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# *The Prexie Era*

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## Mixed Frankings of Foreign Stamps with Prexie Era Stamps

by

Dickson Preston

*[Continued from Issue No.32]*

There are two indications that the extra postage on this letter [Figure 3] was added by the USPOD rather than by the original addressee. The first is that only 3 cents extra was added. If the original receiver had re-mailed the letter, the postage would have been the full 6 cent air mail rate. The second is the short time of only two hours between the arrival back stamp (May 8 / 8-- P.M.) and the canceling postmark ( May 8 / 10<sup>00</sup> PM). The speed with which the letter was handled indicates that all the processing took place within the postal system.

One option when requesting that the USPOD forward mail was to set up an account to pay for the mail to be forwarded by air. Perhaps the addressee of this letter had set up such an account.

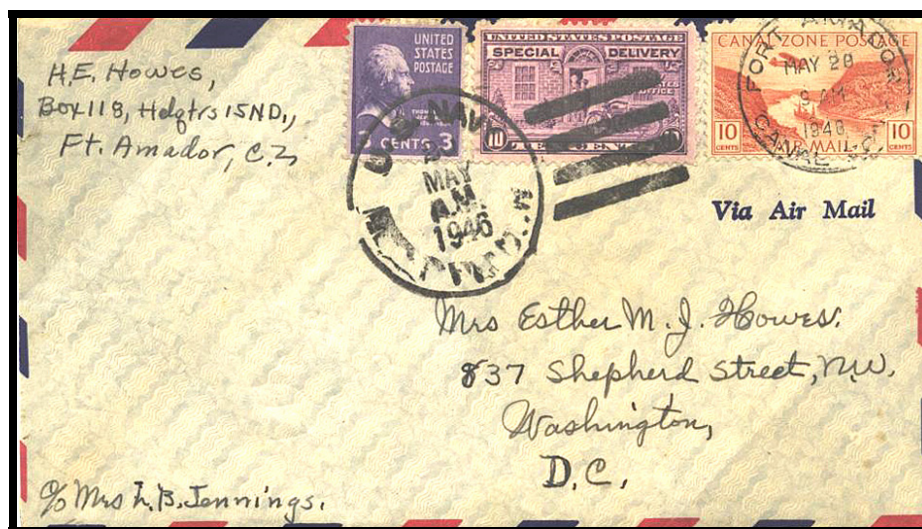


Figure 4. Letter from Canal Zone with UNITED STATES stamps paying the special delivery fee - 1946.

A further way that mixed frankings could occur involved the payment for UNITED STATES special delivery on letters sent from foreign countries. Before international agreements providing for special delivery service (called "express mail" internationally) came into effect in the 1920s, UNITED STATES stamps could be used on letters coming from abroad to obtain special delivery in this country. For example, major Canadian post offices stocked UNITED STATES special delivery stamps for the convenience of Canadian patrons. Starting in the 1920s, the UNITED STATES began reciprocal special delivery service with many foreign postal administrations, making the use of UNITED STATES special delivery stamps on incoming letters no longer necessary. Since we did have such agreements with most major countries by the time the Prexie Era started in 1938, this type of mixed franking is not common during our time period.

Figure 4 shows an example from the Canal Zone on which a 10 cents special delivery stamp and a 3 cents Prexie pay the 13 cents fee effective 1 November 1944. Post offices in the Canal Zone did not even have carrier service, let alone special delivery, so UNITED STATES stamps were sold at Canal Zone post offices only to pay for this special service on letters to the UNITED STATES Also, since the Canal Zone Postal Service reported to the Governor of the Canal Zone, who was appointed by the President of the UNITED STATES, it was not part of the USPOD, and was regarded, in some ways, as a foreign postal entity. UNITED STATES stamps were not valid at Canal Zone post offices, for example, except to pay for special delivery in the UNITED STATES and to pay postage on paquebot mail coming from UNITED

STATES ships. Thus this letter does represent a mixed franking between stamps of two postal administrations.

