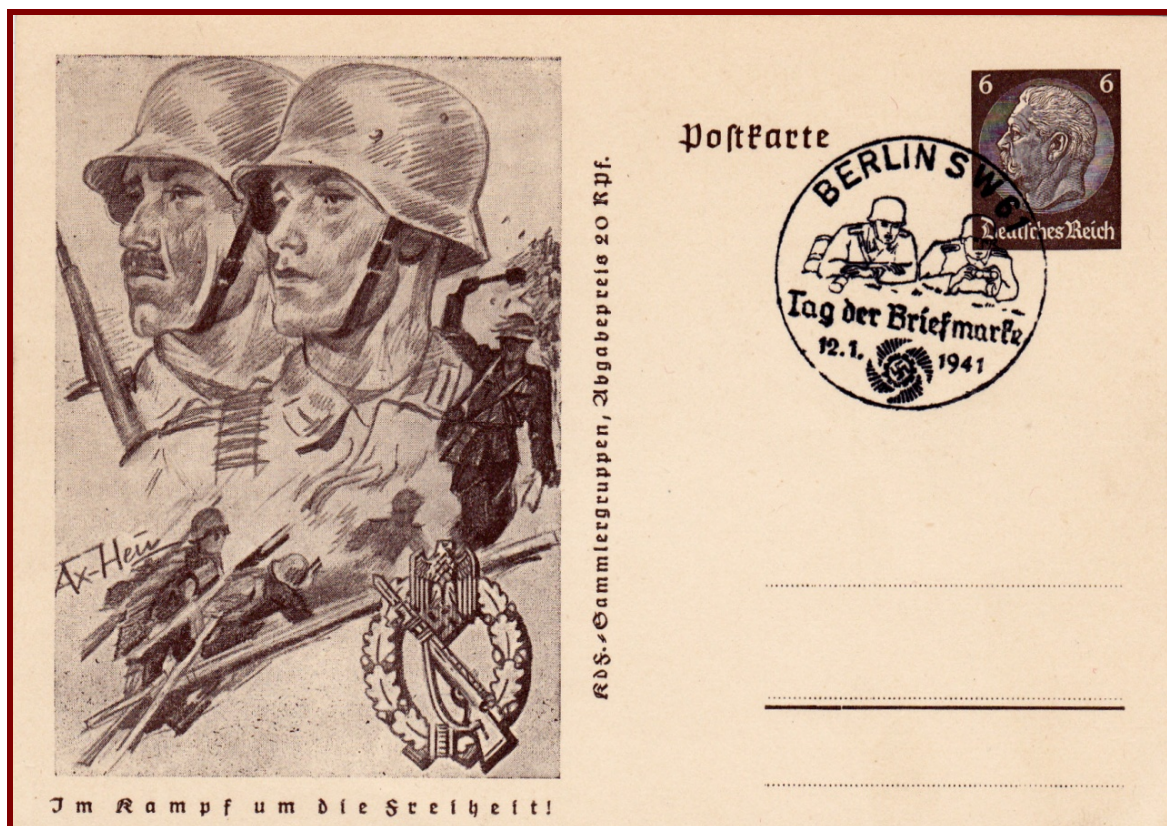


Von Axster-Heudtlass Branch-of-Service Propaganda Postal Cards and *Tag der Briefmarke* (Day of the Stamp) Postmarks in the German Reich, 12 January 1941

The *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP), the National Socialist Workers Party or Nazi Party, used the large European-size postal cards printed to order with striking images and pictorial postmarks for special events to project propagandistic images of German culture, the German military, and party political ideas and activities. *Tag der Briefmarke* (Day of the Stamp), an international observance promoting stamps and postal service, was an important component of this propaganda effort through the issuance of collectible philatelic items which effectively carried propagandistic visual messages with a short patriotic slogan appropriate for the image.

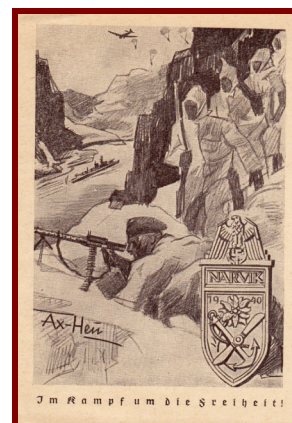
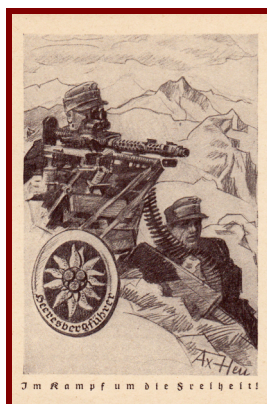
Among the most striking of the printed-to-order postal cards are a set depicting German military branches with the caption *Im Kampf um die Freiheit!* ("In the War for Freedom!") designed by SA *Sturmhauptfuhrer* von Axster-Heudtlass, a captain in the *Sturmabteilung*, a non-military agency associated with the NSDAP. Although franked at 6 pfennig, the von Axster-Heudtlass cards were sold for 20 pfennig. Standardized pictorial postmarks from various cities in the German Reich canceled the 1932 President Paul von Hindenburg indicium which franked the commemorative cards. The military images in the postmarks thematically echoed the cachets, and the small Swastika inside of a stylized Swastika asserted the presence of the NSDAP. Although few of the surviving cards were used to send personal messages, the retention of philatelic souvenirs resulted in the reinforcement of political messages with each viewing.





The artist von Axster-Heudtlass is identified by the abbreviated form of his name found in the lower half of each image.

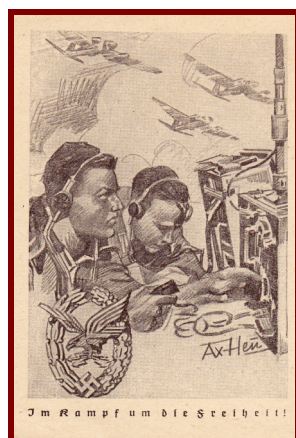
Other Cachets in the von Axster-Heudtlass Branch-of-Service Set [Digitally Cropped and Reduced]



Von Axster-Heudtlass was an experienced poster artist who brought skills from that genre to the smaller postal card format. His cachet designs for the branch-of-service set depicted the military men of the Reich with strong Arian features reflecting their serious commitment to the “War for Freedom.” By placing individual figures in combat situations, von Axster-Heudtlass created a romanticized view of the war in which anything other than success was unthinkable. The future of the Reich was assured by the best of men.



Other Cachets in the von Axster-Heudtlass Branch-of-Service Set [Digitally Cropped and Reduced]



Von Axster-Heudtlass patriotic cachets in the *Im Kampf um die Freiheit!* series were also printed on card stock without printed-to-order franking. Postage added to the card was canceled with one of the military-themed pictorial postmarks used throughout the Reich on *Tag der Briefmarke* on 12 January 1941. This card postmarked in Berlin is franked with a semi-postal stamp depicting Artushof, one of the great architectural landmarks in Danzig.



In the propaganda campaign to marshal support for the war, cards such as these with graphic images of an idealized, heroic military had an important niche on the home front. Like other components of the propaganda effort, they were designed to reach a defined target group and reinforce a patriotic message conveyed by other components of the propaganda effort.