



The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

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Issue No. 20

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the BIA 1938 Presidential Era Study Committee

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Steven M. Roth, Editor

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Message from Former Editor John Grabowski

It has been a real pleasure and privilege to serve as Editor of the Prexie Era Study Committee Newsletter over the past several years. The time has come, however, for me to "pass the baton" to a fresh and enthusiastic new Editor. Despite my good intentions, it has become increasingly difficult for me to produce the three or four issues each year that our member want and deserve.

The primary reasons for my lack of time have been the usual culprits: a growing investment business; a deluge of new investment information on the Internet for me to sift through and absorb; the economic slowdown and its affect on my new business; new computer hardware and software for me to learn; and, a few new philatelic pursuits to fill-up my free time.

The Prexie Era Study Committee is a great group to work with. Member support and participation are about the best in any philatelic society I have seen – please keep up this good work. I'm sure that our new Editor, Steve Roth, will appreciate your contributions.

Although I am turning the reins over to a new Editor with this Issue of the Newsletter, I have no plans to abandon Prexie Era collecting or writing for our Newsletter. With Steve's permission and encouragement, you will be hearing a lot from me.

John Grabowski

**Subscriptions to the Newsletter
are free. Sign-up a friend.**

Message from the Current Editor

I am pleased, to paraphrase John's words above, to "take up the baton" as your new Editor and publisher.

My goal is to publish at least four issues each year, with more Newsletters coming if I have sufficient material available. I hope to run five or six articles or reports in each issue, and to keep administrative/news matters to a minimum. To do this, I will need your help.

Please send me your reports of stamps and covers, or whatever else interests you and which might also interest our members. If possible, send them to me in digital (MS Word or WordPerfect) format, although this is not necessary. You can write-up the material yourself or I will be glad to assist you (or, if you prefer, I even will write the report or article for you; I then will publish the report or article over your name).

For those of you who do not yet know me, here are a few words about my Prexie Era interests: I began collecting all Prexie rates and usages about eleven years ago. I eventually narrowed my focus so that now I collect Prexies on civilian mail only if the covers are going abroad during Word War II. I have further refined this collection to include only examples of such civilian mail if the rates, or the routes and/or the deliverability of the mail was adversely affected by combat conditions, by other military restrictions, or by non-military political factors. [Inevitably, I also have drifted into several related collections involving non-Prexie stamps issued and used during the Prexie Era, repeating the same theme as my current Prexie collection.]

Chairman's Notes

Welcome to the Twenty-First Century version of the Prexie Era Study Committee's Newsletter.

It's been a long time coming, but as you see, it's been worth the wait. Our new Editor, Steve Roth, has done a wonderful job resurrecting this great Newsletter. I hope all of you have plans to help Steve keep this a continuing publishing success.

The past few years have been good to the Prexies and Prexie-era emissions. Besides record-breaking prices for this material's postal history on Ebay, at last count I estimate that 16 individuals have been exhibiting Prexie-era material at national and regional stamp shows with great results.

I've also received a lot of nice comments regarding the ongoing series of articles written by Committee members, appearing in the United States Specialist, edited by Prexie aficionado, Len Piskiewicz.

As for Committee activities, we have held a number of regional meetings across the country to help members meet each other and to spread the word that PREXIE ERA materials RULE !!

Our next meeting will be at STaMpsHOW 2001 in Chicago. I hope to see you there !!

Jeffrey Shapiro

To the Gaza Strip and Back in 1949

by

Stephen L. Suffet

The Setting

The armies of the Arab League attacked the State of Israel in the morning of May 15, 1948, just hours after Israel had proclaimed its independence as a sovereign state. At that time the armed forces of Egypt were occupying the Gaza Strip, a narrow land mass found along the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, stretching from the top of the Sinai Desert to and beyond the city of Gaza.

Although Egypt occupied and administered the Gaza Strip until it was driven away by the Israelis during the 1967 Six Days War, Egypt never officially annexed the region. In fact, during its nineteen year occupation of the Gaza Strip, ordinary stamps from Egypt were not valid for use in the Gaza Strip. Instead, Egypt issued stamps for use in the region which were overprinted with the word **Palestine**.

Under the partition plan approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1947, the Gaza Strip was to become part of the Arab State of Palestine. This has not occurred as of 2001.

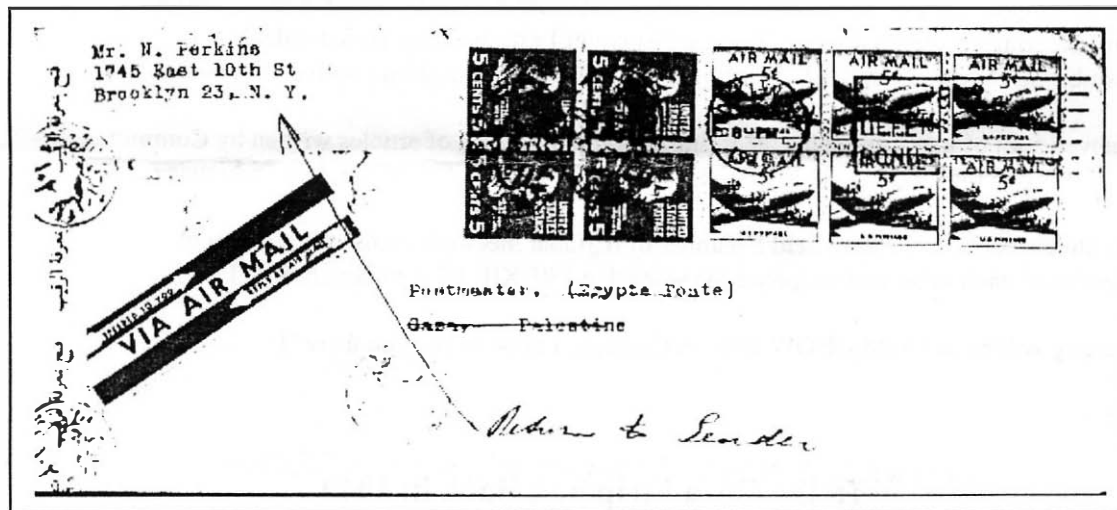
The Airmail Rates

Under the United States international airmail rate schedule that went into effect on November 1, 1946, the postage to Egypt was established at 15¢ per half ounce. The rate to Israel was set at 25¢ per half ounce.

The Questions

1. Which airmail rate (the 15¢ rate to Egypt or the 25¢ rate to Israel) applied to mail from the United States to the Gaza Strip?
2. Why was the letter returned to the sender?

The Cover



This double-weight cover was mailed from the United States to the City of Gaza in 1949. It was censored by Egyptian censors as shown by the censor tape and censor handstamp.

Although the cover was addressed to the Egyptian Post Office ("Egypte Poste") in Gaza, the name of the destination country was correctly given as *Palestine*, not as Egypt. Because the letter was mailed to territory partitioned and allocated by the United Nations to Israel, the letter properly was rated at 25¢ for airmail to Israel, rather than at 15¢, as it would have been for airmail to Egypt.

The receiving handstamp which appears on the back of the cover shows that the letter reached Gaza. For reasons not discernible from the cover, the letter was returned to the sender. Perhaps the censors required that the letter not be delivered?

Study Committee to Meet at Chicago STaMpsHOW

The Prexie Era Study Committee will meet on Saturday, August 25, at 2:00 pm. at the APS show to be held in Chicago. The meeting will be informal, and you are encouraged to bring along interesting covers and stamps to show among members and/or to trade.

E-mail Addresses: It's Time to Update

If you have not already sent in your E-mail address so that John Grabowski has listed it in Issue No. 17 (1998) or earlier, please do so now. Or, if like me, you have changed your E-mail address since it was listed, please send it to me for listing in a future Newsletter.

Here are the addresses I still have of a few of the members [after the recent loss of my hard drive and address book]:

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Joe Bock | jorobock@sedona.net |
| John Grabowski | minnjohn@uswest.net |
| Len Piskiewicz | lenp@pacbell.net |
| Steven M. Roth | smroth@starpower.net |
| Jeffrey Shapiro | coverlover1@yahoo.com |
| Robert Schlesinger | robertsles@aol.com |
| Stephen L. Suffet | suffet@worldnet.att.net |

Prexies at Auction: Thoughts of a Market Watcher

by

John Grabowski

Here are some thoughts on eBay activity. [Ed. Note: John's observations are as timely and cogent today as they were when he first wrote them.]

Someone once said: you can learn alot just by watching. That certainly is true when it comes to online auction material, especially when it comes to Prexie covers on eBay.

The new listings have slowed down to about one hundred additions per week, down from 150 or so new listings per week at year-end 2000.

The most notable trend for the past year is that many of the Prexie lots fail to attract any bidders at all. There probably are two reasons for this: (i) much of the "better" material available to sellers has already been sold online; and, (ii) many new sellers just do not realize what quality of material will attract serious Prexie postal historians. That is, too much common material is now being offered by eBay sellers. This is particularly true of mixed frankings (*i.e.*, Prexies on a cover along with non-Prexies) for common services and/or to common destinations.

On the other hand, the high end of the market for Prexie material continues to be strong for better solo usages, unusual rates and for scarce destinations. For example, there were eBay sales of the 11¢ solo stamp on cover which realized the following hammer prices: \$189.50 for a solo use on a 1939 postcard to Latvia (air/surface combi mail) at auction on April 1, 2000; \$510.37 for a solo use on an undated, probably 3rd Class, usage, at auction on July 9,

2000; and, \$1,136.11 for a solo use on a 1951 insured airmail cover, at auction on July 16, 2000.

It also is interesting to compare prices realized on items that are similar. I take as my example the 1-½¢ vertical coil [Martha Washington] paying the 3rd Class rate — an item seldom seen. In the two examples I have noted, the covers realized \$183.50 (April 26, 2000) and \$160.60 (July 9, 2000), respectively.

Three lots of the 1-½¢ vertical coil paying the regular 3¢ First Class rate (also not very common), realized \$15 (December 28, 2000), \$21.50 (July 8, 2000), and \$27.50 (July 26, 2000), respectively.

The results of the sale of 17¢ solo usage also are interesting: \$51 (October 28, 2000); \$56 (May 13, 2000); and, \$150.10 (May 14, 2000).

[Ed. Note: John updated his observations and thoughts in an email to the Editor on July 1, 2001, as follows] :

“It is now my observation that pricing of this material on eBay is becoming more rational (*i.e.*, lower) although the exotic items still command very active bidding and, therefore, high prices. In fact, many of the common items now are going unsold on eBay at any price. It is a clear sign that this market has matured after the initial rush of 1999 and 2000.”

Classified Notices: Buy, Sell and Trade

There is no set editorial or Committee policy concerning classified notices for members. I am willing (if space is available) to include free notices for members if you would like. Send me your short notices and I will run them as space permits.

The 14,275 Miles Journey: A Well-Travelled Cover

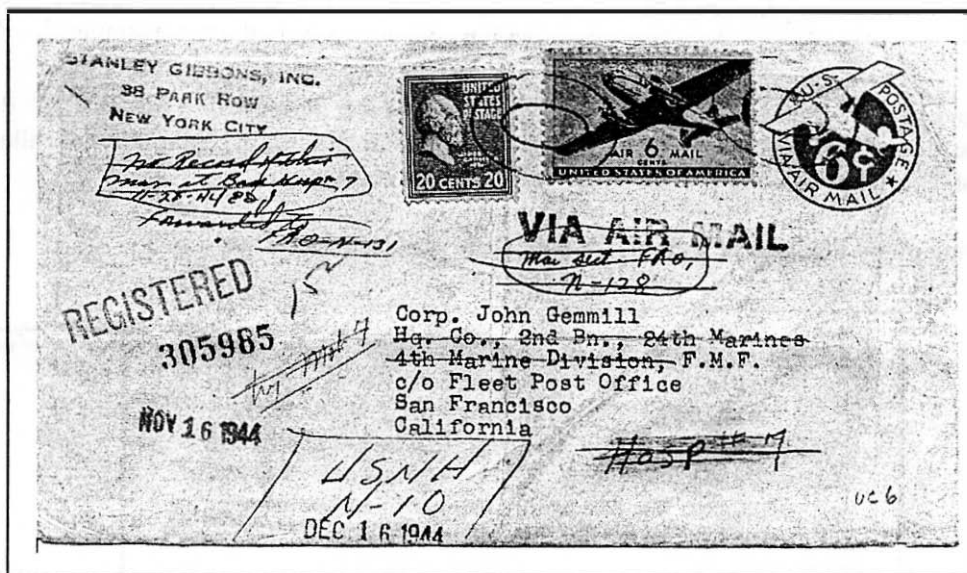
by

Jeffrey Shapiro

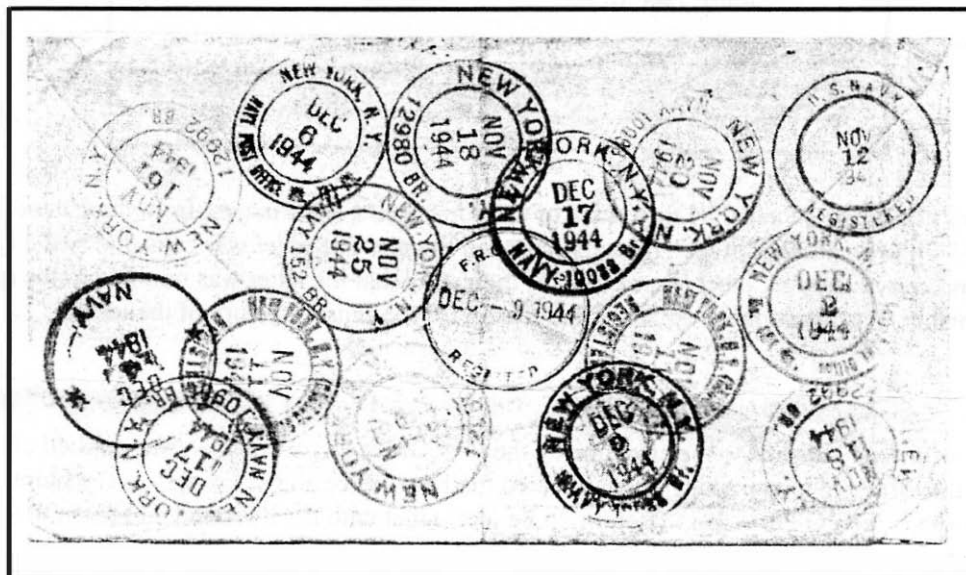
For many philatelists, nothing seems to stop their pursuit of acquiring another stamp or cover — not even a World War. In serving this need, the firm of Stanley Gibbons, Inc. mailed a stamp order to a United States Marine Corporal who was stationed in the South Pacific.

The cover [see the illustration on the next page] was a double rate registered airmail letter franked with 32¢

in postage, made up by combining the 6¢ airmail rate (x2) stamp & embossed envelope with the 20¢ Prexie for the registry fee [for under \$5.00 indemnity].



As you can see from the postal markings on the back of the envelope, this cover travelled quite a distance.



