LATVIA
Russian West Army

Jelgawa
10 October 1919
18 October 1919



Colonel Bermondt-Avalov commanded a White Russian force which occupied parts of central Latvia. On 10 October 1919, this so-called Russian West Army issued its first postage stamps, being overprints of a Russian cross on Latvian stamps. Three days later a second series was issued with a similar overprint but with a shaded background and Cyrillic letters "S.A." for Sapadnaja Armija = West Army.

Covers with these stamps are scarce and sought after by Baltic collectors.

LATVIA
Russian West Army

Jelgawa
9 November 1919
10 November 1919



Still another set of the Bermondt-Avalov regime was issued on 9 November 1919 as overprints on Imperial Russian stamps. It had a very brief period of circulation as the area was area was taken over by the Latvian civil authorities before the end of November.

ESTONIA

Independent Estonian Government

Tartu
1 December 1918
8 December 1918



German forces in Estonia began their withdrawal in mid-November 1918 under the terms of the Armistice, enabling the Estonian authorities to establish a functioning government. The first two stamps of the independent administration were denominated in Russian currency, consisting of 5 and 15 kopek values issued on 22 and 30 November, respectively.

These stamps had only local validity. To send mail to a destination outside Estonia required affixing German "Ob. Ost" overprinted stamps at UPU rates: 10 pfennigs for cards and 20 for letters, to be cancelled at a nearby occupation post office still functioning. Then, the mail could be forwarded through the German postal system.

ESTONIA

Pernov
10 February 1919

Reval
25 April 1919



On 1 January 1919, a new currency was adopted with 100 penni = 1 Estonian mark. Two new stamps denominated at 35 and 70 penni appeared on 18 and 23 January, respectively, in a similar design to the first set.

Note the use of old Russian postmarks on both examples. Upper cover with 35 penni stamp sent to Tallinn by a member of the Parnu Infantry Defense Battalion. Registered post card to Philadelphia via Finland (where it was censored) has 70 penni stamp on postally invalid card of Russian provisional government.

ESTONIA

Jurwakant
May 1919

Rapina
3 November 1919

Tartu
11 March 1920



Between May and September 1919, the Estonian postal authorities issued a number of stamps depicting the sun, doves and even a Viking ship.

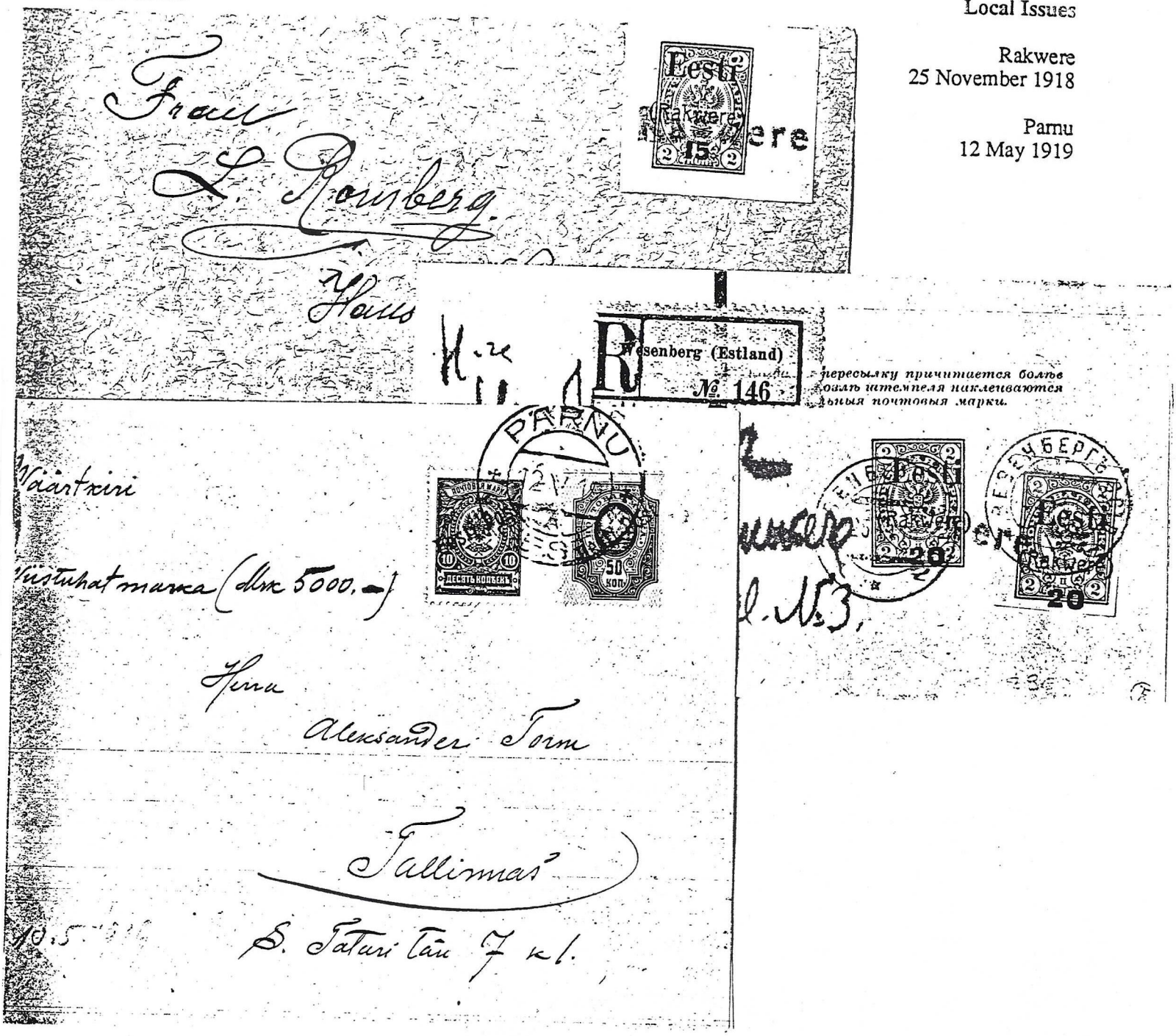
Rather than use the old Russian postmarks, many post offices during this period placed in service provisional markings merely showing the location. In due course, these were replaced with normal Estonian cancels.

