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The Prexie Era

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Prexie Era Website

by

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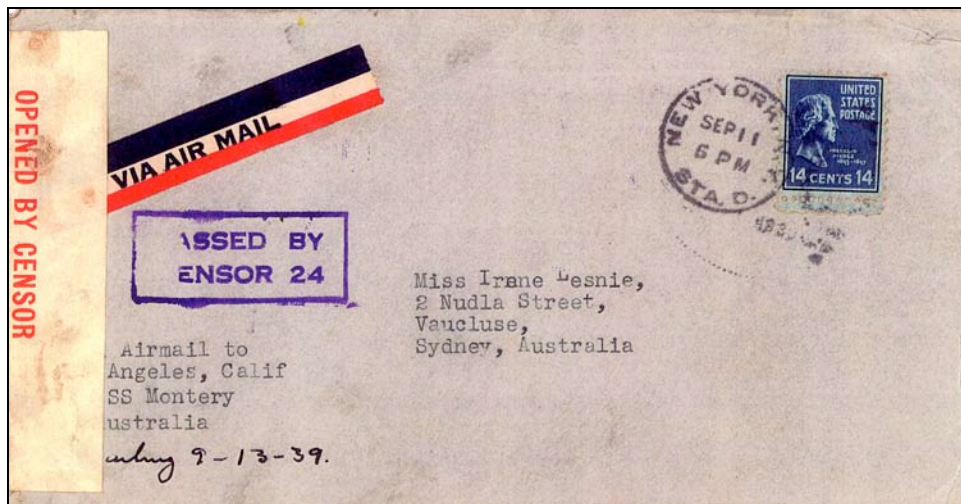
The Prexie Era website is a place to post news and upcoming events. Not intended as a substitute for our newsletter, which provides a forum for members' articles and scans of provocative stamps and covers, here news can be quickly posted to the site. It is designed to educate collectors interested in stamps or covers from the Prexie era. Providing an overview of the various issues including the Prexies, Transport Airmails, Famous Americans, and Win the War and 5-cent Skymaster Airmail stamps, it shows the various ways these definitives and commemoratives can be collected and exhibited. Since the site's inception in March 2008, the Prexie Era group has signed up seven new members.

The website also provides exhibit results from shows throughout the country allowing others to know what members are collecting and exhibiting. I encourage everyone to visit the site at <http://www.prexie-era.org>. Then e-mail me news of shows or meetings related to the Prexie era. (Please put "Prexie Era" in Subject line or it may get deleted as spam.) I will update the site as often as possible.

Airmail/Surface 14-cent Prexie Solo Franking

by

Jim Felton



The cover illustrated here, postmarked September 11, 1939, shows a 14-cent Prexie paying the correct two-ounce UPU letter rate to Australia with domestic airmail to the exchange office (San Francisco.) The rate breaks down as follows. For the first ounce, 5c UPU + 3c domestic airmail surcharge; for the second ounce, 3c UPU + 3c domestic airmail surcharge. This makes the correct 14-cent rate and shows that each additional ounce required an additional 6 cents postage. Thus, a correctly franked four-ounce letter would bear 26 cents (8c + 6c + 6c + 6c) postage.

Also noteworthy is that the letter was posted a week after the beginning of World War II in Europe. Already, censorship was up and running in Australia.

Unusual Prexie Postcard Usages

by

Bob Hohertz

Gordon E. Katz presented the subject of Prexies on postcards in the March 2006 issue of *La Posta*. The items provided here illustrate additional usages not shown by Katz.



Special delivery postcards are not particularly common, but cannot be called rare, either. Airmail special delivery cards are even less common. Katz did locate and illustrate one airmail special delivery postcard from 1947. The example above is much earlier, from 1941. It contains market advice sent from Los Angeles to Chicago. If such practice occurred on a regular basis more examples should exist.



Postcards mailed in Canada franked with US stamps only are common, while from Mexico less so. The example above was mailed in 1946 near the U.S. border, in Tijuana, Mexico paid with a one-cent Prexie. For reasons unclear it was charged three cents postage due. At this time the postage due on an unpaid ordinary item from Mexico should have been the deficiency, and the postcard rate from Mexico to the United States was four centavos, or about a third of a cent. Did the San Diego postal clerk misplace a decimal point?



