

EASY SÜTTERLIN

BY BLAINE BACHMAN – © 2016

PREFACE

The purpose of this article is to suggest a method for learning just enough Sütterlin script to allow you to fill in the necessary fields in a WWII Soldbuch or other such document. All that is needed is a personal computer, internet access, and a word processing program that supports multiple fonts. A comprehensive discussion of German handwriting, grammar, spelling, and word usage is beyond the scope of this article. Likewise, no effort is made to indicate precisely what should be entered in each field of a particular document.

LET YOUR PC HELP

A good place to start is <http://www.suetterlinschrift.de/Englisch/Sutterlin.htm>. This site includes some interesting background material and should you want to delve deeper into the topic there are several exercises designed to increase your ability to recognize Sütterlin letters and improve your reading skills. For our purposes the most useful bit on this site is the link that will download the True Type Sütterlin font to your workstation (<http://www.suetterlinschrift.de/Lese/SUETTER.TTF>). All you have to do is install the downloaded font to your **Fonts** directory.

To help organize your work, open a blank word processing document and create a four column table. Name the column headings as shown in the following example and set this first row as repeating column headings (which will become very handy as this table grows beyond one page in length).

German	English	My Data	My Data in Sütterlin

Fill in the table as follows:

1. In the column labeled **German**, copy the individual field names from your blank document. Use as many rows as necessary to capture each needed item in its own cell.
2. In the column labeled **English**, type your translation of the term in the first column.
3. In the column labeled **My Data**, type the German text that is to be written in the target field.
4. *Copy* each value from the third column and *paste* it into the fourth column. Select each value in the fourth column and:
 - a. Change the font to **Sütterlin**.
 - b. Change the font size to 16 or 18 points.

You now have a guide to help you create characters in Sütterlin script. Print a few copies of your guide and use them as a learning aid. An example of the first few values for a Volkssturm Soldbuch follows:

German	English	My Data	My Data in Sütterlin
<u>Kennort</u>	Place of Issue	<u>Suderwick</u>	<i>Suderwick</i>
<u>Kennnummer</u>	ID Number	5254	5254
<u>Gültig bis</u>	Valid through	6.Juni.45	6. Juni.45
Name	Last Name	Bachmann	<i>Bachmann</i>
<u>Vornamen</u>	First Names	Werner	<i>Werner</i>
<u>Geburtstag</u>	Birthday	24.Aug.82	24. Aug. 82
<u>Geburtsort</u>	Birthplace	<u>Helmstedt</u>	<i>Helmstedt</i>
<u>Beruf</u>	Occupation	<u>Buchführer</u>	<i>Buchführer</i>
<u>Unveränderliche Kennzeichen</u>	Distinguishing Features-perm.	%	
<u>Veränderliche Kennzeichen</u>	Distinguishing Features-changing	<u>Brillenträger</u>	<i>Brillenträger</i>

A FEW MORE SUGGESTIONS

- Practice writing each entry several times before finally writing it in the document.
- While you could use a ball-point pen, such is not entirely accurate – ball-points were not widely available until after the war; fountain pens were king.
- If you go the fountain pen route, be aware that most modern papers are not impervious to ink bleed (including the paper used to create replica wartime documents). Give each page a light spray coating of artist's fixative and let it dry before you continue.
- Liquid ink may 'ball up' on the surface of treated paper; just let it sit for a few moments until it dries.
- For good measure, lightly spray the finished (and dried) work with fixative to keep the ink from smudging in your warm, humid tunic pocket.