ESTONIA

Local Issues

Rakwere
25 November 1918

Parnu
12 May 1919



Two local issues have been accorded catalog listing (Michel), the first being a provisional issue sold in Rakwere (Wesenberg) on 15 November 1918 prior to the availability of the first Estonian stamps. These were overprinted and cut out from Russian newspaper wrappers. (Quantities printed were 402 pieces of the 15 kopek and 137 of the 20.) Middle example shown is a complete wrapper, uprated by an additional stamp to pay the registration fee and cancelled with the old Russian postmark -- a most unusual usage.

The second issue consisted of overprints of "Eesti Post" on Imperial Russian stamps. (Quantities of perforated stamps overprinted in violet were 100 pieces of the 10 kopek and 344 of the 50.) These were issued in Tallinn on 7 May 1919 during a stamp shortage and had postal validity in the entire country until 1 October 1919. Cover shown is backstamped for receipt in Tallinn on 14 May.

ESTONIA
Military Mail

Fieldpost
14 March 1919
17 March 1919
3 June 1919

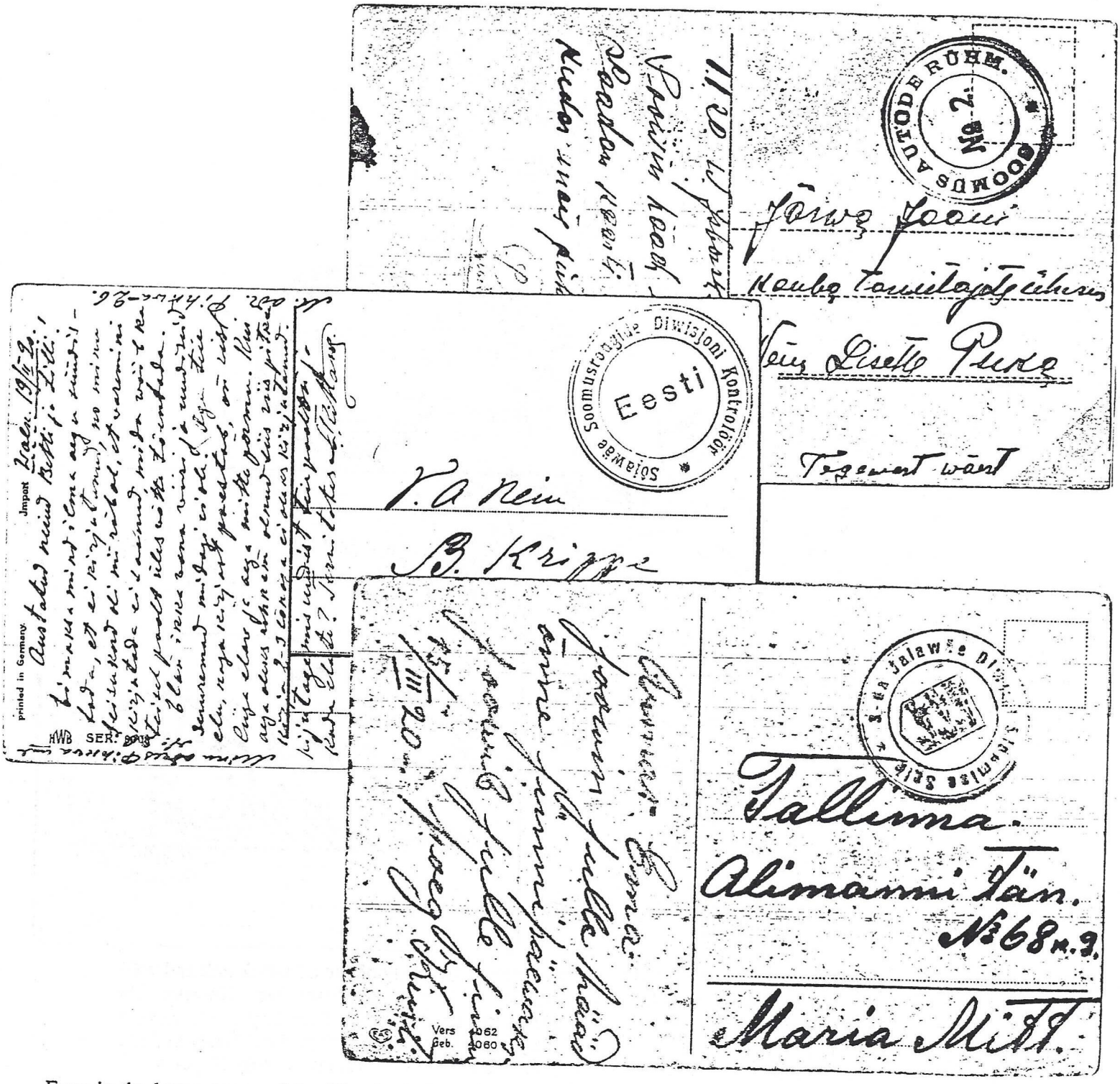


On 13 November 1918, the Bolshevik government in Petrograd declared the treaty of Brest Litovsk null and void, and shortly thereafter sent the Red Army into Estonia, capturing Narva on 28 November. However, the Estonians, assisted