This next postcard is of interest because a postal clerk decided the rule about keeping one side of the postcard only for the address was being blatantly disregarded here. The card was held pending payment of enough postage for the letter rate.

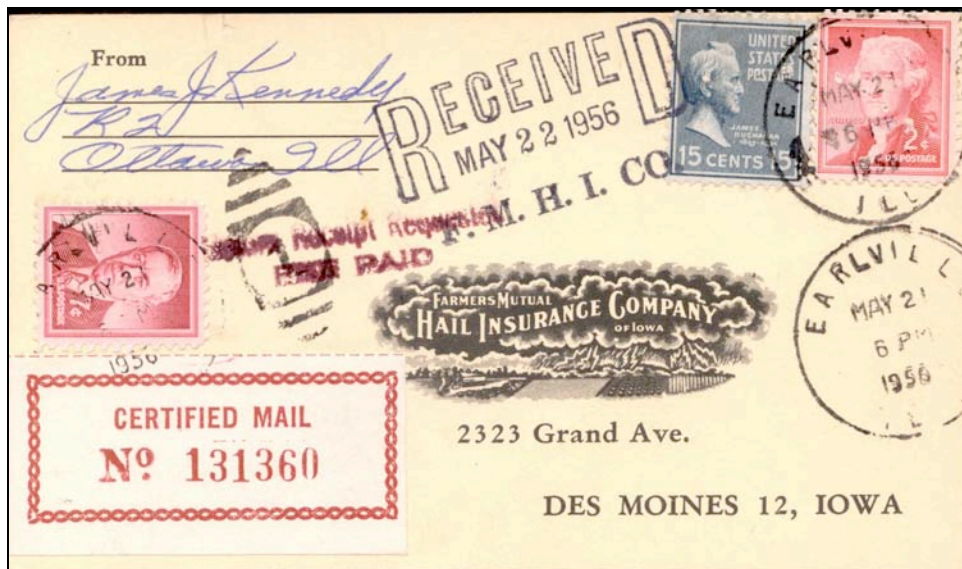


The next three post cards, all posted to the same commercial address, provide variations of special services ordinarily seen on letter mail. One of the most difficult services to find applied to a postcard surely must be registry. This card was used to report storm damage. It was mailed on

May 31, 1955 one week before the end of registry for no indemnity and the beginning of certified mail service. A 30-cent Prexie pays the registry fee. The penny postcard cost 2 cents, effective January 1, 1952.



The next example of a postcard sent to the same company postmarked July 5, 1955 from Fancy Prairie, Illinois, bears postage paying for certified mail service. The cost of certified mail for an item of no value (15 cents) was half that of the registry fee.