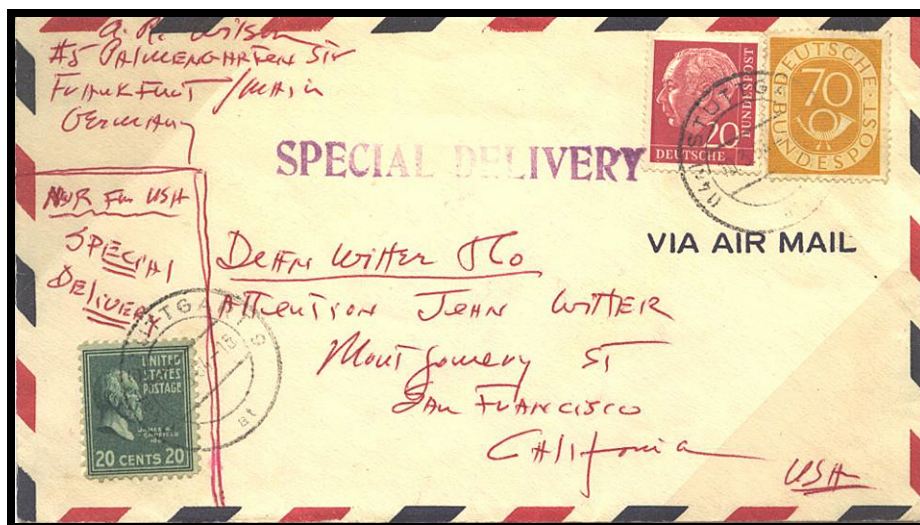


Figure 5. Air mail from West Germany with a 20 cents Prexie used to pay Special Delivery in UNITED STATES - 1954.

A more unusual example is shown in **Figure 5**. Here the sender paid the 90 pfennig air mail postage to the UNITED STATES with West German Stamps, but placed a 20 cents Prexie on the opposite corner of the envelope with the direction "Nur für USA / Special Delivery" (Only for USA / Special Delivery). The commercial address of Dean Witter makes it seem unlikely that this use is merely a philatelic contrivance. This franking was not in accord with the UNITED STATES regulations, because special delivery service between the UNITED STATES and West Germany had been reestablished 28 October 1948, several years before this letter was mailed in 1954. However the service was rendered at the receiving post office as evidenced by the purple UNITED STATES "SPECIAL DELIVERY" marking and by the special delivery back stamp. Perhaps the San Francisco post office was merely being accommodating, but they did have some motivation to bend the rules here, because they would receive a 20 cents credit for the delivery.



Figure 6. Transpacific air mail with 5 cents Chinese stamp paying the general delivery fee - 1940.



The final example in **Figure 6** shows a mixed franking resulting from a special service fee in a foreign country. The letter was flown by Clipper service to Honk Kong in 1940 and then sent up the Chinese coast to Shanghai, where it was addressed in care of Poste Restante (General Delivery). The 3 cents circle die envelope and the 67 cents in Prexies paid the 70 cents Trans-Pacific air mail rate. The 5 cents Chinese stamp was added to pay the general delivery fee, creating a fine mixed franking between Prexie Era stamps and a foreign stamp.

**Note:** My special interest in this type of material was inspired by a talk given at the Prexie Era Study Group meeting at Stampshow in 2004. Robert Dalton Harris showed several unusual examples of mixed frankings with Prexies, and his creative thinking about them led me to look at the examples I had in my own collections with a more informed and interested eye. And then a new search began.

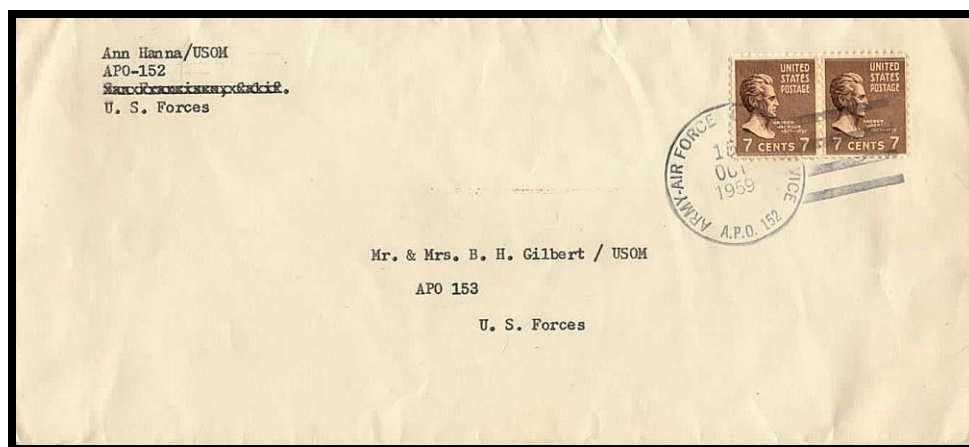
### A Vietnam War Era Prexie Cover

by

Jeffrey Shapiro

Prexie postal history collections routinely have examples from World War II and the Korean War, but how many have a cover from the Vietnam War Era ?

Illustrated is a commercial (albeit late) Prexie-Era correspondence, showing early military involvement in Southeast Asia. This October 15, 1959 cover, affixed with two 7c Jackson stamps paying double the 7c per ounce domestic air mail rate (in effect August 1, 1958 thru January 6, 1963), was mailed from APO 152 (Laos) to APO 153 (Cambodia). Many historians mark the beginning of the Vietnam War as September 1, 1959 with the first deployment of Green Berets to the region.



By the mid-1950s, United States government policy makers were convinced of a "domino theory", i.e., that if South Vietnam fell under communist control, communism would spread throughout Southeast Asia.