by 2,000 Finnish volunteers, initiated a successful counterattack in January 1919. Several other Bolshevik invasions were mounted during the course of the year, but the Russians signed the Treaty of Tartu on 2 February 1920 "voluntarily and forever" renouncing its rights to Estonia -- forever lasting only 20 years!

The Estonian military did not establish fieldpost offices but applied a wide variety of unit cachets to mail, permitting it to be sent free of postage. Examples above show markings of "Commandant of Narrow Gauge Armored Train No.2," "Armament & Supply Administration," and "3rd Battery of the 1st Artillery Regiment."

ESTONIA
Military Mail

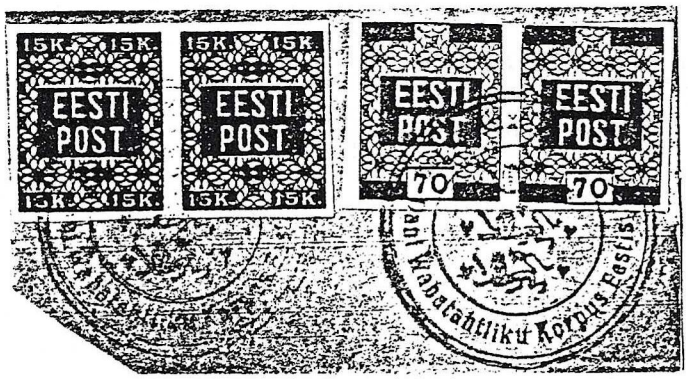
Fieldpost
1 January 1920
19 February 1920
15 March 1920



Even in the latter stages of the War for Independence, there were no Estonian fieldpost stations. Unusual unit cachets included those shown above: "Armored Car Platoon No. 2," "Inspector of Military Armored Trains Division," and "3rd Infantry Division Casualties Clearing Squad."

ESTONIA
Danish & Swedish Volunteers

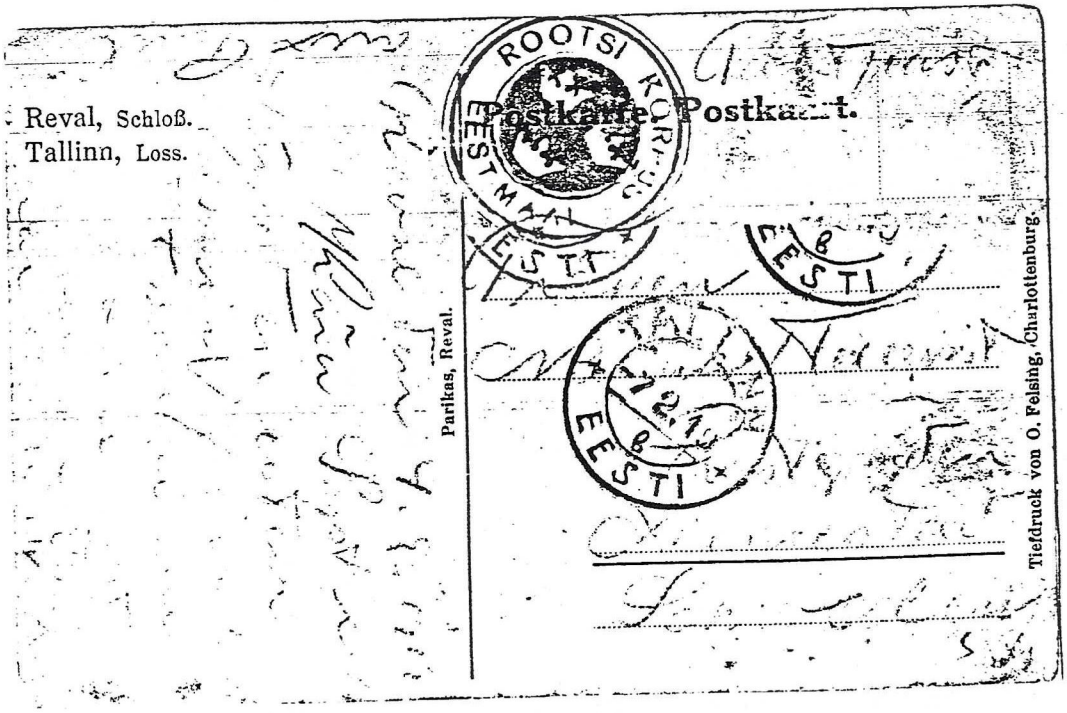
Fieldpost
4 February 1919



Piece showing special marking of the Danish Auxiliary Corps which went to Estonia during the War of Liberation. This cachet represents a most unusual usage.