The notations on the front and the back of the envelope disclose that the letter was mailed on November 11, 1944 in New York City at the Church Street Station, entering the U.S. Navy's postal system on November 12. From there it travelled to the 4th Marine Division (12980); the 24th Marines (12992); Pearl Harbor (10088); Tulagi, British Solomon Islands (152); Noumei, New Caledonia (131); and, finally, through to the U.S. Navy Hospital No. 10 at Pearl Harbor, where the letter finally was delivered on December 17, 1944. The overall journey for this cover was at least 14,275 miles from point of deposit into the mails to the point of delivery.

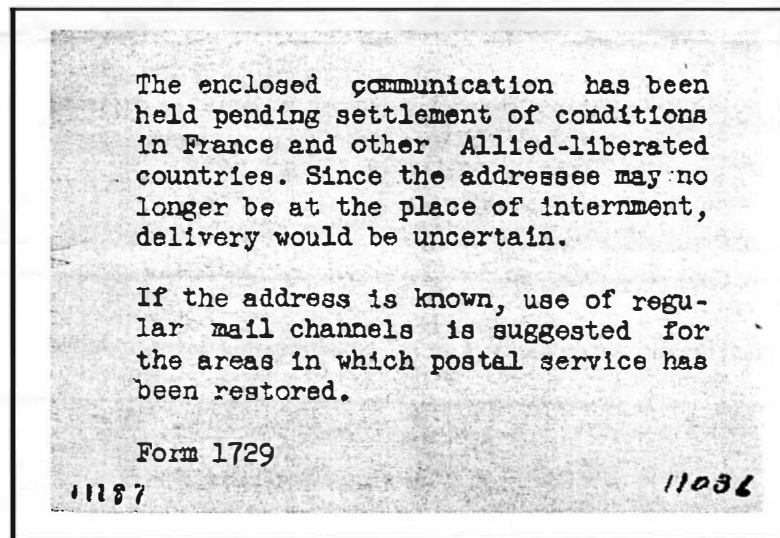
World War II Letter Mail Labels

by

Steven M. Roth

I have been accumulating civilian mail sent to the several theatres of war during World War II which demonstrate adverse conditions that affected mail transportation and delivery. Generally, these conditions were alluded to through the use of hand stamps and/or printed labels applied to the envelopes.

Below is a sampling of my holdings of such labels, with some observations by me.



This label [Form 1729] was attached by the Office of Censorship to a letter mailed from the United States on December 14, 1944, to an address in then recently liberated France. The letter was censored in the U.S. where it received a second, very common, label [Form OC-15] indicating that the letter was returned to the sender by the Office of Censorship. The above label explained the reason for the censor's return of the letter.

* * * * *

Another label — this one attached to the envelope by the Post Office Department — was applied after examination of the letter by the Office of Censorship, which directed the Post Office at San Francisco (the point of origin of the letter) to attach the PO Form 2911 [Return To Sender] label with the indicated reason on this 1942 letter to occupied Norway:

Form 2211
 Post Office San Francisco, Calif.
RETURN TO SENDER
 (Sections 2203 and 2204, P. L. & E.)

This article is returned for delivery to the sender, as it is not transmissible to destination for the reason noted below:

Reason for return:

**Service restricted to
 nonillustrated post cards.
 Postage rate 3¢ ea.**

Attention is called to Section _____ (paragraph _____)
 on page _____ of Part II of the Postal Guide.
William H. McCarthy, POSTMASTER.
 GPO : 1938-1 Per _____

* * * * *

Next, there is P.O. Form 862 which, while self-explanatory, requires some comment.

Date APR 24 1943

Returned by Censorship
 for Disposition under Postal
 Laws and Regulations pertain-
 ing to dead letters and dead
 parcel post.

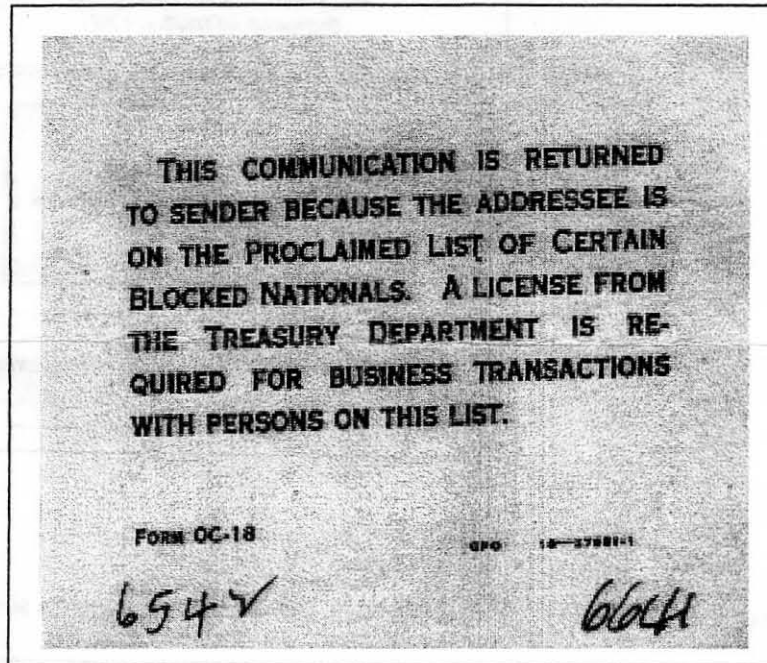
REASON: No Return Address

Form 862

My comment is this: although the label states that the letter lacked a return address, in fact this cover did have a return address, but it was placed on the back of the envelope. The Office of Censorship Regulations, however, required that civilian mail going abroad (in this case to occupied Netherlands in 1943) had to have a full legible return address placed in the upper-left corner at the front of the envelope.

* * * * *

Finally, the last label I will show for this Issue of the Newsletter was one applied by the Office of Censorship when mail was uncovered addressed to a recipient who was on the United States Treasury Department's Watch List.*



*NOTE: In 1990, I researched and wrote a monograph called "The Censorship of International Civilian Mail During World War II: The History, Structure and Operation of the United States Office of Censorship" (La Posta Monograph Series, Volume 6). While I did not discuss the labels and handstamps used by Censorship, I did examine in detail how mail was censored, how decisions were made to censor or not to censor a letter, and the practical problems incurred in operating the Office of Censorship — all based on original research among thousands of previously classified documents stored at the National Archives.

The monograph currently is out-of-print, but we are considering revising portions of it and publishing a new edition.

Newsletter Subscription Information

Anyone can
by sending

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P.O. Box 3211
Fayville, MA 01745-0211

contribute postage
01745-3211, or that
both.

Winter 2002



Issue No. 21

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the BIA 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

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Uncommon Use of Solo 25c Prexie - 1948 Emergency Service to Palestine by Jeffrey Shapiro

Another Secret World War II Address? Why? by Steven M. Roth

Don't let this issue of the Newsletter be your last!
See page 2.

Steven M. Roth, Editor

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Message from the Editor

I must begin this issue of the Newsletter by offering my apology to one of last issue's contributor, Steve Suffet.

As I transcribed his article ["To the Gaza Strip and Back in 1949"] I took certain liberties in hastily editing his text and, in so doing, I introduced (in several places) the erroneous reference to "Israel" where Steve had correctly used the term "Palestine". I apologize again to Steve and to any reader I might have confused or misled in my haste to publish.

* * * * *

Our study group Chairman, Jeff Shapiro, has sent each of you our request for a small contribution to help pay the costs of printing and mailing the Newsletter. If you have not yet responded to Jeff, please do so. We have almost no source of funds to cover production and mailing costs other than what we receive from subscribers. When (if) the money runs out, we either will not be able to continue to publish or we will be forced to trim the mailing list to those people who have made contributions. In the meantime, however, we will occasionally (as in this issue) run a small auction of material that has been donated. The proceeds of the sale will help defray the costs of the Newsletter.

Chairman's Letter

I am happy to report that interest in Prexie Era material remains high.

Interest in our Study Group, too, continues to grow. But we need your help. Please show your support by contributing to our efforts at least \$5.00 in cash and/or mint postage. Send your contribution to me at: PO Box 3211, Fayville, MA 01745.

Steve & I greatly appreciate your support.

I wish you all a healthy 2002, with successful stamping.

Jeff Shapiro

Prexies Featured in NJPH Journal

More than forty Prexie covers with some New Jersey affiliation were featured in the November 2001 issue of the journal of the New Jersey Postal History Society. Information about the Society or copies of the journal can be obtained at <njpostalhistory@aol.com>.

Forwarded Out Of the Country

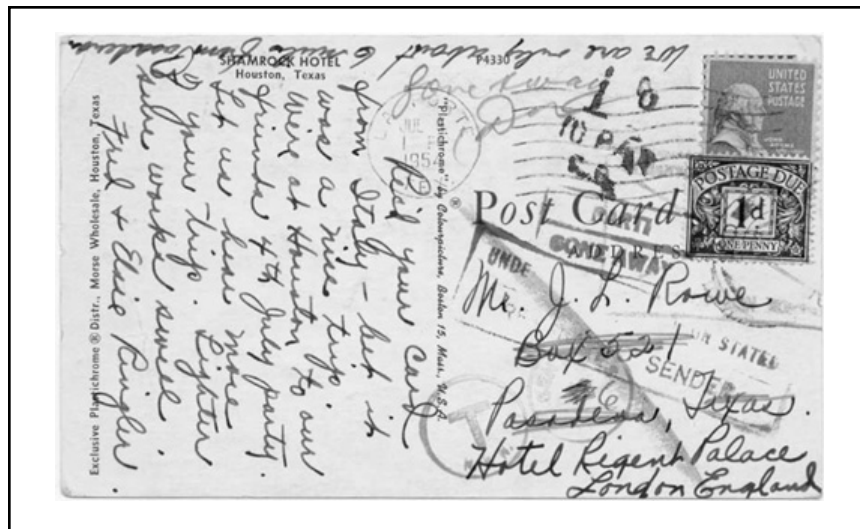
by

Dickson Preston

Ebay brought me a post card which originally began a six mile journey between two Texas towns and ended up crossing the Atlantic twice. The card was written by travellers at La Porte, Texas, and mailed to a friend in Pasadena, still in Texas, six miles away. The friend had departed, so the card was redirected to a London hotel.

Additional postage was charged to get the card to Great Britain since the domestic rate was 2 cents, while the UPU rate was 4 cents. If the card had been short paid, the charge would have been twice the indemnity, $2 \times 2 = 4$ cents, equal to 12 gold centimes. But since the card was redirected the charge was the 4 cents UPU rate, less the amount paid [$4 - 2 = 2$ cents, or 6 centimes]. The amount in the Exchange Office marking was changed by hand from 12 centimes to 6 centimes to reflect the correct charge.

In London the card was marked "1d TO PAY" and a stamp for that amount was applied and cancelled. However, the addressee had once again escaped so the card was marked "Gone Away" by hand and was hand-stamped "PARTI/GONE AWAY" "UNDE[LIVERED FOR REASON STATED/RE[TURN] TO SENDER". Since there was no return address, it is anyone's guess where the card went on its journey from London to Ebay and then to me.

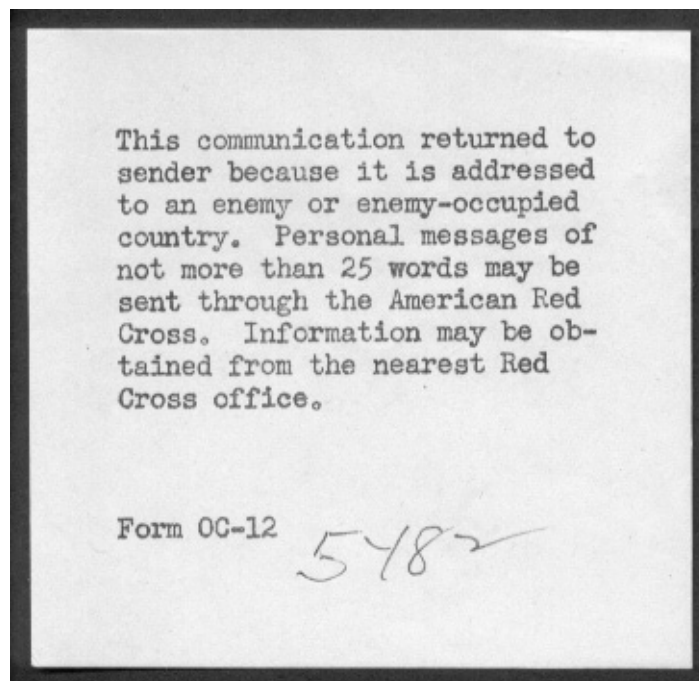


World War II Letter Mail Labels

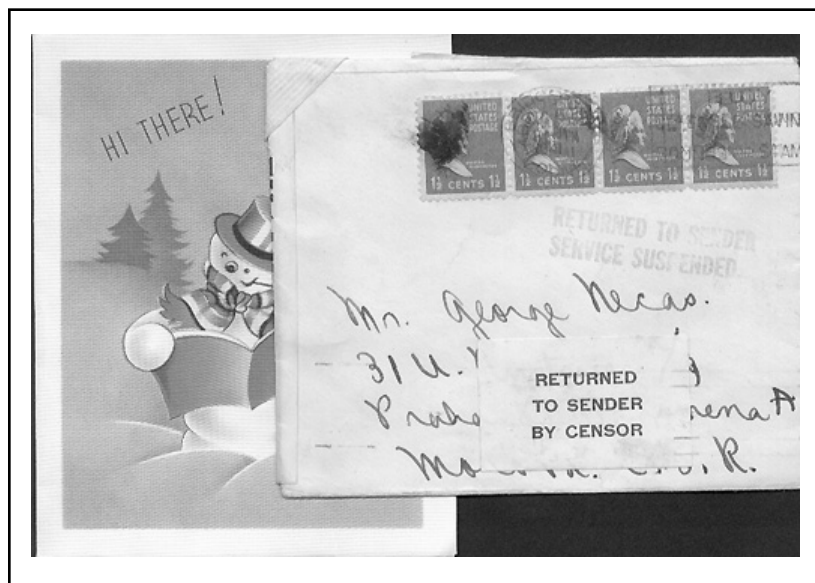
(continued from Issue No. 20)

Once the United States entered the War, it suspended mail delivery to Axis nations [e.g., Germany], countries under the control of the Axis [e.g., Holland], and mail to other countries to which mail delivery was not readily

and conveniently achievable [e.g., Switzerland in March 1943]. One notable exception was for letters of 25 words or less which contained a personal message. Such letters were to be mailed via the American Red Cross. (See Label OC-12 below.)



Apparently, the U.S. Office of Censorship did not consider a Christmas card mailed to Moscow in December 1941 within the scope of these requirements. It returned the card shown below with Form OC-12 attached.