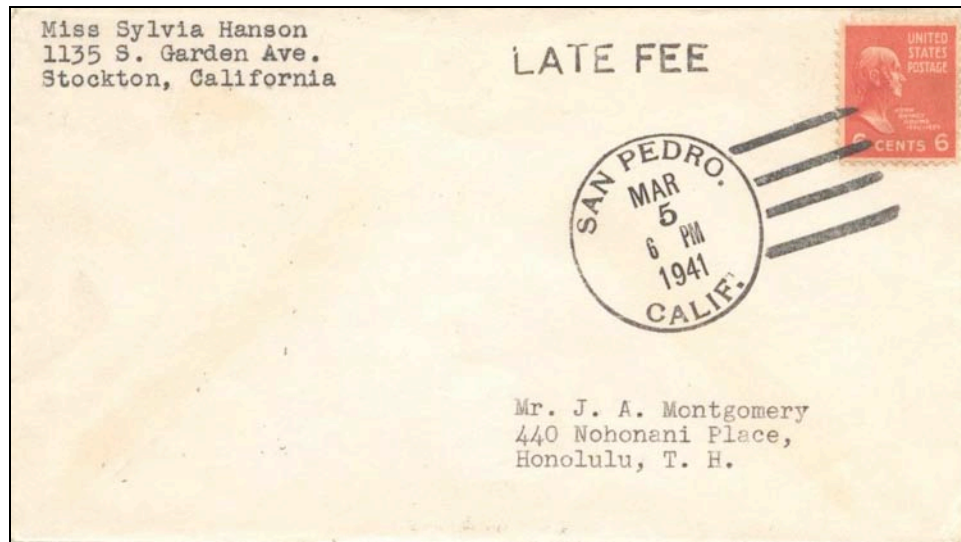


The final card illustrated here, bearing 24 cents postage, was sent by certified mail, with sufficient postage to pay for Return Receipt Requested. The 15-cent Prexie pays the certified mail fee, while the two stamps from the Liberty series pay the postcard rate (2 cents) and return receipt service (7 cents). This combination of services on a post card rarely appears.

Late Fee Letter From Los Angeles Franked With A Solo 6-Cent Prexie

by

Dickson Preston



One service provided by the U.S. Post Office was acceptance of mail at dockside during the time between the closing of the mails to be carried by a ship and the time the ship actually departed. This service was available from the nineteenth century up to the beginning of World War II. Twentieth-century aspects of interest to collectors of Prexie era postal history have recently been documented with great thoroughness in the *United States Specialist* by Leonard Piskiewicz in his series of articles called "U.S. Supplementary Mail."

The example shown was posted at dockside in the Port of Los Angeles, located at San Pedro, California. As described by Piskiewicz in his chapter on San Pedro in the April 2008 issue of the *Specialist*, a post office was opened at the dock one and one-half hours before the ship departed. This office accepted letter mail and parcel post, sold stamps, and dispatched mail aboard the ship. Mail accepted there received postmarks with the date and time the ship was scheduled to depart. This service started at San Pedro in 1935 and ended when the U.S. entered World War II in December 1941.

All examples seen from this location correspond to departures of ships of the Matson Navigation Company, and this cover is no exception. According to the *Los Angeles Times* "Shipping News" column for 5 March 1941, the Matson vessel *Monterey* arrived at 7:30 a.m. from San Francisco and was scheduled to sail at 6:00 p.m. for Melbourne. The date and time on the cover shown match the scheduled departure time for this ship.

Postage for this service was assessed at twice the rate for normal surface postage. For a domestic destination, such as this one to Hawaii, the postage was twice the 3-cent letter rate, or 6 cents. For a foreign destination, which required UPU postage, the rate was twice the 5-cent UPU letter postage, or 10 cents. Payment of the extra postage for acceptance of this letter after the normal mails had closed was acknowledged by the hand-stamped marking "LATE FEE."

Piskiewicz's excellent series of articles will soon appear in book form, including newly discovered examples and information. The book will be published by our parent organization, the United States Stamp Society.

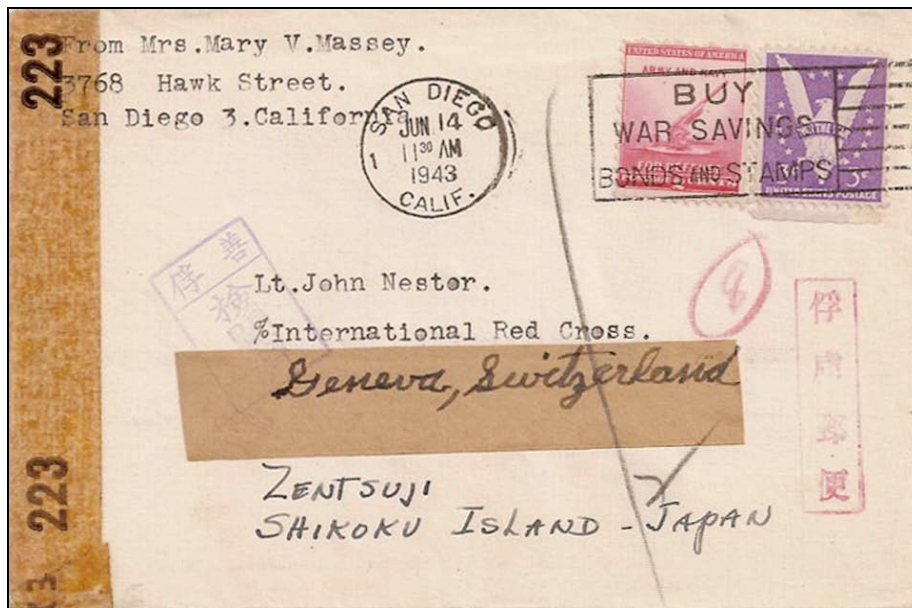
Mail to Japanese-Held POWs Bearing U.S. Stamps with “Patriotic Themes”