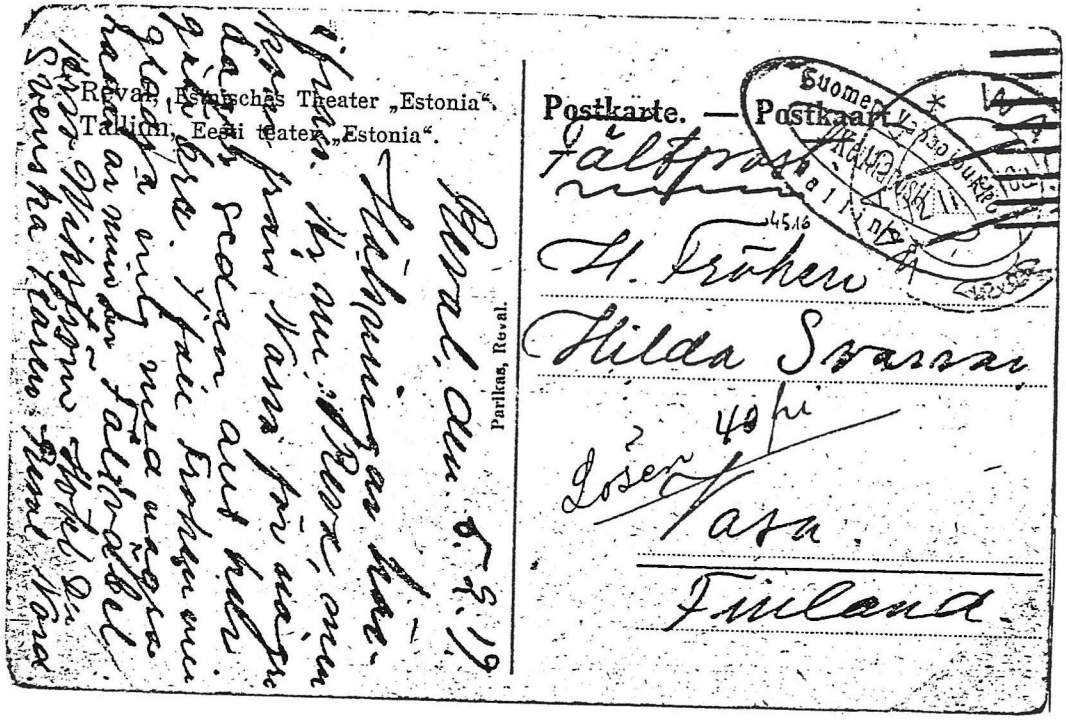


Post card sent from Tallinn to Sweden by a member of the Swedish Corps of volunteers which was aiding the Estonians in the War of Liberation. The stamps were removed (possibly by the censor?) but a very elusive usage.