[Editor's Note: I have run out of interesting labels from my holdings. Please send me some from yours]

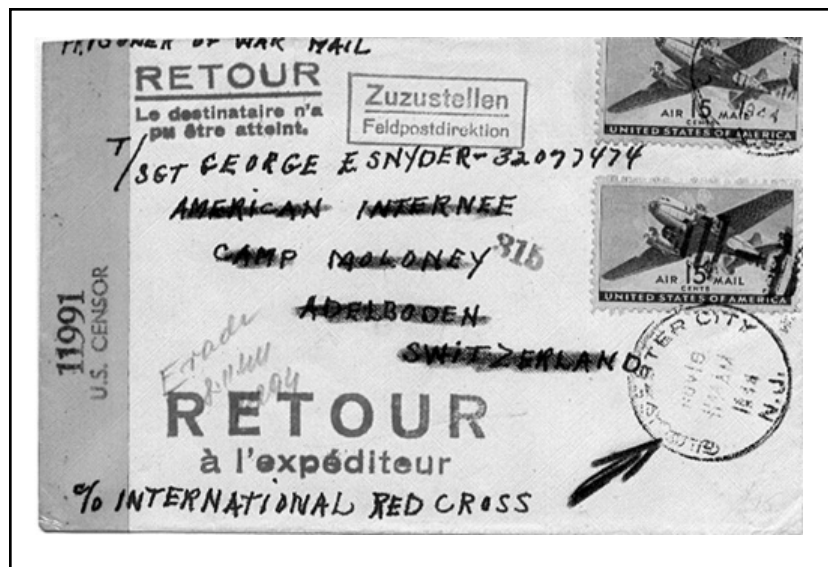
Your Editor needs your help. I need short articles, reports on interesting covers and information about in-period stamps. I also want news reports -- this is, afterall, a newsletter. Without your help, this Newsletter will become the *Roth House Organ* until I either run-out of my material or tire of writing.

Return to Sender - Prisoner Escaped! An Air Transport Cover

by

Steven M. Roth

This cover, sent to an American internee who was held at Camp Maloney, a detention camp located in Aldeboden, Switzerland, could not be delivered by the International Red Cross because, as someone had noted in pencil on the face of the cover, the addressee/prisoner of war had escaped ["Evade/8.11.44/4294"].



Do you want us to run Buy/Sell/Trade notices in the Newsletter? Let your Editor know.

A Famous American Censored Postal Card to Serbia

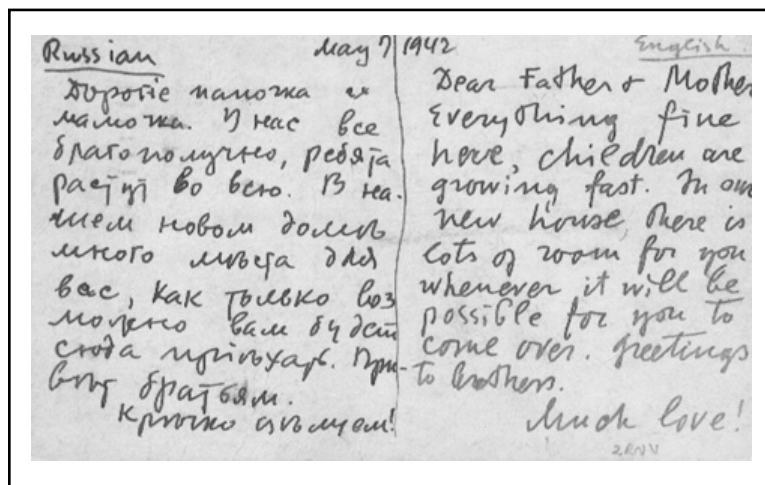
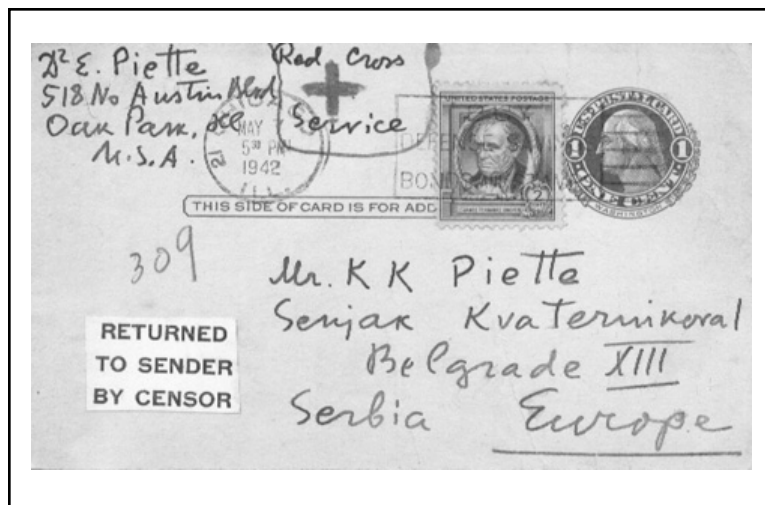
by

Steven M. Roth

Envelopes showing evidence of censorship are common even for the period before the United States entered the War. Postal cards, however, are far less common. A censored postal card to an interesting destination, therefore, is a very desirable artifact.

Shown below is a postal card bearing the 2 cents James Fenimore Cooper Famous Americans stamp added to a postal card to make-up the 3 cents postage fee to Europe. The card was mailed in Chicago on May 7, 1942, addressed to Belgrade, Serbia. The sender made the face of the card "Red Cross/+ /Service". A censor's label ["RETURNED/TO SENDER/BY CENSOR"] has been affixed to the face of the card.

The message side of the card is divided into two parts: the left side has the message written in Russian; the right side has the message written in English.



Study Group Donor Auction

We begin our Committee Donor Auction in this Issue of the Newsletter . All net proceeds will be used to pay the costs of printing & mailing the Newsletter. Our first three Lots were contributed, respectively, by: Steve Ekstrom, by Anonymous, and by your Editor, in the order presented below.

Auction Rules

1. All bids must be received by 5:00 pm (EST).
2. Bids less than the stated Minimum Bid will not be executed.
3. Winning bidders will be notified of the realized price(s) of their Lot(s), together with postage and mailing supply/box due.
4. Payment must be received by the Chairman within ten (10) days of the sending of the e-mail notice.
5. Each Lot will go to the highest bidder at the actual bid amount. There will not be any buyer's premium added to a winning bid.
6. In case of tie bids, the earliest bid received by the Chairman wins.
7. In case of disputes, the Chairman's decision is final.
8. Neither the Chairman nor the Editor is responsible for errors in the description of any Lot. Lots are mailed at the risk of the buyer. Postal insurance is at the expense of the buyer.
9. Send your bids by snail mail to: Jeffrey Shapiro, PO Box 3211, Fayville, MA 01745-3211 or to him by e-mail at coverlover1@yahoo.com].

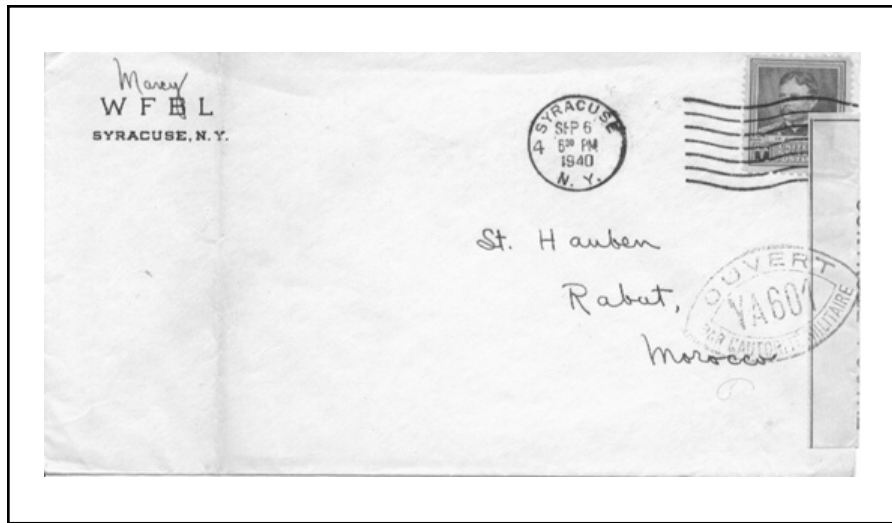
The Auction

Lot #1. March 22, 1944. Washington, DC to Brazil. Censor's handstamp on front. Interesting handstamp relating to the technical information enclosed [Sender, Harvey B. Jacobson, was a well-known Washington patent attorney]. Sent airmail -- rated 12 times the 40 cents postage. Minimum Bid: \$10.

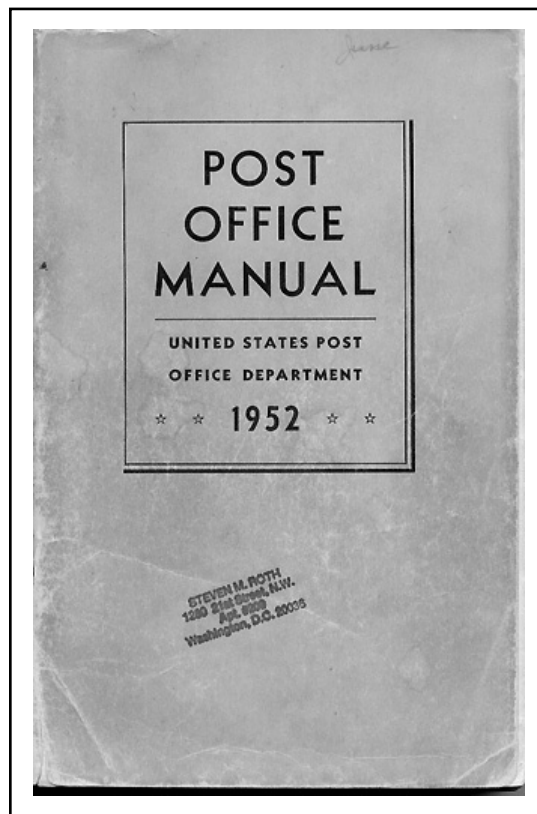


Lot #2. 5 cents Famous American stamp on ocean mail envelope addressed to Rabat, Morocco. Postmark dated September 6, 1940. Letter censored by Moroccan Military, and censor tape applied to right side to close up the envelope. Censor handstamp on front and back. Envelope creased at left; minor tear at left top.
Minimum Bid: \$3.00.

Lot #2: [continued from prior page]



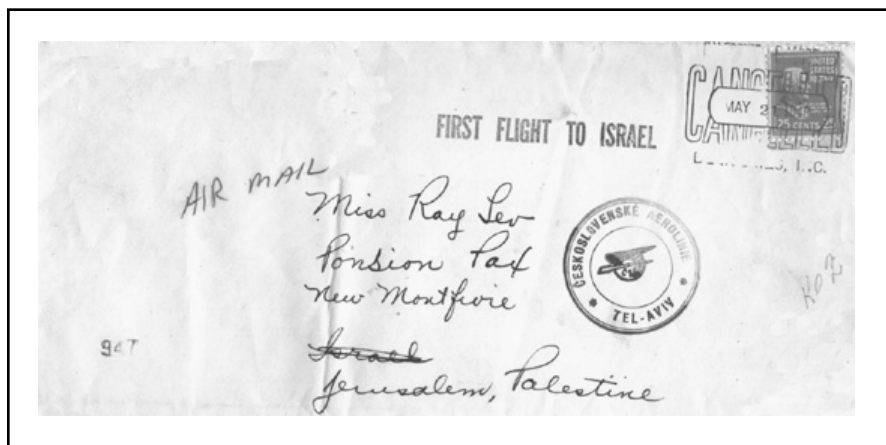
Lot #3. "Post Office Manual/United States Post Office Department/1952". 603pp. Well-used. Some clerk's notes written inside at various places. This volume contains a wealth of information about the operation of the Post Office Department during the Prexy Era. Cover bent in places and with some minor tears. This is an invaluable resource for the Prexy Era postal historian. **Minimum Bid: \$5.00.**



UNCOMMON USE OF SOLO 25c PREXIE - 1948 EMERGENCY SERVICE TO PALESTINE

by

Jeffrey N. Shapiro



Due to worsening conditions in the Arab/Israeli struggle, the United States Post Office suspended surface mail to Palestine at the end of March 1948. When “disturbed conditions” threatened air fields, air mail service was also suspended on 27 April 1948. Because of the importance of mail connections with the outside world, the New York-based Jewish Agency for Palestine, the unofficial embassy in America for the soon-to-be-established State of Israel, immediately proposed that mail destined for Palestine be collected in New York City and shipped as air freight.

Discussions began with KLM but switched to Ceskoslovenske Aerolinie (CSA) when that airline was the first to be granted landing rights by the newly-created State of Israel. With CSA ready to fly freight into Israel, and with a great demand for the proposed service, the Jewish Agency and other American Zionist organizations moved quickly to establish the Palestine Emergency Deliveries, Inc. (PEDI).

Procedures were relatively simple. Mail destined for Israel was sent to PEDI’s office in Manhattan under separate cover, franked with US stamps paying the then current 25c per half ounce international air rate to Asia and the Middle East. An additional 25c per half ounce was paid in cash or by money order to PEDI. These procedures were in full compliance with US Postal Regulations: any private carrier could accept and convey mail provided that the proper postage had been paid.

The first shipment was processed by PEDI personnel on 20-21 May. A few days later (date, air carrier and route are undocumented) the PEDI shipment left New York for Rome where it was impounded by Italian Customs officials. On 2 June a pouch containing about 1,200 PEDI letters was released to the crew of a CSA Dakota airliner, en route to Haifa via Athens. Upon arrival in Haifa that same evening, airline employees applied the CSA/Tel Aviv receiving mark to PEDI letters, even though the Tel Aviv airport was closed because of hostilities. The 1,200 letters came as a complete surprise to the newly established Israeli Post Office. It was assumed that air mail service from the United States had resumed and the PEDI mail was promptly delivered.

About 10,000 letters were delivered by PEDI and CSA through 7 June, on paper the date when official air mail service between the US and Israel was re-established. (Actual service did not resume until 28 June). PEDI continued to transmit mail well into July 1948. It is estimated that over 26,000 pieces of mail were processed before PEDI ended its services.

References:

Shamir, Chaim & Siegel, Marvin. **Air Mail Services From Abroad in May and Early June 1948**, Holy Land Postal History XXVIII, Autumn 1986, pp. 375-397.

Shamir, Chaim & Siegel, Marvin. **The Emergency Mails in 1948: Part B Palestine Emergency Deliveries, Inc. (PEDI)**. Holy Land Postal History XXXI, Summer 1987, pp. 527-553.

Another Secret Address? Why?

by

Steven M. Roth

Secret mailing addresses used during World War II have been well documented as to their purposes, identities and locations. There were, for example, those for mail addressed to people working on the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos; there was Box 506 in Lisbon, Portugal; and there was 25 Broadway, New York, NY, to name a few of the most familiar addresses.

Now, in the Postal Bulletin for March 5, 1943 (No. 18563) we see perhaps another secret address:

PRISONERS-OF-WAR MAIL

Treatment to be Given Matter Bearing as Part of Address “Post Office Box No.20, General Post Office, New York, N.Y.”

All concerned are requested to see that mail intended for prisoners of war and civilian internees bearing as part of the address “Post Office Box 20, General Post Office, New York, N.Y.,” is routed to that address even though the serial number of the addressee is omitted or the name of the State in which the camp is located appears on the envelope.