by

Kurt Stauffer

One of the postage stamps covered by “Postal Bulletin no 18687 dated January 25, 1944 “ was Scott # 905 issued July 4, 1942 and known as the “Win the War” stamp. This quasi-commemorative stamp displaced the 3-cent Prexie definitive as the workhorse stamp for the remainder of the war. I have never seen this stamp used on POW mail to Germany, but have found several examples on mail that did indeed make it to POWs held in Japan. The fact that mail to POWs was allowed to be sent postage free, makes surviving covers with stamps scarce, and those with “Win the War” stamps even scarcer. Most franked mail with two of the 3-cent stamps mistakenly paid the 6-cent airmail concession rate on soldiers’ mail or the domestic airmail rate.

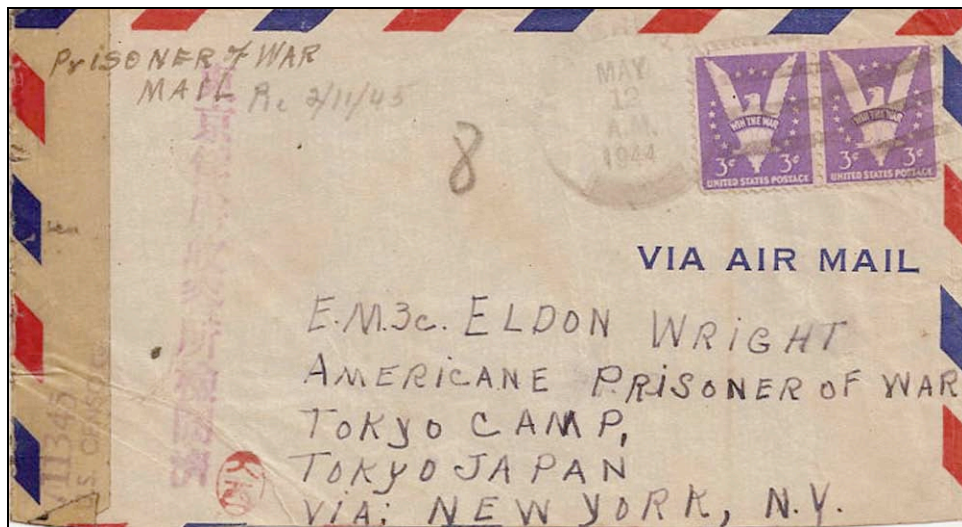
The earliest example I have noted is postmarked June 14, 1943 at San Diego, California. The sender addressed it to the International Red Cross in Geneva, applying 5-cents franking to pay the UPU rate for a one ounce letter. Once arriving in Switzerland the letter was forwarded by the Red Cross to Camp Zentsuji, in Japan. The square Japanese censor mark that partially covers his name is from that camp. The 4-character rectangular marking under the stamps reads “Prisoner of War Mail.” The US censor tape on the left (223) was applied by a censor assigned to the POW Unit at the New York field station. The addressee, Lt. John Nestor, was captured at Guam in Dec 1941 while serving as a crew member on the USS *Barnes*.