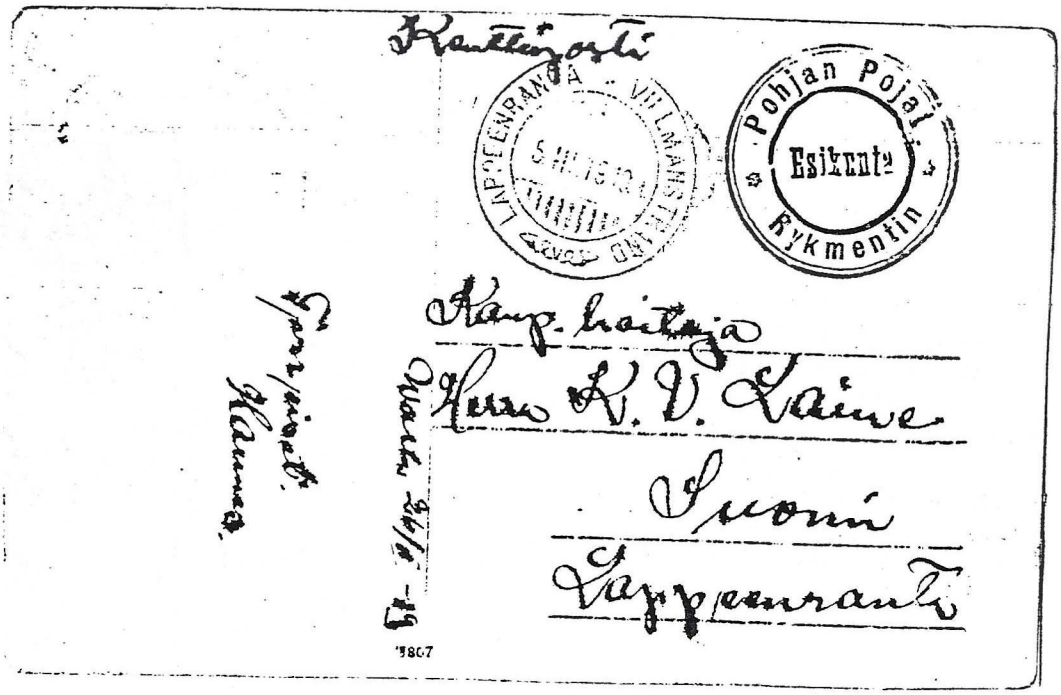


ESTONIA
Finnish Volunteers

Fieldpost
5 February 1919
26 February 1919



Post card sent from Tallinn to Finland by a member of the Finnish volunteers aiding the Estonians in the War of Liberation. Note special oval unit marking of the contingent. An unusual usage.



Post card sent from Walk to Lappeenranta by a member of the "Sons of the North" Regiment of volunteers. Has special unit cachet and receiving mark in Finland one week later.

Once their internal political affairs were settled, some Finns (ethnically closely related to the Estonians), volunteered to fight against the Bolsheviks. Mail from these units is avidly sought by Finnish collectors.

ESTONIA
British Military Mission

British Supply Mission
24 September 1919

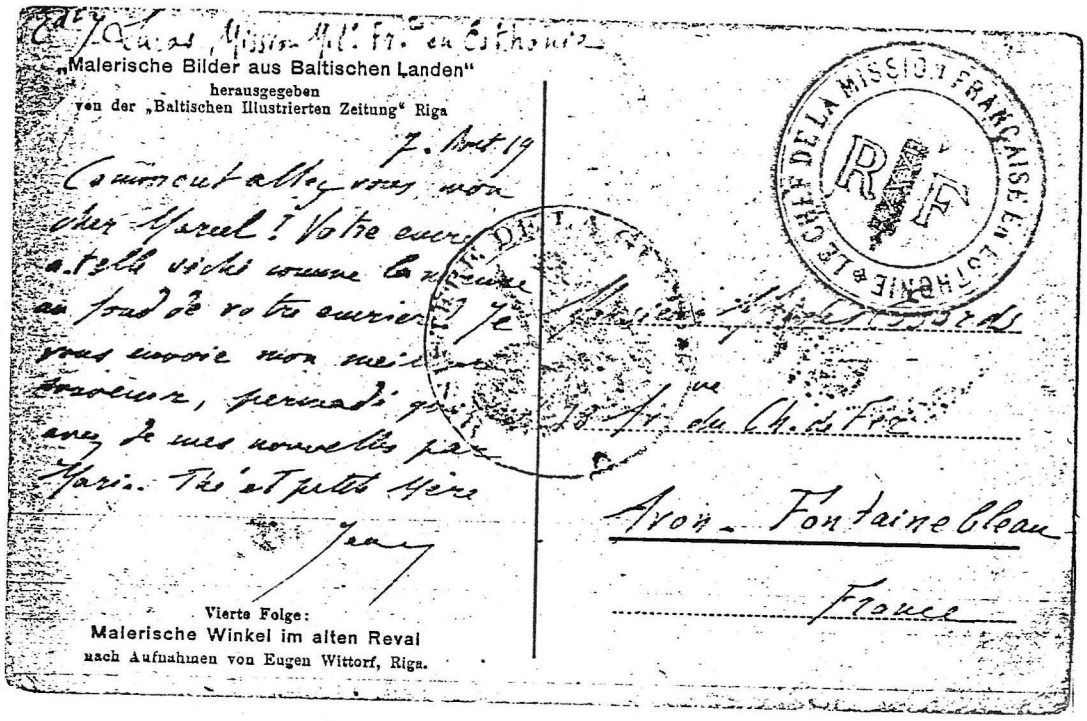
Military Mission/Baltic States
September 1919



The British authorities undertook the strengthening of the newly-independent Baltic nations as a buffer against the Bolshevik regime in Russia and sent military missions to assist in building their defense capabilities. Postcard of Reval sent by a member of the British Supply Mission assisting the Finnish volunteers in Estonia. Cover is from a member of the BMM in Reval.

ESTONIA
French Military Mission

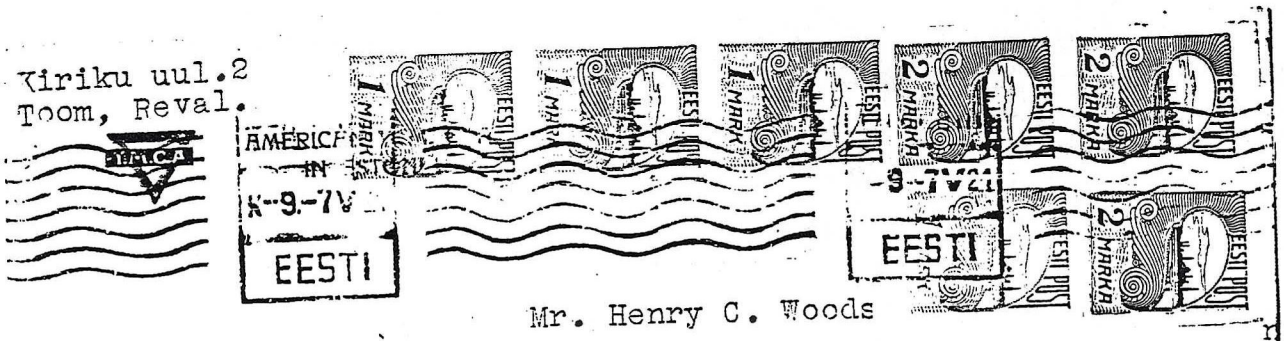
Mission Francaise en Esthonie
7 August 1919