No. 18563, Friday, March 5, 1943

Why was there a secret mail address for civilian internees and prisoners-of-war who were held in the United States? It was unlikely that the purpose was to keep their locations secret since the PB notice acknowledged that the name of the state in which the camp was located might already be on the envelope. Rather, it is more likely that such routing was intended as an aid to the examination and censorship of all mail addressed to such persons by centralizing the examination and distribution.

Does anyone have a cover addressed to **PO Box No. 20** that we can display in the next Issue?

Spring 2002



Issue No. 22

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the BIA 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Inside this Issue:

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A Reader Responds: A *PO Box 20* Undercover Address Cover by Louis Fiset

Return to Sender/No Service Available: When Was Letter Service to Neutral Switzerland Temporarily Suspended? by Steven M. Roth

Show & Tell: Items From Our Readers

Steven M. Roth, Editor

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Message From the Editor

My thanks to all of you who have contributed to this Issue. The material is diverse and interesting. I now need reports, etc., for Issue No. 23, and would appreciate having whatever you can offer.

Here is a content question for which I would appreciate your feedback: Is it appropriate -- now that the Newsletter covers the Prexie Era (not just Prexies) -- to include reports about covers without stamps? I made the judgment for Issue No. 22 that Len Piskiewicz's report is so interesting that I would include it. Will this approach be appropriate for future Issues as well? Please let me know your thoughts about this or any other matter affecting the Newsletter.

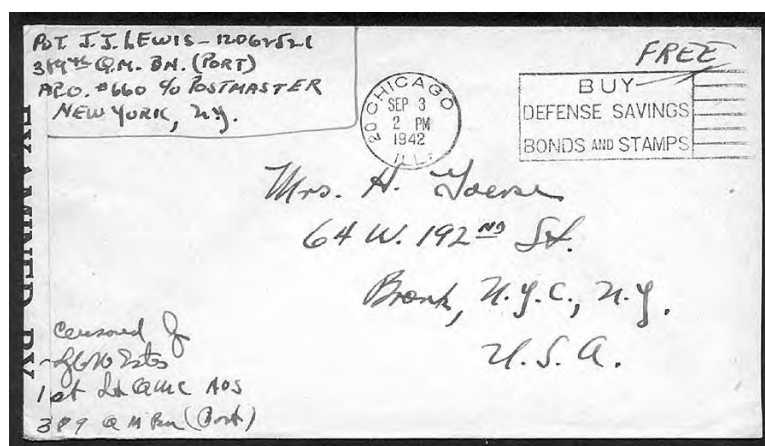
I also want to thank those readers who have responded to our call for contributions to keep the Newsletter coming. The response has been very gratifying. However, since our publication fund is not self-renewing, we always need additional funds or postage. Please continue to send your contributions to Jeff Shapiro; and, please send your auction donations directly to me.

Censored Within the U.S.?

by

Leonard Piskiewicz

The illustrated cover, at first glance, looks like a domestic letter that was censored during the early days of World War II. It was postmarked at Chicago and was destined for the Bronx, New York.



One does not often see a cover that was postmarked in the United States, addressed to a destination in the United States, and censored. In this instance the cornercard script offers the clue to the explanation.

The cover actually is from the early days of APO 660 in Churchill, Manitoba -- a town where polar bears are at the top of the food chain. Apparently, after the letter was censored, it was dropped into the mail in Chicago. This is not the only such cover known. Bill Helbock wrote about "Censor Markings of the U.S. Army in 1942" in *La Posta* some years ago, illustrating another cover from APO 660, also postmarked

at Chicago. The Helbock cover was dated SEP 21 1942 [*La Posta*, May 1996, p.7]; the cover in this report has a postmark dated SEP 3, 1942. So far, these are the only reported covers from APO 660!

What is curious about both covers is that neither received U.S. Army Postal Service postmarks.

As Helbock writes, APOs 660 and 669 were established in July 1942. APO 660 was discontinued in October 1942; APO 669 was discontinued at some date not known to Helbock. Since both were short-term APOs, they might never have had postmark devices, so that outgoing letters entered the mail at some convenient point in the United States after being processed by the Office of Censorship. There are no reported covers from APO 669.

Does anyone have a cover from APO 660 or APO 669? If so, please report it to the Newsletter Editor or to this author. Also, does anyone have any records that will help establish how common or perhaps uncommon covers are from APOs with ordinary U.S. (non-Army) postmarks?

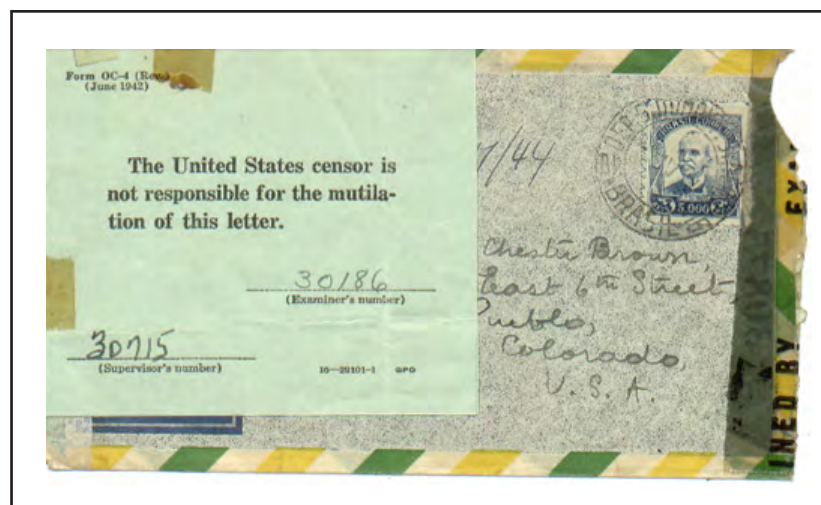
World War II Letter Mail Labels

[continued from Issue No.21]

by

Steven M. Roth

Until recently, all of the labels I have had in my holdings reflect official responses to *outgoing* international civilian mail. Now, however, I own an Office of Censorship label [Form OC-4 (Rev.)] which was applied to mail coming into the U.S.



This cover originated in Brazil in December 1943. It was delivered to the addressee in Colorado in May 1944.

Results of Donor Auction

Our first Donor Auction netted \$102 from four bidders who cast five bids for the three Lots. Lot #1 realized \$70; Lot #2 realized \$7; and, Lot #3 realized \$25. All of the proceeds will be used to offset the costs of publishing the Newsletter (*i.e.*, printing and/or postage). While we do not plan to host auctions frequently, we will include them in the Newsletter if suitable donations in kind are offered.

Pitney-Bowes Barrel Cancel: A Trial Use

by

James Felton

Reader Jim Felton recently wrote to the Editor:

I picked up [this] cover at INDYPEX last summer. This is a trial use of an experimental Pitney-Bowes barrel cancel. This is nearly 2 years prior to my earliest recorded use of the production devices (*i.e.*, early March 1953). I have reports from 2 parties of a 1953 trial use of the roller cancel based on the barrel. Len Piskiewicz sent me a copy of an article from *The Bureau Specialist* of March 1959 describing such experimental devices.



Wanted

Covers to Asia, Europe
and Africa in 1940.

Contact: Steve Roth

A Reader Responds: A *PO Box 20* Undercover Address Cover

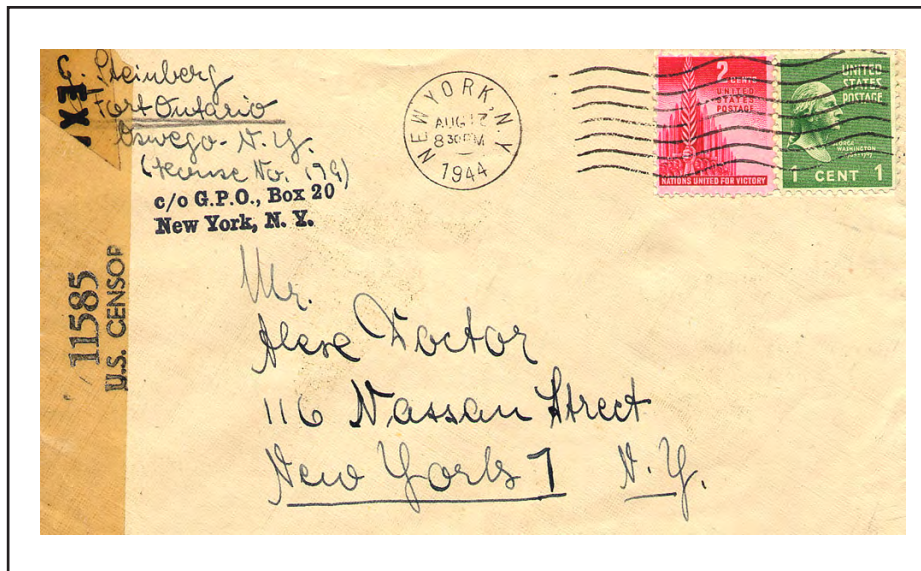
by

Louis Fiset

Reader Louis Fiset responded to my request in Issue No. 21 for examples of **PO Box 20** covers, offering two examples from his holdings.

Professor Fiset wrote:

In response to your request for covers with the PO Box 20 address, I'm sending you both outgoing and incoming covers. I think you're right that the address was to help routing of mail. The POW cover made the rounds to McAlester and Maxey, to be sure. However, my guess is the master list of POWs and internees was kept at some central location. I wouldn't call covers with this address plentiful, but the POW covers, at least, are not rare.



The civilian cover [above] is a recent acquisition and is one I've never seen before, even though I've known about these people for many years. This is a cover from a Jewish refugee, one of about 1,000 who were permitted into the country in August 1944, and eventually [were] allowed to stay. The camp was run as a modified concentration camp, and [was] administered by none other than the War Relocation Authority, which ...also administered the relocation centers that [held] incarcerated Japanese Americans.

Here is what I know about the POW cover [shown on the next page].

[The cover is] postmarked December 12, 1944, Bebra Hessen, to a German POW at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin. [The cover was] forwarded to Camp McAlester, Oklahoma, and finally to Camp Maxey, Texas, where it was received April 5, 1945.

[The cover indicates that its contents were] censored both in Berlin and New York (POW

Unit). [It seems that the] air post instructions were likely unfulfilled.



If the Box 20 address was an attempt to centralize mail distribution [Editor's note: as I suggested in Issue No.21], it appears not to have been effective in this case.

Interestingly, Camp McCoy also held Japanese aliens from Hawaii early in the War (and a few Nisei until the ACLU threatened [to bring] *habeas corpus* proceedings), and, later, Japanese prisoners of war. The all-Nisei 100th Battalion, from Hawaii, also trained there before heading to Camp Shelby to become the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Camp McAlester held approximately 250 Italian enemy aliens until they were returned to INS jurisdiction in the spring of 1943. Japanese, German and Italian enemy alien civilians under Army jurisdiction used the Box 20 address between March and June 1943.

Professor Fiset has published an interesting article which I recommend: "*Return to Sender/U.S. Censorship of Enemy Alien Mail in World War II*". The article is available online, without charge, at <http://www.nara.gov/publications/prologue/fiset1.html>.

Return to Sender/No Service Available: When Was Letter Service to Neutral Switzerland Temporarily Suspended?

by

Steven M. Roth

Until recently, I have been puzzled by various aspects of the interruption of First Class letter mail to

Switzerland during World War II since, as we all know, Switzerland was a declared neutral. For example, I was curious about the wording of the handstamp used to indicate the break in service. Instead of the common “RETURN TO SENDER/SERVICE SUSPENDED” (or some variation in language), the handstamp used by U.S. authorities to indicate the cessation of mail service to Switzerland stated “RETURN TO SENDER/NO SERVICE AVAILABLE”.

I now know that the “SERVICE SUSPENDED” type handstamp reflected the declared suspension of service to a country which itself was an Allied Powers enemy or which was occupied or controlled by an enemy country. The “NO SERVICE AVAILABLE” handstamp, on the other hand, reflected the interruption of mail service to a friendly country or to a neutral country because of the difficulty of delivery or the inconvenience of mail delivery to that country resulting from the exigencies of war.

Does anyone have an example of the “NO SERVICE AVAILABLE” handstamp used for a country other than Switzerland? I haven’t seen any.

I also have been puzzled by the published dates that appear in the literature concerning when service to Switzerland ceased and resumed.

Here, briefly, is what I have been able to determine so far.

The First Period of Suspended Service

There appear to have been two distinct periods during which letter mail service to Switzerland was suspended. The first occurrence was in November 1942 when the German Army closed the Swiss borders after the Allies invaded North Africa. This period of suspension lasted for several months, according to conventional wisdom, although I have not been able to find any original source indicating when this first suspension period terminated. Helbock (Prexy Postal History, Appendix B), Davis (The Transports) and Wawrukiewicz & Beecher (U.S. International Postal Rates, 1872-1996) all date the beginning of this suspension period from November 1942, and give the date service resumed as June 20, 1945, more or less, treating what I believe to be two distinct periods of service suspension as one continuous period.

While it is possible that there was only one period of suspension, and that it lasted from November 1942 until June 1945, it seems unlikely that this was the case. Otherwise, why would the United States have announced its own suspension of the mails to Switzerland in 1943? So far, however, I have not found any covers which show that service resumed sometime after the German Army suspension period ended and before the commencement of the second period of suspension, as described next. But until I wrote this note I wasn’t looking for such covers, instead I assumed that I had everything I needed concerning the suspension of the mails to Switzerland.

The Second Period of Suspended Service

The second period of suspended service to Switzerland occurred when the United States inaugurated its period of suspension on March 24, 1943. The following notice appeared in *The Postal Bulletin* for Wednesday, March 24, 1943 [No.18571]:

INSTRUCTIONS OF
SECOND ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL

INTERNATIONAL MAILS

No Service Available to Switzerland

Since there is no service to Switzerland except through Axis-occupied territory, the United States mails that have accumulated for that country will be returned to senders. Until such time as mails can be safely sent to Switzerland (notice of which will be given), mails for that country should not be accepted. As an exception to the above, prisoners-of-war mail and certain Red Cross welfare messages will be accepted and given dispatch.

It is understood that the Swiss authorities have made arrangements for the sending of certain unregistered mail from Switzerland to the United States.

Postmasters shall advise prospective mailers to the extent practicable that mail, other than prisoners-of-war mail and Red Cross welfare messages, cannot be sent to Switzerland until further notice.

The second suspension period ended on November 6, 1944, with this announcement in *The Postal Bulletin* for November 7, 1944 (No. 18769):

ORDER OF
THE POSTMASTER GENERAL

RESTRICTED RESUMPTION OF MAIL SERVICE TO SWITZERLAND

ORDER No. 26449; DATED NOVEMBER 6, 1944.

Effective at once letters weighing not in excess of 1 ounce and post cards shall be accepted when addressed for delivery to civilians in Switzerland. The postage rates applicable thereto shall be the same as were previously in effect (5 cents for letters and 3 cents for post cards).

Registration, money order, air-mail, and parcel post services are not available at this time.

This does not affect prisoner of war mail.

There are a few covers in my collection which reflect the structure I have described.