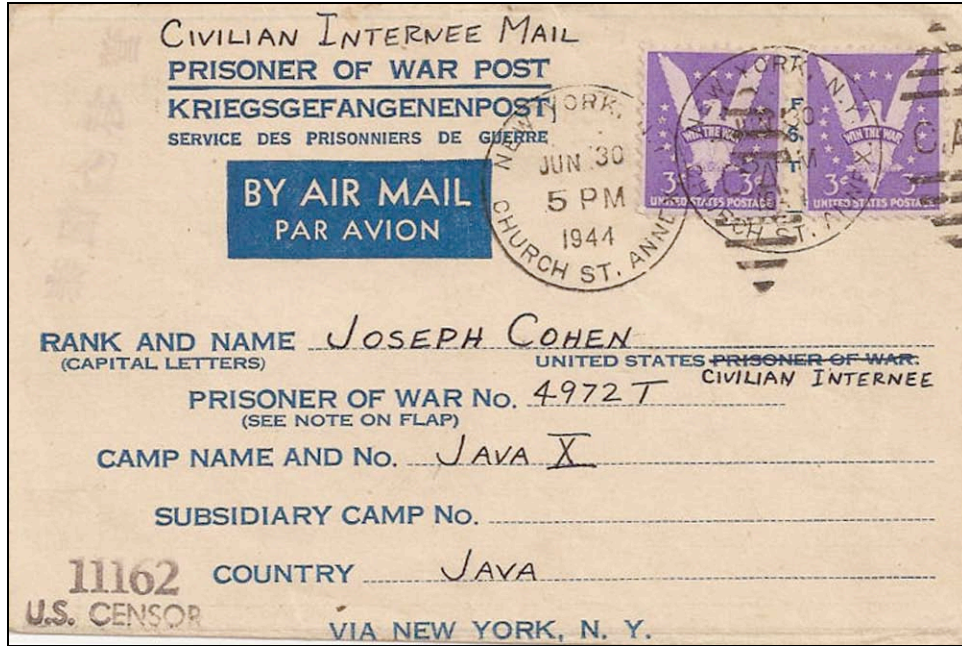
The second example was postmarked August 31, 1943 mailed in plenty of time to be carried on the second diplomatic exchange voyage of MS *Gripsholm*. The 3 cents postage paying the domestic surface rate was unnecessary on POW mail. The cover was received at Kawasaki Dispatch Camp # 5 in Japan (5- D). The purple, multi-character Japanese censor mark beneath the stamp was applied at this camp. The US Censor tape on the left was applied at the New York POW Unit. PFC Chester Venable was captured in the Philippines and transported to Japan in 1942. The manuscript “#358” in the address line indicates Venable’s assigned POW identification number.



The third cover, below, was sent to a POW very lucky to be alive. EM3c Eldon Wright was a crewman on the submarine *USS Sculpin*, sunk in a surface battle with Japanese naval forces on November 19, 1943 during an attack on a convoy. The 21 survivors became POW's of the Japanese. This cover was posted May 24, 1944 at Hurricane, Utah and addressed to Wright at Camp 8, located in Tokyo. US and Japanese censor marks may be seen to the left.



The last cover in the group bears the latest postmark of any covers with “Win the War” stamps I have encountered. It was postmarked June 30, 1944 at the New York Church Street Annex. The addressee is a non-combatant (civilian) merchant seaman captured after the *SS American Leader* was sunk by the German surface raider, *Michel*, on August 10, 1942 while in the South Atlantic. He was held in Java by Japanese forces after the German navy transferred him into their custody. A faint Japanese five-character censor mark may be seen in the upper left hand corner of the letter form. The US censor mark in the lower left and was applied at the New York POW Unit. The letter form used in this example, War Dept PMG Form No. 111, was first available in April 1944.