Picture postcard of Tallinn sent by a member of the French Military Mission. There was no French fieldpost service in the Baltic area, so transmission was by military pouch to Paris, as attested by the receiving cachet of the Ministry of War.

ESTONIA
American Relief Organizations

Tallinn
7 May 1921
23 May 1921



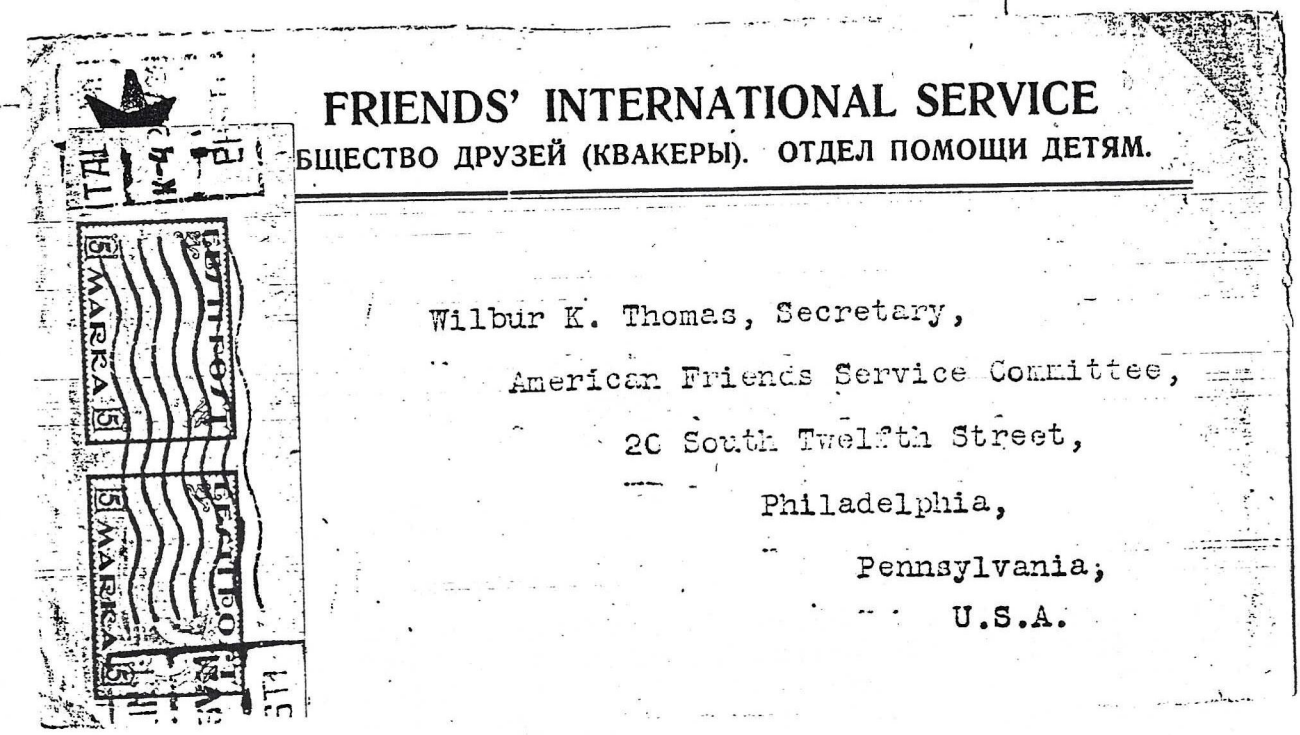
Mr. Henry C. Woods

Russian Department, Oversea Divisic

International Committee YMCA

347, Madisn Avenue.

N e w - Y o r k .



American relief organizations, including the YMCA and Quakers (Friends), were active in supplying food and other supplies to the Estonian people. Covers shown represent mail from local representatives to the headquarters of the organizations in the U.S.