Pre-Suspension Period



This cover (special because of its emergency trans-Pacific routing) is dated September 14, 1942. It pre-dated the sealing of the borders

The First Period of Suspension: Swiss Borders Sealed

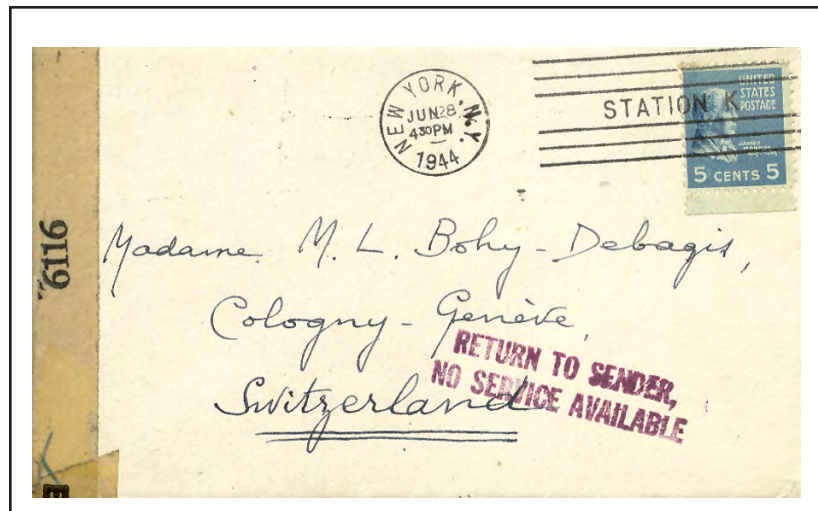
The German Army closed the Swiss borders to Allied nations' mail by prohibiting its transit over Axis occupied countries. The cover below (dated December 11, 1942) was held by United States Censorship and then returned to the sender in April 1943.



I believe that sometime in 1943 (date still to be determined) the German Army again permitted the mails to enter Switzerland.

The Second Period of Suspension: The United States' Period of Suspension

The United States suspended letter mail service to Switzerland from March 24, 1943 to November 6, 1944.



Of course, neither the German Army's suspension of service nor the United States' suspension affected

the delivery of mail to Switzerland addressed to the International Committee of the Red Cross, to POWs, or to civilian internees held in Switzerland.

Now that I have layed this out, it seems obvious that I am missing some relevant covers although I did not realize this before I put this note together. What do I need?

I need a cover that was admitted to Switzerland after November, 1942 but before March 24, 1943.

I need, too, a cover that was admitted to Switzerland after November 6, 1944, but before June 20, 1945, the date generally given for the resumption of service to Switzerland.

Show & Tell: Items From Our Readers



When he sent me files of this cover and others in his collection, Professor Thomas P. Myers wrote about this cover:

[This is a] wartime airmail letter from Berkeley, California to Sweden, dated 17 January 1940, with airmail postage paid only to the east coast. [The letter was to]...be forwarded to Sweden by surface mail. [The h]andwritten notation by [the] sender reads "To the east coast and with *boat* to *Sweden*". The magenta handstamp reads "BY AIR IN U.S.A. TO EXCHANGE OFFICE". [This was probably] applied by [the] Berkeley [post office].

This cover is a nice example of a combi-use after the commencement of trans-atlantic mail flights. Such uses, while not rare, are far more difficult to come by than those from before May 20, 1939 when FAM 18 was inaugurated.

The 8 cents solo franking on Professor Myers' cover was allocated: 2 cents per ounce for ship transport across the ocean [the 2 cents was the difference between the U.S. first-class 3 cents rate and the 5 cents foreign ship rate]; and, 6 cents per ounce for the domestic airmail rate. The 2 cents (calculated above) was added to this.

Summer 2002



Issue No. 23

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the BIA 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Inside this Issue:

Message From the Editor

Returned From Tibet: No Postal Exchange Convention or Available Agent by Steven M. Roth

Effects of War on the Delivery of Mail to Chungking, China by Jeffrey Shapiro

Prexie Era Study Group to Meet

Around the World Airmail to Greece by Dr. Roger G. Schnell

Enigmatic Sea Route: To Sweden Via Egypt by Steven M. Roth

Free Color Illustrations Available to Subscribers

Fractional Overprints of the Canal Zone by Robert Schlesinger

World War II Letter Mail Labels [continued from Issue No.22] by Steven M. Roth

An Example of Internee Mail to Switzerland by Jeffrey Shapiro

**Your contributions to the Newsletter
in the form of articles, notes and/or
financial assistance will enable us to
continue publishing.**

Message From the Editor

This is the fourth issue of the Newsletter I have edited. I appreciate the contributions of the readers who have sent me articles, etc. I hope that others of you will send me your articles, notes on material you own, whatever you think might interest our other readers.

Jeff Shapiro has asked me to remind you that if you have not sent him at least \$5.00 in cash or mint postage as a contribution by the time Issue No. 24 (the next Issue) is ready to mail, that this Issue (No. 23) will be your last. I refer you to Jeff's statement in Issue No. 21. We cannot publish and mail the Newsletter without your help -- both with content and with expenses.

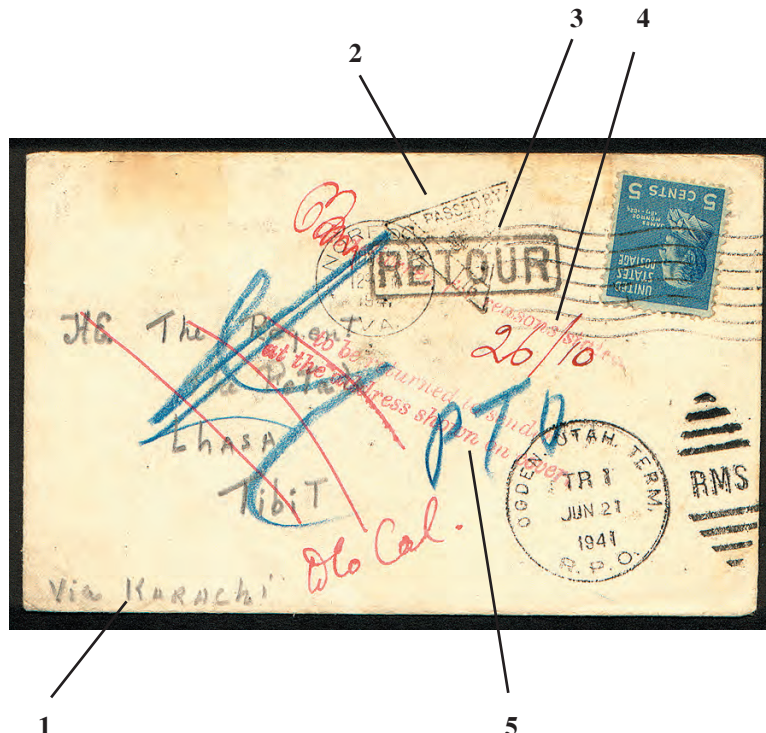
Returned From Tibet: No Postal Exchange Convention or Available Agent

by

Steven M. Roth

Editor's Note: Northern Virginia postal history dealer Kenneth A. Pitt recently sent me this cover for examination.

The cover originated at Norfolk, Virginia on June 18, 1941. It was carried by the Railway Mail Service to the west coast where it embarked for Lhasa, Tibet via India. Along the way it received a British India handstamp "Passed By Censor", two Gyantse [Tibet] handstamps, two Bombay handstamps, one Calcutta handstamp, some miscellaneous handstamps, and some very interesting manuscript notations.

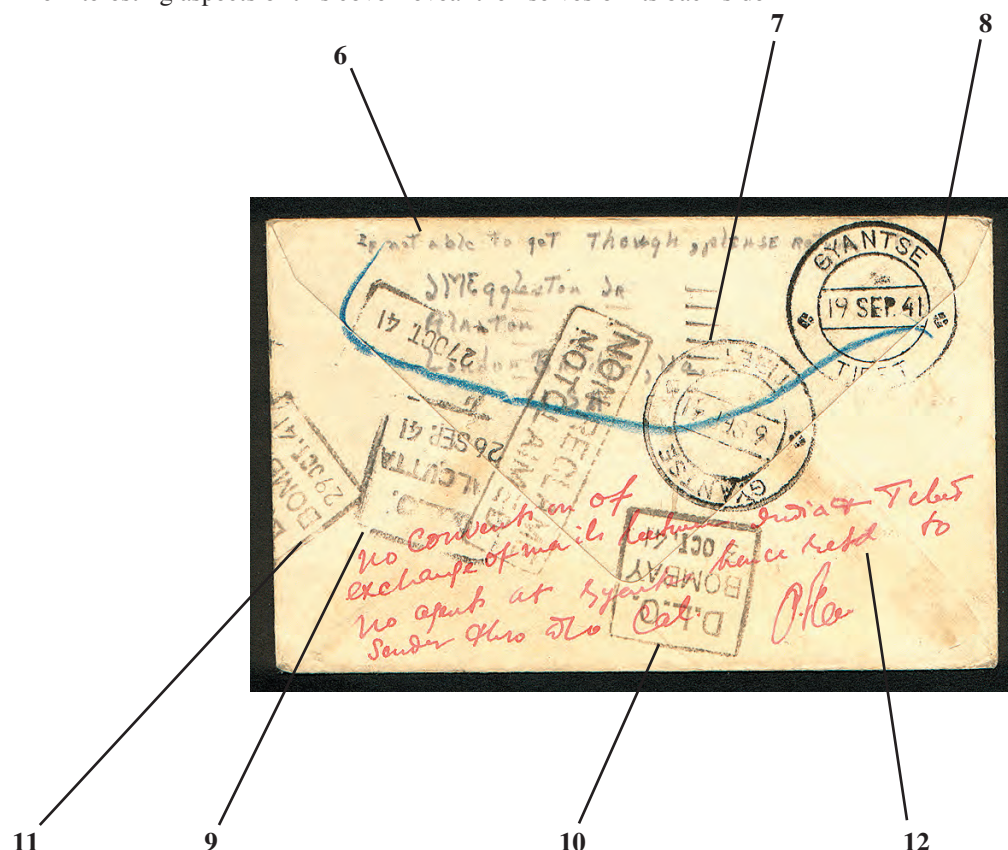


Key to the numbers:

1. Sender's admonition to route the letter via Karachi.

2. British Censor handstamp applied at Karachi
3. “Retour” [Return] handstamp
4. “returned to sender for the reasons stated” handstamp [red]
5. “to be returned to sender/at the address shown on over” handstamp [red]

The interesting aspects of this cover reveal themselves on its back side.



6. Sender's notation in pencil: "If not able to get through, please return to/J M Eggleston Jr/London Bridge, Va".
7. GYANTSE [Tibet] cds [dated September 6, 1941]
8. GYANTSE [Tibet] cds [dated September 19, 1941]
9. Handstamp "D.L.O./CALCUTTA/26 Sep 41"
10. Handstamp "D.L.O./BOMBAY/ 3 Oct 41"
11. Handstamp "D.L.O./BOMBAY/29 Oct 41"
12. Manuscript notation: "No convention of exchange of mails between India & Tibet. No agent at Gyantse. Have returned to sender. DLO Cal [cutta]"

Apparently, what happened to this cover is this: The cover was censored at Karachi (then a part of India) and was allowed to pass. It was delivered to Gyantse, Tibet and held there. It was never called for by the addressee or by a mail agent so it was returned to the sender via Bombay and Calcutta.

Because Tibet was not a member of the Universal Postal Union, a sender could not prepay the Tibet internal postage. The practice, I am told, was to enclose funds in the letter for the postage. The letter would then be opened at the Tibetan border by a mail agent who would use the currency to pay the Tibet postage. When,

as in this case, no agent presented himself, the letter was held for a certain time, then routed back through India, apparently being held from time-to-time at dead letter offices along the way. Can anyone add to this story or, perhaps, correct my interpretation?

Editor's Note: This cover is best viewed in color because of the many markings and notations on it, some of which are in red or blue ink. Contact me if you would like me to send you a copy of the cover as an email <.pdf>, <.gif> or <.jpeg> attachment.

Effects of War on the Delivery of Mail to Chungking, China

by

Jeffrey Shapiro

One of the misconceptions concerning the delivery of letters from the United States to China in World War II is that mail service to China was suspended throughout the country. In fact, mail was suspended only where its delivery was difficult to achieve (before the U.S. entered the War) or in those scattered areas in China occupied or controlled by Japan (after December 8, 1941).

After the Japanese invaded China on July 7, 1937, the Kwantung Army pushed the Nationalist government out of its capital at Nanking, then out of its successor capital at Hankow, and on to Chungking where the Nationalist government settled for the duration of World War II. Although the Japanese army never made a serious attempt to invade and occupy Chungking, it did engage in long-term saturation bombing of the capital city.

Shown below are two covers addressed to Chungking, but treated differently, during the time when it was the capital of Free China.



Service Suspended/Return to Sender

This registered letter, dated January 8, 1942, originated in Texas. It travelled to China via New York and

Miami along FAM 22, across the South Atlantic Ocean and Africa to India, where the letter was examined by British censorship and “passed”. The British authorities determined that service to Chungking was suspended and, therefore, they returned the letter to the U.S.

At this time (1942) Chungking not only was not threatened by the Japanese, but most of the saturation bombing had ceased. So....why was service suspended to Chungking? Probably because the Japanese had occupied Hong Kong as of Christmas Day 1941, and the delivery of mail to all parts of China was then uncertain.

This uncertainty somewhat changed during the next year, and delivery using FAM 22 was used, as demonstrated by the “two oceans” cover shown below.



This cover originated in Hawaii on March 17, 1943. It was flown across the Pacific Ocean to the west coast of mainland United States, was then carried to New York City, and then to Miami. From Miami it was dispatched via FAM 22 across the Atlantic Ocean to Africa and then to Free China. It was delivered to Chungking several weeks later.

The Prexie-Era Study Group will meet at the Pennsylvania National Stamp Exhibition in King of Prussia, PA over the weekend of October 11-13, 2002. Come join us if you can.

Around the World Airmail to Greece

by

Dr. Roger G. Schnell

This registered letter originated in Detroit, MI on April 2, 1941. It was flown by domestic airmail to San Francisco. It departed on April 4, 1941 via Pan American FAM 14 for Hong Kong, where the letter was

censored. It then was carried via BOAC to Basra -- then by rail to Istanbul and onward to Greece. The postage for this routing was 70 cents (there are two 20-cents Prexies on the back) rather than the 30 cents postage that would have been applicable had this letter been sent via FAM 18 directly to Europe. The letter (which arrived at Greece sometime after April 6 when the Germans began their invasion of the Balkans and Greece) was refused admission to Greece, and was returned to the United States via Switzerland, Frankfurt and Lisbon over FAM 18 to New York (where the handstamp "RETURN TO SENDER/SERVICE SUSPENDED was applied.) It arrived back in Detroit December 3, 1941.



If you are tired of seeing only postal history in our Newsletter, send me some articles or notes on stamps, rates or anything else that you think will interest our readers. As your Editor, I can only publish what you send me or I am able to dig out of my own World War II related Prexie-Era holdings.