By mid-1959, as the North Vietnamese increased their infiltration of the South over the newly-completed beginnings of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the United States began to send supplies and advisors to train South Vietnam forces and support governments in the region. With the United States supplying the South and the Soviets and Chinese supporting the North, the Vietnam War quickly escalated, spilling over into Laos and Cambodia.

Subscriber will trade or sell Prexies. Contact Larry  
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## **Wartime Emergency Trans-Pacific Airmail Route to Europe, Africa, Sub-Asia and the Middle East**

by

Steven M. Roth

### **Introduction**

With the entry of Italy into the War on June 10 1940, Britain's access to its Empire by airmail across the Mediterranean no longer existed. To work around this problem, Britain, on June 19, 1940, instituted the so-called Horseshoe Route. This was a combination of airmail and ocean/land surface mail to and from Britain, and to, from and through Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The Horseshoe Route directly linked sixteen countries of the Empire between England, Durban, South Africa, Cairo, Egypt and Sydney, Australia.

The Horseshoe Route also was available to United States mailers [this aspect of the route is known as the Reverse Horseshoe Route],<sup>1</sup> but it was a very slow choice since, in addition to the time it would take to get a letter from the originating city in the United States onto the Pan American Airways FAM 18 flight and then from the United States to England via FAM 18, there also would be several weeks transit time for the letter via the Reverse Horseshoe Route.

The quicker route, albeit much more expensive for United States patrons to use, was Trans-Pacific Route FAM 14. This air route had been available since 1936 for mail to Asia. Beginning in late June 1940, it also became available for mail to Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Sub-Asia.

When interpreting these covers, collectors should be mindful that while knowing the dates of the covers is necessary, it isn't always sufficient to interpret the route [*i.e.*, Horseshoe Route vs. Trans-Pacific Route]. Even though the sender had the ability to designate the route he desired the letter to travel (this would be indicated by the sender indicating the desired route on the envelope – for example, “Via Pacific” – or by applying the relevant postage to the envelope – for example, enough for airmail via the Pacific Route rather than 5¢ for ocean mail), the post office, responding to the exigencies of war, often chose the actual route used. The clearest examples of this occurred on those covers on which the sender used 30¢ postage in anticipation of the letter flying via the FAM 18 Trans-Atlantic Route, but the letter actually was flown over the Trans-Pacific Route selected by the Post Office.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in order to interpret these covers and determine the route, the collector needs to look at dates, of course, but also at censor markings, censor resealing tapes, and post office transit markings.

### **Examples of Mail Routes Available to Senders Other Than the Trans-Pacific Airmail Route**

Senders of mail to foreign destinations had, as their first choice, the option to send the letter by ocean mail or by airmail. Then, within these two categories, they had other choices: airmail within the United States combined with ocean mail; ocean mail from the United States combined with airmail from Europe or other point of arrival; ocean mail plus surface mail to destination; airmail from the United States and airmail to destination. They could influence the choice, in the absence of war related exigencies, by the admonition they would put on the envelope and/or by the amount of postage they would use.

The aspect Senders had no control over was the decisions made by the postal authorities in response to the changing conditions of the War.

The covers in this part of this article reflect routings that differ from pre-war routings (other than the

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<sup>1</sup> See, Wilcsek, Robert, “American ‘Horseshoe’ Airmail”, *Airpost Journal* (August 2003), p.325.

<sup>2</sup> See, Roth, S.M., “Trans-Pacific Airmail to Europe – The 30 Cents Legacy Rate”, *Prexie Era Newsletter* (Fall 2002), p.2.

emergency Trans-Pacific Airmail routings which I show below). Some reflect routing instructions placed on the envelope by the sender. Others were not anticipated by the sender and no such instructions or revelatory postage appear.

**Figure 1** is a cover sent from the United States to Germany on September 26, 1940. The postage (8¢) reflects the postage for airmail from New York City to San Francisco, plus ocean mail thereafter. Note the sender's admonition: "Airmail to San Francisco/Via Japan and Siberia, Russia". This routing reflects the notices published in the POSTAL BULLETIN on September 3<sup>rd</sup> and September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1940.<sup>3</sup>