FINLAND

Independent Finnish Government

Hamina
14 August 1918

Helsinki
17 December 1918



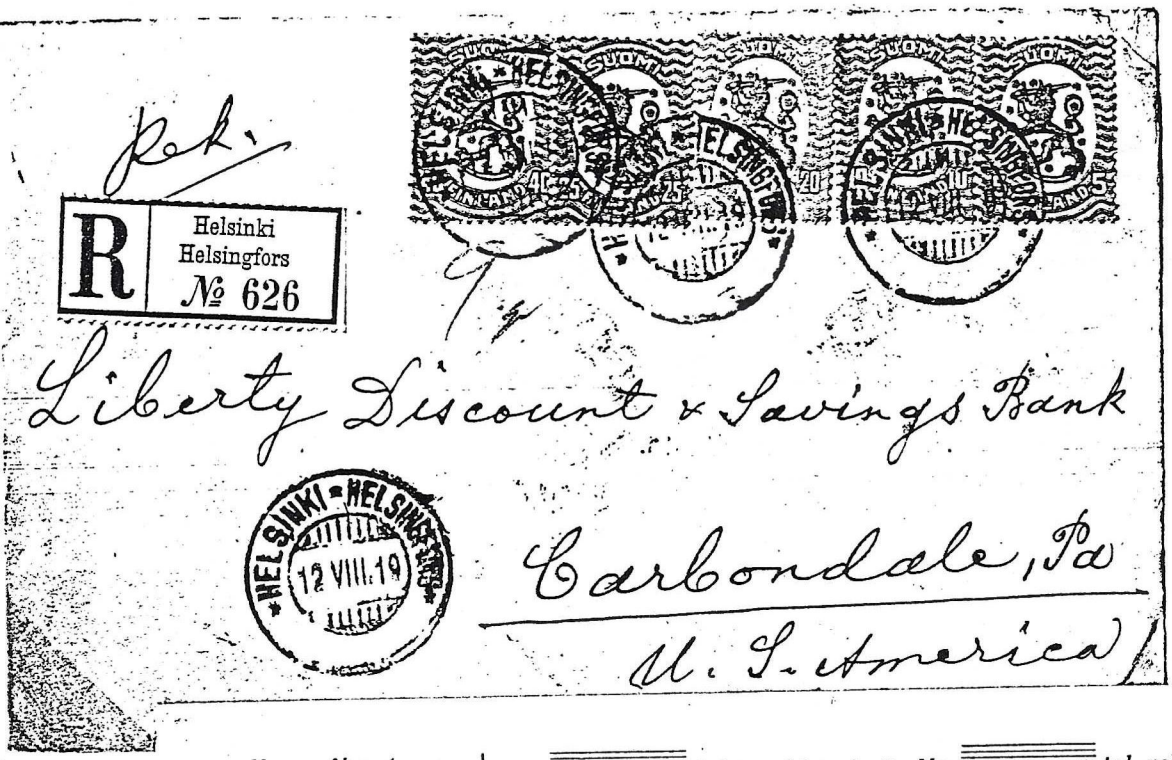
Unlike the other Baltic states, Finland was not occupied by the Germans and began to prepare for independence in May 1917 following the abdication of the Czar. Independence was formally declared on 6 December 1917. After the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, the Treaty of Brest Litovsk required that the Russians evacuate the country. However, there were still 40,000 Russian troops in the country at the time, and they sided with the Red Guards who wanted to establish a Soviet republic. Nevertheless, under the leadership of Baron Carl Gustav Mannerheim, the White forces prevailed in the civil war, which came to an end on 16 May 1918.

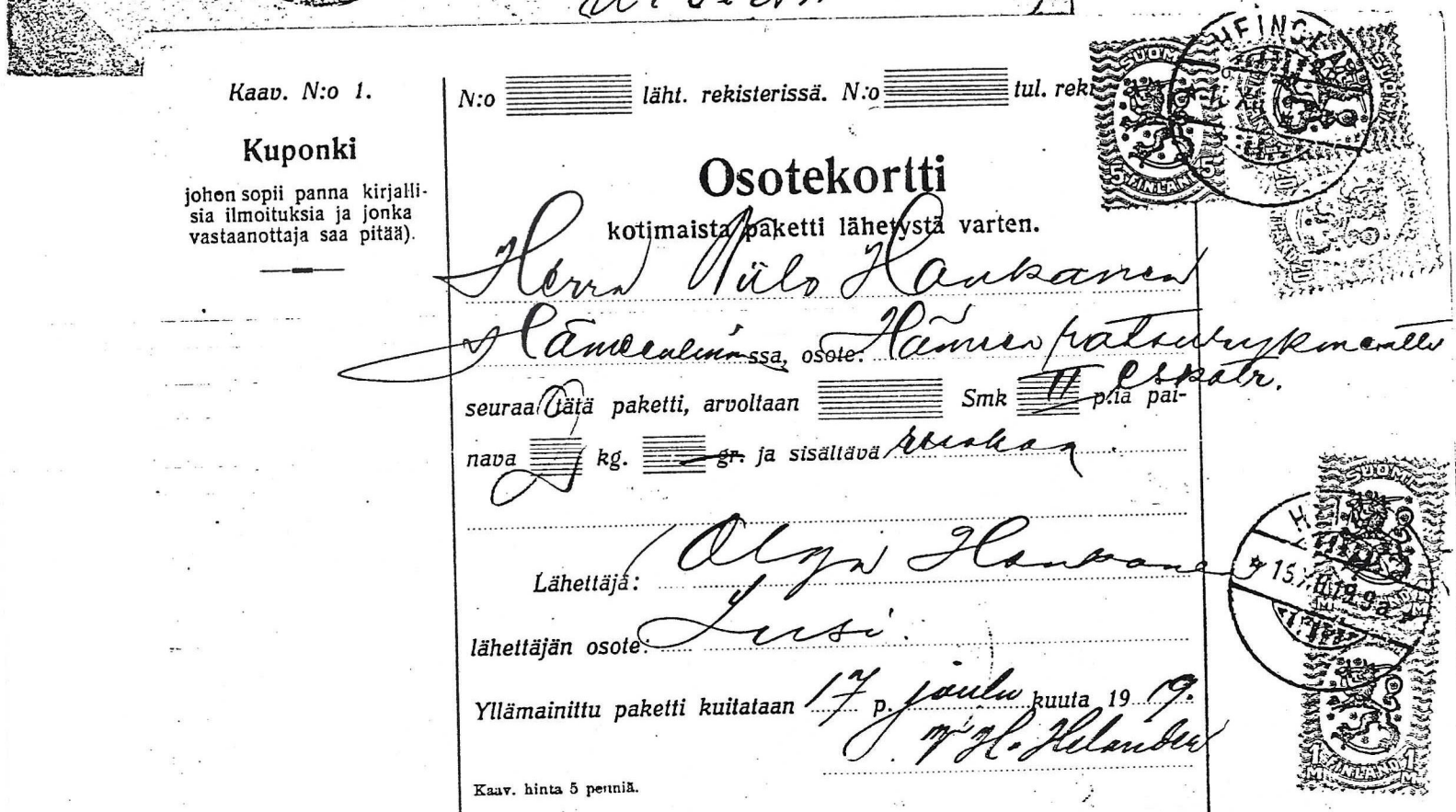
The first Finnish stamps printed in the "Lion" design were issued from 1 October 1917 until well into 1921. Covers with the first issue shown above are cancelled with altered Russian postmarks, retaining the bilingual Finnish-Swedish spelling but with the Russian spelling excised.