Enigmatic Sea Route: To Sweden via Egypt

by

Steven M. Roth

Shown below is a cover your Editor picked up awhile ago on Ebay. I would appreciate your input in helping me understand its routing.

The cover originated in Michigan on May 1, 1940. It traveled to Sweden by ocean mail (1 cent overpayment) via Egypt. The letter was censored in Egypt where it received a censorship handstamp on the front and another on the back of the cover. It was opened and resealed with an Egyptian censorship tape.



Here is what was happening historically that might have been relevant to this routing. In April 1940 Germany invaded Denmark. In May, when this cover was dispatched, Germany and Norway were engaged in ferocious combat. U-boats were beginning to lay mines in the North Atlantic Ocean, and the Battle of the Atlantic was just underway. The Mediterranean was closed to most Allied shipping.

The only postal reference I have been able to find appeared in the *Postal Bulletin Supplement* for March 1940 ["Changes in the Routing of Mails for Certain European Countries"] where it was stated:

"Regular mails (including airmails) for Sweden...are now being dispatched via Italy and Germany"

Free color illustrations available. I will make available to readers via e-mail attachment free color <.pdf>, <.gif> or <.jpg> copies of any of the illustrations that appear in any issue of the Newsletter if the original illustrations were sent to me in color. Feel free to contact me for copies.

Fractional Overprints of the Canal Zone

by

Robert Schlesinger

The 1/2 cent Ben Franklin and 1-1/2 cents Martha Washington sheet stamps - from the 1938 Prexie issue - were issued by the Canal Zone Postal Service so that it would be able to provide stamps for various book rates and third class usages.

The Scott catalog shows an issue date of September 1, 1939 -- a date of some significance to World War II postal history collectors (the invasion of Poland by Germany and the outbreak of the War in Europe).

According to “The Prexies” by Rollie Rustad, a total of 993,643 stamps of the 1/2 cent value were issued and 1,119,991 stamps of the 1-1/2 cents value were issued. These totals account for the relatively low catalog value of the mint stamps, but the low catalog value of plain used copies (now 15 cents each) belies the rest of the story.

Commercially used covers bearing a solo 1/2 cent Ben Franklin or the 1-1/2 cents Martha Washington are scarce to rare. **Figure 1** shows a proper, non-philatelic use of the 1/2 cent value applied to a 1 cent entire to pay the unsealed third class mail rate.

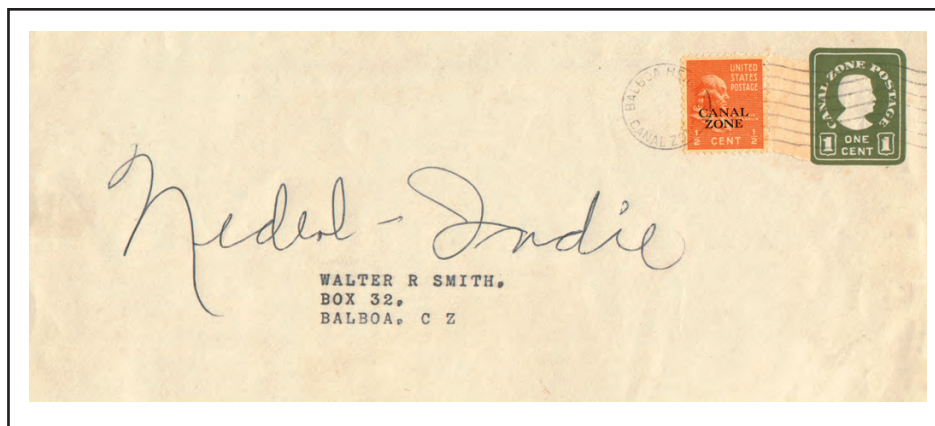


Figure 1

The Balboa Heights, CZ circular date stamp is mute. This, along with the fact that the envelope was ungummed (which indicates that the envelope was unsealed) strongly suggests that the contents was a printed circular or some other similar third class usage. There are few such commercial usages available to collectors.

Figure 2 also shows a third class usage. This cover, too, was unsealed, and bears a Canal Zone roller, attesting to its usage.

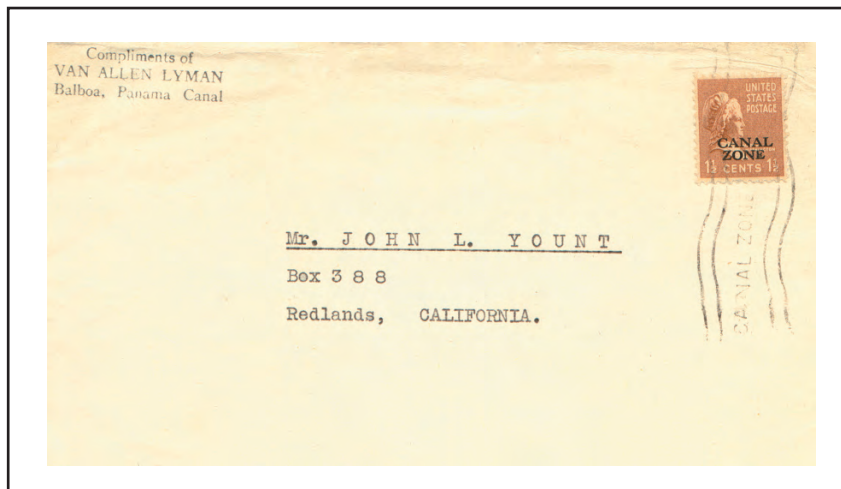


Figure 2

Although I do not have an exact census of such covers, there are VERY few solo 1-1/2 cents covers known to collectors, probably less than one dozen.

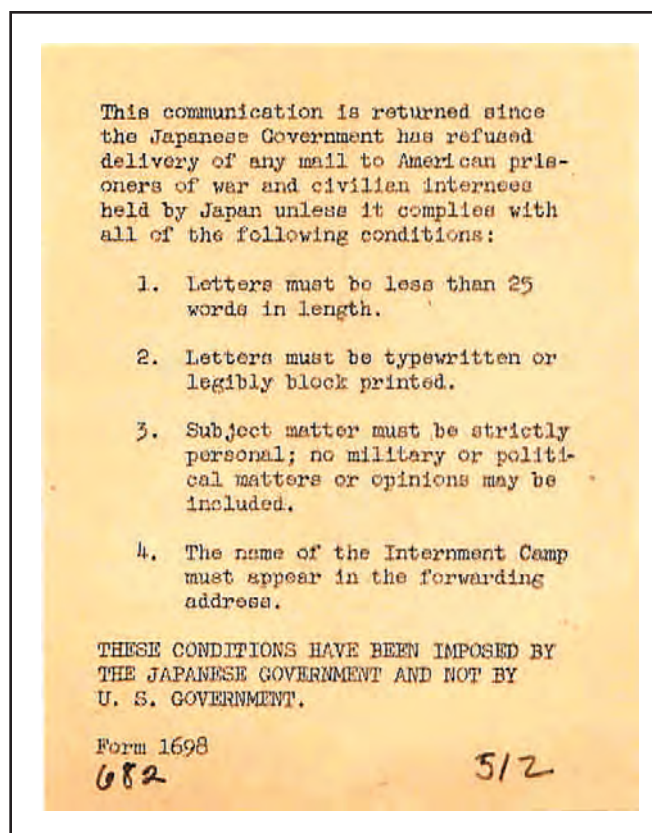
World War II Letter Mail Labels

[continued from Issue #22]

by

Steven M. Roth

This label was attached to a letter datelined September 20, 1943. The label is self-explanatory.



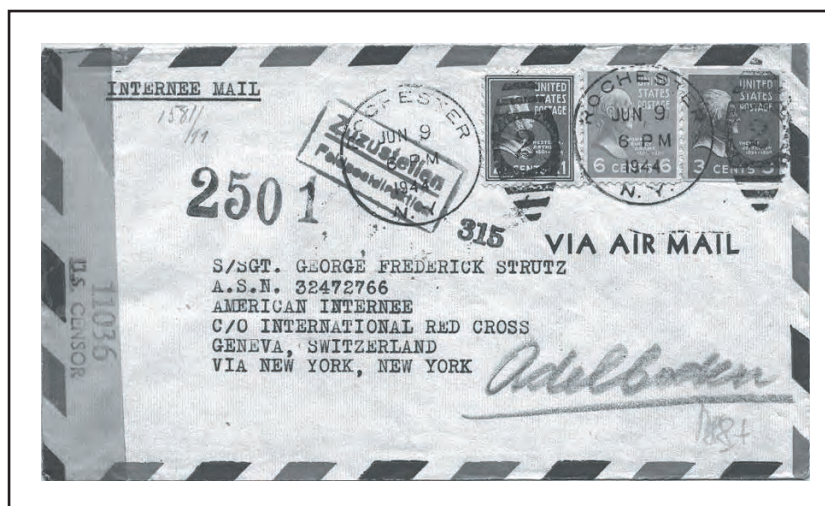
An Example of Internee Mail to Switzerland

by

Jeffrey Shapiro

While I've seen many covers addressed to prisoners of war held by Germany, Italy and Japan during

World War II, this is the first Prexie cover I have seen addressed to an internee being held by the Swiss.



Franked with three Prexies paying the thirty cents per half ounce airmail rate to Europe, this cover was mailed from Rochester, NY on June 9, 1944, and probably was flown to Europe via Lisbon, Portugal. It then would have been carried by train to Geneva, Switzerland. During its travels the cover was examined by both American and German censors. The International Red Cross determined that the addressee was interned by the Swiss government in the town of Adelboden. The cover was dispatched to Adelboden.

Switzerland was not occupied during World War II because of its neutrality. In order to maintain this neutrality, the Swiss government mandated that all aircraft and air crews which landed without proper authorization or which crashed within its territory were to be interned.

From 1943 until the end of the European War, an estimated 170 United States military craft made emergency landings or crashed in Switzerland as a byproduct of bombing runs against strategic German targets in the nearby Ruhr Valley. As a result, early in 1943 an internment camp was established by the Swiss government in Adelboden, an abandoned ski resort in the Alps. The camp was named Camp Mahoney in honor of Joseph Mahoney, the first United States airman killed in Switzerland in World War II.

By the spring of 1944 the camp had become dangerously overcrowded. While the enlisted men internees remained at the camp, the interned officers were transferred to the neighboring village of Davos-Platz, on June 24, 1944, where they were assigned to the Palace Hotel. They remained quartered there until the end of the War.

Editor's Note: As a companion to this cover, see the Air Transport Camp Mahoney cover described at page 5, Issue No. 21 of the Newsletter.

Fall 2002



Issue No. 24

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the BIA 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Inside this Issue:

Expressing Our Appreciation to Jim Forte

Airmail to Niger Colony – The Unpublished 50 Cents Rate by Joseph G. Bock

Trans-Pacific Airmail to Europe – The 30 Cents Legacy Rate by Steven M. Roth

Two Interesting Covers to Pitcairn Island

Two Other Interesting Covers From Our Readers

Airmail to West Africa in 1940 & 1941 – Interruption and Resumption by Steven M. Roth

**What would you like to see in the Newsletter?
Let your Editor know. Better yet, send me an
article or a note to publish.**

Steven M. Roth, Editor

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Expressing Our Appreciation to Jim Forte

Jeff Shapiro and I, on our behalf and on behalf of all subscribers to the Newsletter, thank postal history dealer Jim Forte who has generously contributed his labor to, and the costs of, mailing this Issue of the Newsletter.

Airmail to Niger Colony – The Unpublished 50 Cents Rate

by

Joseph G. Bock

The attempt to deliver the cover shown below via FAM 22 in 1942 was thwarted because of the then unpublished airmail rate to its original destination – Niger Colony of French West Africa.



The cover originally was addressed to Niger Colony. It was franked with 45 cents postage which correctly reflected the prior, published airmail rate to Niger Colony. However, when this cover was mailed (November 6 1942) the correct airmail rate to Niger was 50 cents, but this rate was as yet unpublished. Rather than return the cover to the post office of origin (Miami) for the missing postage (5 cents), the cover was handstamped “INSUFFICIENT POSTAGE/FOR AIRMAIL SERVICE”, and sent onward by ship. Upon reaching Niger the cover was forwarded to Nigeria. The entire trip took 10 months.

Editor’s Note: In November 1942 mail service to Niger Colony, which was controlled by the Vichy government, was suspended by the United States. Thus, this letter would not have been delivered even had the correct postage been paid.

Trans-Pacific Airmail to Europe – The 30 Cents Legacy Rate

by

Steven M. Roth

With the the fall of France and the entry of Italy into the War (both in June 1940) the carriage of mail to

Lisbon (the terminal and transit port for FAM 18 flights from the United States to various destinations in Europe), and then across Europe or the Mediterranean Sea became very precarious. Indeed, Italy, which had acted as the transit carrier, no longer would preform this service for the Allies. Accordingly, the Post Office Department shifted Trans-Atlantic FAM 18 traffic to FAM 14 – the Trans-Pacific route. This emergency rerouting would last until the opening of FAM 22 in December 1941. Basic Trans-Pacific airmail postage for letters addressed to Europe was set at 70 cents (compared to 30 cents for delivery via FAM 18).

The Post Office Department recognized that it would take time for postal patrons to adapt their practices to the new, slower (because of the greater distance) and more expensive routing over FAM 14. Accordingly, it provided, in general, that letters for Europe franked with 30 cents postage rather than 70 cents would be carried over the Trans-Pacific route for a limited time. In practice, however, this rule was applied differently for different destinations in Europe.

In this note I examine how letters franked with 30 cents postage were handled when the operative route to Europe was the Trans-Pacific route. This is a preliminary study only. I am examining specific destinations; others might follow in later Issues if appropriate.

Airmail to Greece

Italy invaded Greece in October 1940. After many months of ferocious combat, the Greek forces pushed the Italian army back into Albania, at great losses to Italy in manpower and equipment, so that in April 1941 the German Army had to come to Italy's rescue. It invaded Greece on April 6, 1941 to protect its interests in the oil fields of Rumania and as part of Germany's larger plan for the conquest of the Balkans.

Airmail to Greece during the period of combat with Italy was uncertain. Often the mail was intercepted by the Italian forces and held or returned to the sender. One such cover is that shown immediately below. It was mailed to Italy on October 21, 1940. It was flown to Lisbon via FAM 18 (Trans-Atlantic route) at the applicable 30 cents airmail rate. When it reached Greece it was intercepted, it received the label "Al mittente/a l'envoyeur/ SERVIZIO SOSPEO", and the cover was returned to the sender.



In February 1941 the Post Office Department published a Notice in the **Postal Bulletin Supplement** instructing all postmasters that airmail to Greece would be carried via the Trans-Pacific route [at 70 cents (up to one half ounce)] to Cairo, and then sent onward by ordinary means. This Notice also provided that mail to Greece franked with 30 cents postage (rather than the required 70 cents postage) *would be sent to*

Lisbon and held [emphasis added] until once again it became possible to deliver mail from Lisbon to Greece as previously. This instruction represented one method of dealing with former FAM 18 mail after February 1941.