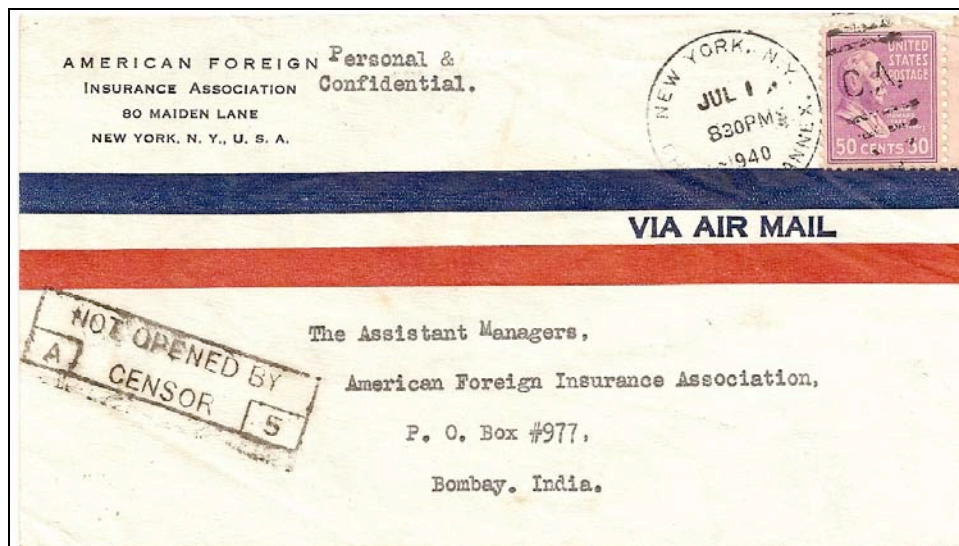


This group of four covers suggests Japanese censors allowed POW mail sent to Japan to pass bearing stamps with “patriotic themes.” If not, then they certainly missed a few!

A Short Lived Airmail Rate to India

by

Robert Schlesinger



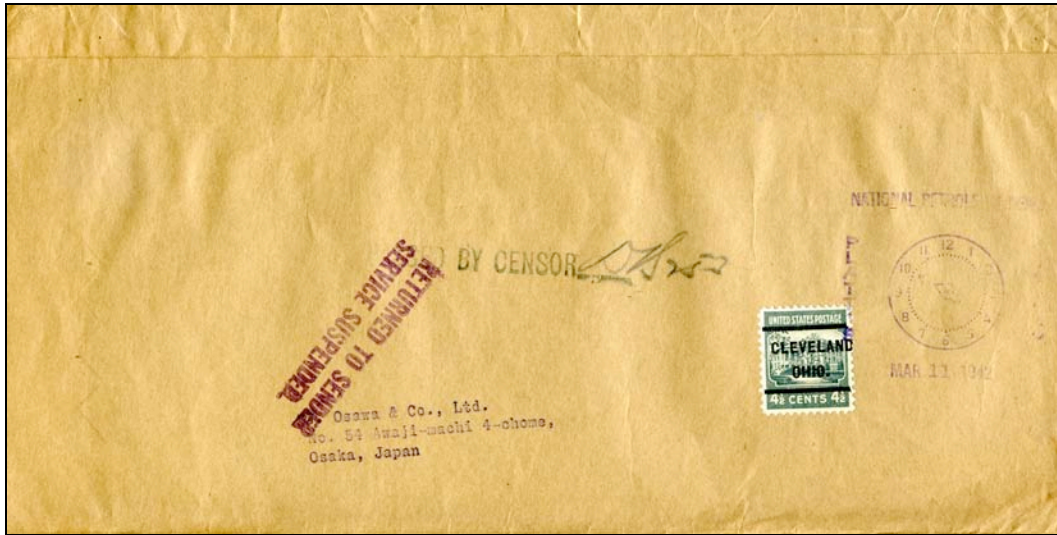
The 50 cents per half-ounce rate to India was in effect from May 23, 1939 through June 14, 1940, a period of just over one year. This mail was carried by trans-Atlantic carrier to Europe then on to India by air. The rate was relatively obscure, even to postal clerks, as this cover, postmarked July 1, 1940, was allowed to go to its destination 16 days after the end of the rate without postage due assessed. The cover was passed unopened by India censors.

Printed Matter To Asia Censored In Canada

by

Howard Lee

The two wrappers shown here originated with the Cleveland based *National Petroleum News*, a trade journal reporting on news and trends for the retail sale and distribution of petroleum products. Both destined for Asia, they were returned following the attack on Pearl Harbor. The first wrapper bears a 4½-cent Prexie paying the six-ounce foreign surface printed matter rate (1.5 cents per two ounces.) The second, with 7½ cents postage, pays the 10-ounce rate. The latter was postmarked November 12, 1941, and both were docketed on March 11, 1942.



Interestingly, both wrappers received Canada Imperial censorship (DB). Likely, the **RETURNED TO SENDER** directive on the first wrapper was applied at Seattle, whereas the **RETOUR-RETURN** directive on the second, in French and English, occurred at Vancouver where both were censored. Trade relations between the U.S. and Japan were suspended after the U.S. froze Japanese assets in summer 1941. Commercial shipping between Canada and Japan, including transport of the mail between North America and Asia, continued until the outbreak of the war.