FINLAND

Helsinki
12 August 1919

Heinola
15 December 1919



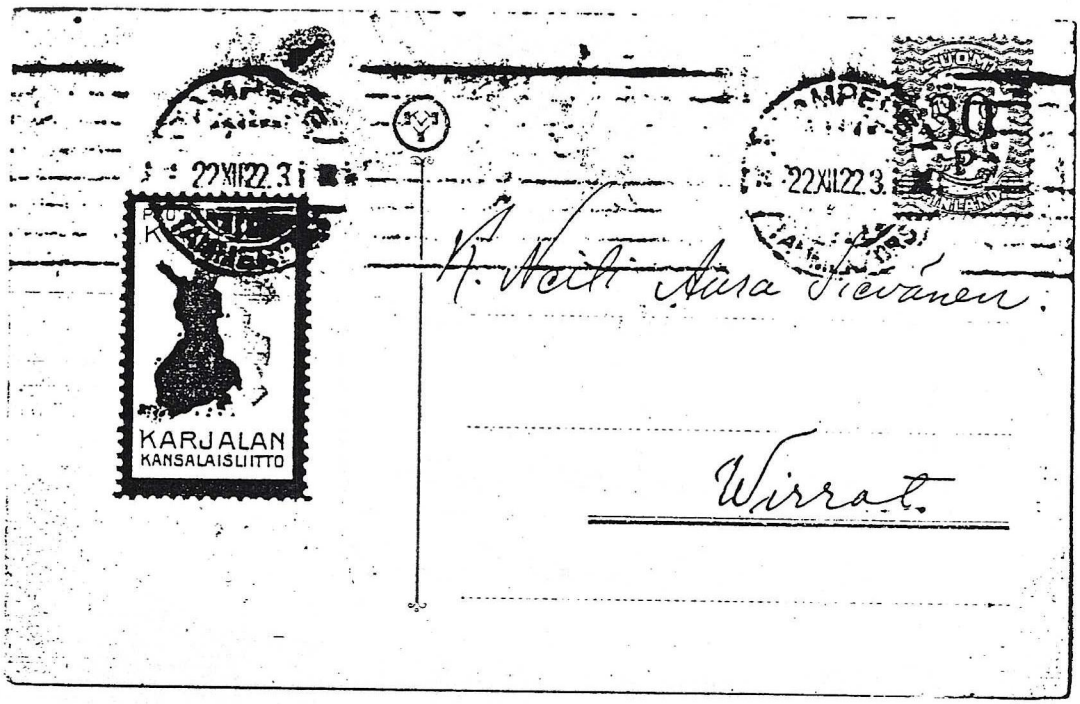


The "Lion" stamps were an extremely long-lived series, continuing in use until 1930. Above examples show registration use to the United States and a parcel card sent to Hameenlinna.

FINLAND

Tampere
22 December 1922

Bennas
30 December 1922





For nearly five years, the only postage sold in Finland was the familiar "Lion" series. However, because of inflation, a few of the basic stamps were surcharged with new values.

Note the use of patriotic labels on these post cards: the first promoting the independence of Karelia (shown in yellow) and the other honoring the Swedish-speaking districts of Finland (the Aland Islands and areas along the west and south coasts).