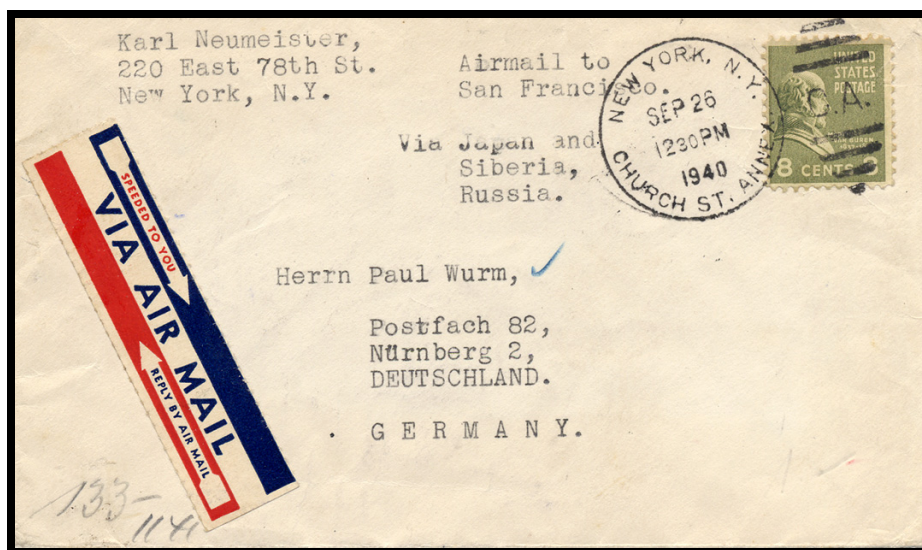


Figure 1

For approximately thirteen weeks in September through the first week of December 1940, ocean mail to Germany, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and the USSR was sent via San Francisco to Japan, then to Siberia where it traveled via the Trans-Siberian Railway to St. Petersburg, Russia. From there the mail when to Berlin for distribution to its destination. The reason for routing mail that normally went from the East Coast of the United States to the West Coast reflected the increased tempo of submarine warfare on the part of the Nazis in the Battle of the Atlantic.



Figure 2

<sup>3</sup>

POSTAL BULLETINS NOS. 18022 and 18026.



**Figure 2** is another example of mail rerouted because of hostile actions occurring over the normal mail route. This letter was sent from the United States to Sweden by ocean mail on May 1, 1940. This typically would have traveled to Germany by ship, across Germany by train, then over the Baltic Sea to Sweden. Instead, the letter traveled by sea from the United States to Egypt (where it was opened for inspection and received the Egyptian censor's resealing tape), then by land to Sweden. This circuitous routing reflected the ferocious air and sea combat then going on with Norway after Germany invaded Denmark in April. The seas surrounding Norway and neutral Sweden were infested with mines making it unsafe to bring in shipping carrying mail.

**Figure 3** and **Figure 4** are examples of Reverse Horseshoe Route usages, although **Figure 3** looks as if it traveled over the emergency Trans-Pacific Route, and **Figure 4**, on its face, is an enigma.<sup>4</sup>



Figure 3



Figure 4

Note that **Figure 3** contains the sender's admonition "Pacific Clipper". It has a Durban transit marking on the back indicating it did not travel via FAM 14. **Figure 4** to India has a Cairo transit marking on its back.

Each letter was censored at its respective destination as indicated by the Palestine and Calcutta censorship handstamps on the front of the letters, respectively. Neither letter was censored in transit.

Airmail to Europe, Africa, Sub-Asia and the Middle East was flown via FAM 18 to England, France or, later, Lisbon during this period. **Figure 5**, **Figure 6** and **Figure 7** were flown by Pan American Airways via FAM 18 to England, then from England by Imperial Airlines to Palestine, Lebanon/Syria and Egypt, respectively. The postage was 36¢ per ½ oz (which was allocated 30¢ for Trans-Atlantic air and 6¢ for air from England to the Middle East).



Figure 5. Palestine censor's resealing tape at right edge.



Figure 6. Censored in Lebanon/Syria.

[Figure 7 appears on page 9]

**Figure 8** shows a letter which flew via FAM 18 on its way to South Africa. The letter was charged 55¢ airmail postage, the correct rate for FAM 18 to Lisbon, then by air carriage by Imperial Airways to destination.





Figure 7. Censored in Egypt.



Figure 8. November 25, 1939.

### Airmail Via Emergency Trans-Pacific Route

**Figure 9** is an example of the 95¢ airmail rate to South Africa. This rate was in effect from August 6, 1940 through July 17, 1941, when it was replaced by the \$1.10 rate [Figure 10]. In my opinion, as difficult as the \$1.10 covers are to find, the 95¢ is more difficult.

### New Editor Needed Beginning with Issue No. 36 [Spring 2006]

My last issue of the Newsletter will be No. 35, the Winter 2006 issue. I will have completed four years as Editor at that time. I want to move on to other postal history writing, involving inland waterways mail, which has been piling up. At that time I intend to send in my \$5 and become a digital subscriber – assuming we have someone step-up and take over. I intend to write for the



Newsletter from time-to-time. I have enjoyed my stint as Editor, and thank those subscribers who have stayed with us during my term as Editor.



Figure 9



Figure 10

[To be continued in Issue No. 34]

### An Interesting FAM 22 Route Cover to Round-Out the South Africa Rates from the Robert Schlesinger Collection