FOREIGN AIR MAIL SERVICE—GREECE, BELGIAN CONGO

Air-mail service is available for transportation of articles for Greece via the trans-Pacific route to Cairo, thence by ordinary means. The postage required is 70 cents per half ounce. Articles for that route should be marked "Via Pacific Route." This routing is made available to senders because of interruption of through service to Greece via the trans-Atlantic air-mail route. However, articles mailed with postage at the rate of 30 cents per half ounce will continue to be sent via Lisbon for possible onward forwarding.

While there appears to be no air-mail service by which mails for the Belgian Congo may be expedited to that country, the domestic air-mail service within the Belgian Congo is still in operation. If senders desire their articles carried by such domestic air service after reaching an exchange office in the Belgian Congo by ordinary means, they should prepay the postage required of 9 cents per half ounce in addition to the regular postage and mark them "By Air Mail in Belgian Congo."

The current Foreign Air Mail Service leaflet should be corrected accordingly.

Below is a typical 30 cents cover addressed to Greece during the Trans-Pacific period. As is the case with all such covers (except one) I have recorded, it was carried to Lisbon, but never entered Greece, having been blocked by the German occupiers.



The only 30 cents cover I have recorded that was given Trans-Pacific service during this period was a quadruple rate cover that had been handstamped "VIA TRANS-ATLANTIC/AIR MAIL". Perhaps this cover was not recognized for what it was (an underpaid Trans-Pacific cover) because it had \$1.20 postage affixed. In any event, this cover was own via FAM 14 to Singapore where it was opened by the British censorship, was resealed, was sent on to Greece, was refused entrance, and then was returned to the sender.

This cover appears below.



Once Germany consolidated its position in the Balkans in late April 1941, airmail to Greece once again was routed over FAM 18 through Lisbon at 30 cents. [Postal Bulletin Supplement, May 1941] Thus, the opportunity to find airmail covers to Greece carried over the Trans-Pacific route is limited to a period of not more than approximately ninety days.

Airmail to Turkey

The approach of the Post Office Department to airmail to Turkey during this same turbulent period differed from that described above. Ostensibly, all airmail to Turkey was carried via FAM 18 for 30 cents until December 17, 1941, when the Notice in the **Postal Bulletin** [December 18, 1941] informed postmasters that all airmail *previously carried* via the Trans-Pacific route (FAM 14) would now be carried via Miami and via Africa [FAM 22] at 70 cents. I have not been able to find a previous Notice routing the mail from FAM 18 to FAM 14 in the **Postal Bulletins** or in the **Postal Bulletin Supplements**.



I have recorded only one cover to Turkey via the Trans-Pacific route franked with 70 cents postage. That cover is in the exhibit of Stephen L. Suffet. All of the others I have seen have been franked with 30 cents postage, but carried over the Trans-Pacific route.

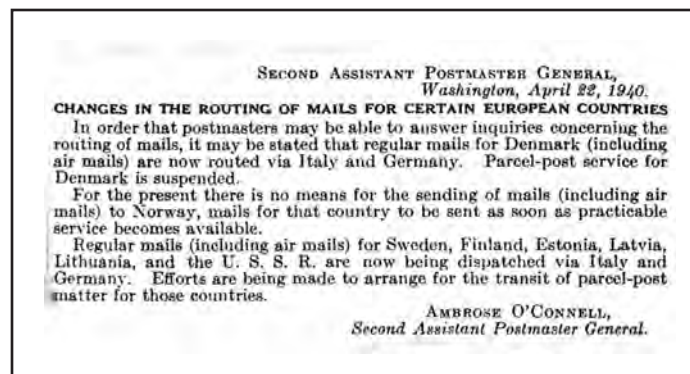
Here is an example of such a 30 cents Trans-Pacific cover to Turkey.



This cover is part of the extensive Elizabeth Tank correspondence. The letter was postmarked September 14, 1941. It was flown to Singapore where British censorship opened the letter, inspected it, and then resealed it. The cover arrived in Istanbul on November 16, 1941.

Airmail to Latvia

A Notice in the **Postal Bulletin** for April 24, 1940, announced that mail for Latvia would be routed via Italy and Germany. Presumably this required the same 30 cents airmail postage rate as before the announcement.



Such routing, however, was not possible after June 22, 1941, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union (which then included Latvia as a vassal state). Accordingly, on June 25, 1941, the Post Office Department published a Notice in the **Postal Bulletin** requiring that airmail for Latvia, the USSR, and other named destinations be carried over the Trans-Pacific route to Hong Kong at 70 cents. This Notice also stated that *for a time* letters franked with 30 cents postage *would be recognized and would be carried* over the Trans-Pacific route. [emphasis added]

This Notice, therefore, demonstrates a third approach (forwarding the letter at the old rate for a limited time) to the handling of 30 cents Trans-Pacific airmail in this quixotic period.

FOREIGN AIR MAIL SERVICE

Beginning at once, air mails for U. S. S. R., Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, shall be dispatched via the Pacific coast and the trans-Pacific air-mail route, to be sent onward from Hong Kong by ordinary means. The total postage shall be 70 cents per half ounce. However, for a time mails for those countries prepaid at the air-mail rate heretofore required, shall be given dispatch via the trans-Pacific route. Inquiring mailers may be informed that the sending of articles for the above-named countries by air mail may not expedite the articles materially over service by ordinary means.

An example of an airmail cover during this period, franked with 30 cents postage, addressed to Latvia and given Trans-Pacific service appears below.



This cover, postmarked August 16, 1941, traveled via Hong Kong to Latvia where it was returned to the sender because the addressee was unknown or could not be found.

Editor's Tip:

Watch for Dr. Roger G. Schnell's upcoming article in the *Airpost Journal* on FAM 22 airmail to the USSR during WW II.

Two Interesting Covers to Pitcairn Island

Readers Ken Pitt and Charles O'Dell have sent us these two interesting covers addressed to Pitcairn Island.

From Ken Pitt:



From Charles O'Dell:



Coming in the next Issue: An Update
to *Suspended Mail to Switzerland*

Two Other Interesting Covers From Our Readers

In this Issue we are pleased to present two very interesting covers submitted for inclusion by one of our readers.

Larry Paige has submitted this parcel tag franked with six 22 cents *Cleavelands*:



Larry also contributed the following Registry form bearing a 3 cents horizontal coil:

U. S. Post Office **Hagerstown, Md.** May 3, 1940

Registered Article No. **2133** mailed on **May 3**, 19**40** by **Pascagoula**
National Bank Addressed to **National Bank of Hagerstown,**
Hagerstown, Md. can not be delivered because **no bank in Hagerstown**
we have a 2nd National also **Nicodemus National in Hagerstown**

Have sender indicate in spaces provided below disposition he desires made of the article.
 Prompt attention must be given to this notice, otherwise the article will be disposed of in accordance
 with the regulations.
 Postage required to forward or return the article _____ cents

POSTMASTER at office where the registered article was mailed: **Hagerstown Post Co.**

the registered article described to **Hagerstown, Md.**

(Signature of sender or authorized agent) **Arthur V. Smith**

*Cross out words not applicable.
 The above signature is verified as that of the sender (or authorized agent) of
 the registered article.

MAY 8 - 1940 (Date) **Arthur V. Smith** Postmaster.

NOTE TO POSTMASTER.—Return this card in an official envelope to the office where the registered article is held.

3 CENTS 3

Airmail to West Africa in 1940 & 1941 – Interruption and Resumption

by

Steven M. Roth

Airmail to West Africa was unavailable for at least thirteen months commencing sometime before November 1940, until the first flight over FAM 22 on December 6, 1941.

The **Postal Bulletin**, dated November 1, 1940, contained a leaflet entitled **Foreign Airmail Service Leaflet**. The leaflet provided, in pertinent part:

It appears that there is no air service by which mails for the following countries in west Africa may be materially expedited, the mails for such countries being sent by steamship from New York:

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Angola | French Sudan | Niger |
| Belgian Congo | Gambia | Nigeria |
| Cameroons | Gold Coast Colony | Portuguese Guinea |
| Dahomey | Ivory Coast | Senegal |
| French Equatorial Africa | Liberia | Spanish Guinea |
| French Guinea | Mauritania | Togoland |

I have not found an airmail cover from the U.S. to any of the listed destinations prior to the advent of FAM 22. Below is a cover I believe might have been carried on the first flight back to West Africa after the end of the temporary moratorium against airmail. Note the sender's admonition: "Clipper - via Miami".



This airmail cover was mailed from New York on December 4, 1941 to Cameroons, West Africa.

Winter 2003



Issue No. 25

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the BIA 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Inside this Issue:

A Security Marking in WW II by Steven M. Roth

A Reader's Report: Trans-Pacific Airmail to Europe - The 30 Cents Legacy Rate

Covers from Our Readers

World War II Letter Mail Labels [*continued from Newsletter No.23*] by Steven M. Roth

The Postage Due "Search Fee" by Clyde Jennings and Jay Jennings

Airmail from New York to Argentina: Censored by Germany? by Steven M. Roth

Return to Sender/No Service Available: When Was Letter Service to Neutral Switzerland Temporarily Suspended? An Update by Steven M. Roth

Unusual Prexie Usage: International Airmail Message Postal Card with Attached Reply Card by Leonard Piskiewicz

O Brother, Admiral Byrd, Where Art Thou? by Jeffrey Shapiro

A Security Marking in WW II

by

Steven M. Roth

Shown below is a 6-bar, orange-red marking on a cover, dated 1942, which originated in Washington, DC, and that was addressed to a British officer in London, England. It transited through the Trinidad post office.



I have seen this marking used on mail to and from the United States, England and the Commonwealth countries in late 1941 and in 1942. In each instance the 6-bar marking (or some variety of the marking) obscured the CDS, in whole or in part, as if the marking were serving some wartime location security function.

Here is what I do not know about this marking, but would like to learn:

1. What was the purpose of the marking?
2. Was it applied in the United States and/or elsewhere?
3. Was the marking used only on mail addressed to or from military personnel?
4. Was the marking used on mail at the starting and/or ending post offices, or was it applied only to mail that passed through a transit office (as in the case of the cover shown above)?

Editor's note: The marking and cover are a beautiful combination of orange-red (marking) and blue (stamp and envelope). The cover was part of the inventory of the **Prexie-Era Postal History Net Pricelist** sent out by Jim Forte with Newsletter No. 24. It can be seen, in color, in that Pricelist. (Inventory number TR430906) Jim, at my request, made the illustration available to me for the Newsletter.

A Reader's Report: Trans-Pacific Airmail to Europe - The 30 Cents Legacy Rate

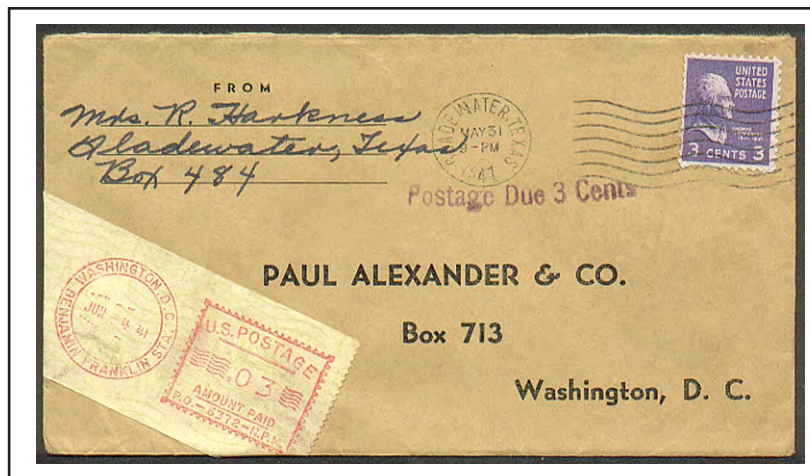
In Newsletter No. 24 I stated that I had recorded only one 70¢ FAM 14 cover to Turkey. Now, Dr. Roger G. Schnell has written to me that he also has in his collection a pre-FAM 22 70¢ airmail cover to Turkey. Does any other reader have this usage to report?

Covers from Our Readers

Reader Steven Kok has sent this interesting registered cover with Canal Zone overprinted Prexies:



Postal History dealer Ken Pitt has offered this unusual “Due” cover for inclusion in the Newsletter:



From contributor Tom Myers we have this incoming “Due” cover from France (postmarked March 1953):



World War II Letter Mail Labels [continued from Newsletter No. 23]

by

Steven M. Roth

Form 2911 Foreign Section, Morgan Annex, New York, N. Y.

Post Office

RETURN TO SENDER
(Secs. 2203 and 2204, P. L. & R.)

This article is returned for delivery to the sender, as it is not transmissible to destination for the reason noted below:

Reason for return

**RETURN TO SENDER
SERVICE SUSPENDED**

Attention is called to section _____ of the Postal Guide.

5-11989 GPO Per _____

NEW YORK, N. Y.
12-9
POSTMASTER
1944
FOREIGN

This form is found on a cover that was addressed to Romania in 1944. It was inscribed “Through U.S.S.R. Mail”, and was franked with 85¢ postage for airmail carriage via FAM 22, plus the international registered mail fee. [Note: We saw a different “message” used with this generic form in Newsletter No. 20, p.9.]

This communication is returned since the Japanese government has refused delivery of any mail to American Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees held by Japan unless it complies with all of the following conditions:

1. Letters must not be more than twenty-four (24) words in length. This total does not include the salutation (i.e. "Dear Son") nor the signature.
2. Letters must be typewritten or block printed in legible capital letters.
3. Subject matter must be strictly personal; no military or political matters or opinions may be included.

THESE CONDITIONS HAVE BEEN IMPOSED BY THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AND NOT BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

Form 1698 Rev.

Note that this label is a revision of Form 1698 (having fewer restrictions than that form) which we showed in Newsletter No. 23, p.9.

The Postage Due "Search Fee"

by

Clyde Jennings and Jay Jennings

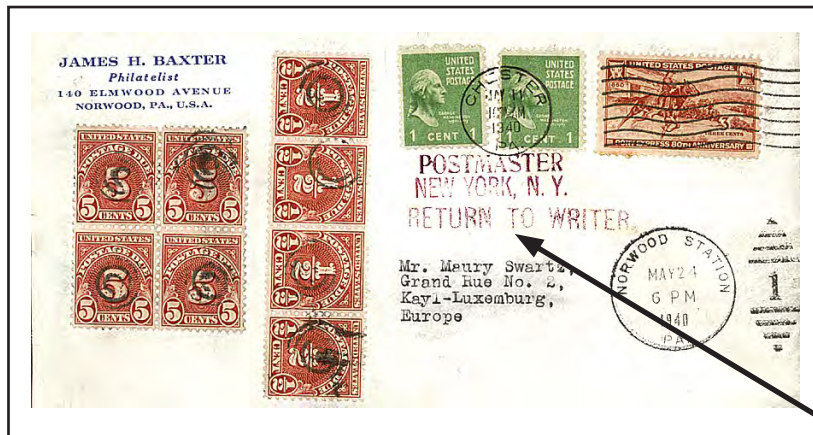
Germany invaded the Benelux countries, including Luxemburg, on May 10, 1940. The New York postmaster instituted the practice of holding mail addressed to these countries. To that end, he also advertised in the New York newspapers that for a fee (which was calculated according to the amount of time involved) the post office would search for letters that were held so they could be returned to those senders who had prepaid the search fee.

The cover shown on page 6 of this Newsletter is one such letter.

This letter required an eleven minute search for which a 22¢ fee was charged.

The key to identifying these letters lies in the purple handstamp: "POSTMASTER/NEW YORK, N.Y./RETURN TO WRITER", as shown by the arrow in the illustration.

[The cover illustration is on next page]



[Key to identification]

Airmail from New York to Argentina: Censored by Germany?

by

Steven M. Roth

I recently purchased the cover shown below because it puzzled me. Now that I have studied the cover, it still confuses me. Perhaps you can help me understand how and why it received Nazi censorship?



[2]



[3]

[4]

[1]

The cover was mailed from New York City to Argentina on July 23, 1940. It reached Argentina, as evidenced by a receiving backstamp (see arrow “[1]” in illustration), but I can only make out the first two letters [“JU”] of the backstamp date (The seller of the cover claims that the arrival date was June 23, 1943, but my careful examination of the cover under a strong glass does not support this -- or any identifiable -- arrival date.) At some point the letter came into the possession of the Germans who opened the letter, examined it, and then resealed it. I am satisfied that the sealing tape and the handstamps tying the tape are genuine. The censorship tape is tied by a purple German censorship marking “[2]” and also by the Argentina receiving CDS (thus indicating that the letter was opened and inspected before it reached Argentina). There also is a black, small circular handstamp that is divided in half by a horizontal black line. It contains the numeral “64” in the top portion; it contains the number “3” in the bottom half. “[3]” There also are some illegible pencil notations . “[4]”

So, how did this occur? Here is some collateral history of the period that might be useful: Among the Latin American countries, only Argentina openly sided with the Nazis, while also holding itself out as a Neutral. Meanwhile, in 1940 Germany engaged in an active and fairly successful campaign to sink Allied ships along the coast of South America.

What are your thoughts about this cover? Let me know so I can publish them in a future Newsletter.

Return to Sender/No Service Available: When Was Letter Service to Neutral Switzerland Temporarily Suspended? An Update

by

Steven M. Roth

In Newsletter No. 22 I stated that I would like to examine a cover successfully sent from the United States to Switzerland after November 1942 and before March 24, 1943, to determine if there was a break between the German imposed suspension of mail service to Switzerland and the published onset of the blockade imposed by the United States. I recently discovered such a cover, but I suspect that it is merely an enticing anomaly.



This cover originated in New York on March 23, 1943. The New York branch of the Office of Censorship examined and resealed it. There are no markings on the back. Nothing about the cover suggests its disposition

(continued on page 9)

Unusual Prexie Usage: International Airmail Message Postal Card with Attached Reply Card

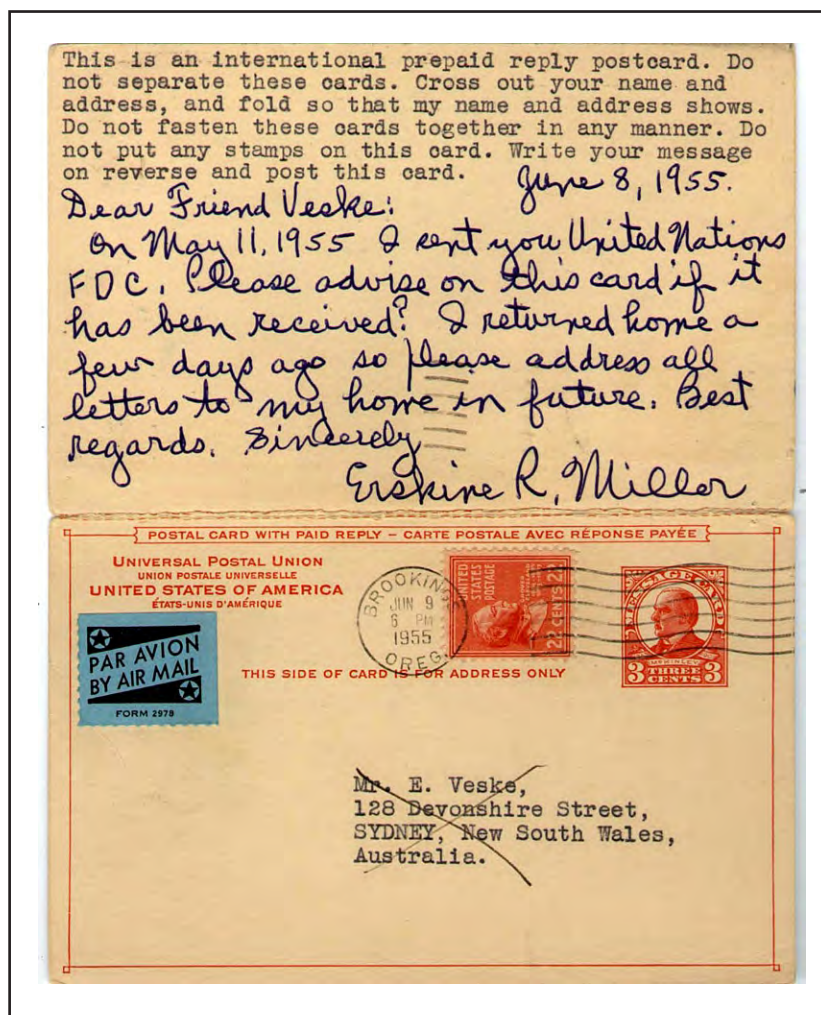
by

Leonard Piskiewicz

International airmail message postal cards with attached reply cards are rarely seen, probably because they were subject to letter rates of postage. [Note that while the USPOD has issued international reply cards for surface mail, no such airmail card has ever been issued.]

Illustrated is a card (Scott #UY12, issued in 1926, and not replaced until the 4¢ Liberty card of 1956) that was mailed to Australia in 1955 by airmail. A 22¢ Prexie was added to make the airmail letter rate. The sender also added a 1¢ Prexie coil to the reply side, but asked his recipient to return the cards unsevered. The card probably should have been returned unsevered with the U.S. 4¢ postage paid, but the Australian sender added 6½d and 1d stamps to pay the 7½d Australian international surface letter rate. Do any of our readers have an insight as to why the surface letter rate was paid for return?

[Original Message Side]





[Switzerland Update]

(continued from page 7)

by Censorship, but it likely was sent on to Switzerland since it is not marked otherwise. Since this cover entered the mails on March 23, it likely was examined and released by Censorship on or about the 23rd. Otherwise, how should we account for the fact that when the United States suspended service to Switzerland on March 24, this letter was not returned to the sender or held by Censorship? And, too, why was it not intercepted en route and returned? Indeed, if the cover ever did arrive at the border of Switzerland, why was it not blocked by the German suspension of service during the so-called Nazi First Period of suspended service if this period extended to or even beyond March 24?

Without markings to indicate information about this cover's journey, I am not yet prepared to accept this cover as the indication that there was any interval between the apparent two periods of suspended service.

Other updating data I have to report are:

1. Airmail service to Switzerland resumed on June 21, 1945, per the notice in the **Postal Bulletin**, dated June 22, 1945 (PB No.18834);
2. The earliest CDS I have examined for the First Period is September 21, 1942 on a surface cover; and,
3. The latest CDS I have examined for the First Period is a surface cover dated February 15, 1943.

One writer to this Editor has stated that the United States' period of suspension began in November 1942, not on or about March 24, 1943, as I have written, although he cited no support for this position.

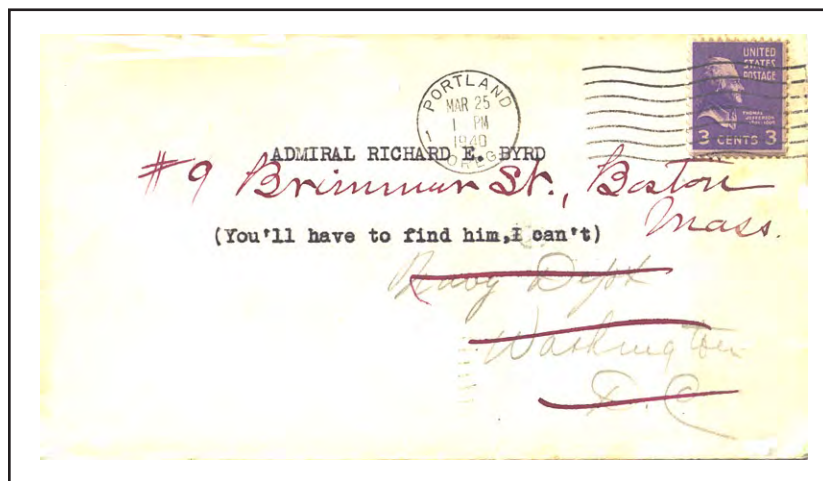
In the next Issue, I will examine covers that were in the censorship system (United States and Bermuda) before November 1942, but received the "No Service Available" handstamp, and why this factor does not mean that the United States' period of suspension (the Second Period) started in November 1942.

O Brother, Admiral Byrd, Where Art Thou?

by

Jeffrey Shapiro

With only a name to go on (albeit a famous one) the Post Office found the correct delivery address after only two attempts on this 1940 cover franked with a 3¢ Prexie, paying the prevailing domestic First Class rate.



Editor's Request: PLEASE send me material for
the next Issue.

Spring 2003



Issue No. 26

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the BIA 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Inside this Issue:

Chairman's Message

Inter-Camp Detainee Mail From Kooskia Detention Camp by Millard H. Mack

Full Digital Run (#s 1-26) Available; New Subscription Requirements

Wake Island WW II Cover From Pearl Harbor by Roland Austin

A Reader's Request for Help

An Interesting Question From a Reader

Missent Domestic Letter Erroneously Censored by Chip Briggs

Nutmeg's Suffet Sale Analysis Coming in Issue No. 27

A Prexie Puzzler by Leonard Piskiewicz

Readers Reply to Issue No. 25

An Early Cold War Prexie Usage by Jeffrey Shapiro

Two Airmail Covers from the United States via the Horseshoe Route by Steven M. Roth

Editor's *Prexie to Tibet* Cover Available to Trade

Temporary Rerouting of Ship Mail via Japan and Siberia by Steven M. Roth

Steven M. Roth, Editor/Publisher

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Chairman's Message

Now that the dust has begun to settle after the dispersal of the wonderful collections formed by Len Pisz-kiewicz and Steve Suffet, it will be interesting to see how the balance of power will change in the very competitive world of Prexie collecting and exhibiting. Stay tuned.....

A reminder --- There will be a Prexie-Era Study Group meeting at the APS StampShow to be held in Columbus, Ohio, on Friday, August 8, at 11:00 am. I hope to see many of you there. We also will get together at CHICAGOPEX in November 2003.

Jeff

Inter-Camp Detainee Mail From Kooskia Detention Camp

by

Millard H. Mack

Shown below is a cover in my collection sent from a detained enemy alien who was likely confined voluntarily in Camp Kooskia, Idaho to avoid the barbed wire confines of the Santa Fe Internment Camp. The cover was sent to another alien internee, who was held at the Santa Fe Detention Station. The cover is dated December 1944. Kooskia [pronounced "KOOS-key"] was an enemy alien detention camp located in Idaho. It held approx-



-imately 250 Japanese nationals from other camps, who volunteered to help construct the Lewis and Clark Highway. Personnel from the Ft. Missoula Internment Camp, 120 miles to the east in Montana, administered this small road camp. Mail to and from the camp, if written in English, was censored at Kooskia; if written in Japanese, it was examined at Ft. Missoula. In the case of this card, the examination occurred at Camp Kooskia by an examiner who had the authority to read English language mail.

[Editor's Note: Turn the page to see the censor's handstamp applied to the enclosure.]

I wish to thank Dann Mayo and Louis Fiset for their assistance in preparing this note.

Red censor handstamp applied by the U.S. Immigration & Naturalization Service:



“DETAINED ALIEN/ENEMY MAIL/EXAMINED/BY 31-3/U.S.I. & N.S.”

Full Digital Run (#s 1-26) Available; New Subscription Requirements

Jeff Shapiro, John Grabowski and I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that it is time to meet the high costs of publishing the Newsletter by placing subscriptions on a formal basis rather than continue to rely on contributions. We will be offering two types of subscriptions: a digital (electronic) version of the Newsletter which subscribers will receive via e-mail; and, a print (paper) version of the Newsletter. In both cases, everyone will continue to receive the Newsletter without any additional charge through the last (Winter) Issue for the year 2004.

By subscribing to the digital version you will save us the costs of printing and mailing the Issue to you. In return, **I will send you immediately upon receiving your conversion notice a CD-R** containing the entire run of the Newsletter (Nos.1-26). Each Newsletter is in .pdf file format, and formatted for easy printing so that you can create paper versions of all Issues. Then, at the end of each publishing year, as long as your digital subscription is current, I will send you a replacement CD-R containing all Issues through that year (e.g., Nos. 1-28; then, 1-32, etc.). In the year 2005, you can continue your digital subscription for \$5 for four Issues, plus the year-end cumulative CD-R. [For your information, all illustrations, beginning with Issue No.22, are in color when viewed on your computer.] To subscribe, send your e-mail address to John Grabowski and to me, and state that you want to convert your subscription to the digital edition.

To continue to subscribe to the paper edition of the Newsletter, do nothing. To continue your print version subscription after the year 2004, you must then send \$10 for four Issues to John Grabowski. Subscribers to the paper edition of the Newsletter who wish to purchase the CD-R can do so by sending me or John \$10. All proceeds, less the costs of creating and mailing the CD-R, will go into the publication fund.

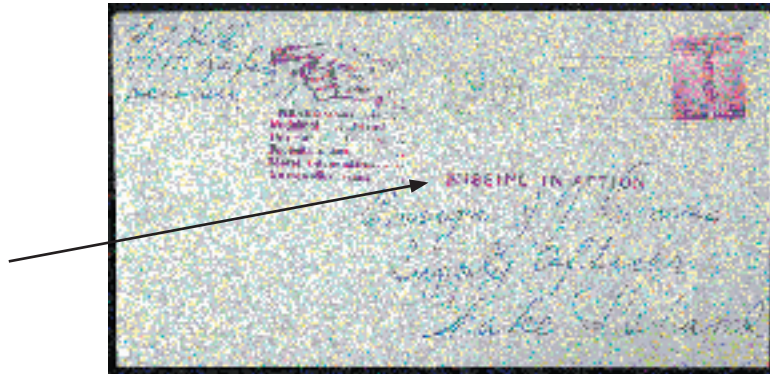
Wake Island WW II Cover From Pearl Harbor

by

Roland Austin

A single Defense Issue stamp pays the 3-cents surface rate to Wake island. Posted on December 3, 1941, at Pearl Harbor, the letter slowly traveled west about 2,300 miles by sea to Wake Island, a tiny atoll in the Pacific Ocean. The cover is addressed to one of the 447 Marines and 75 Army Signal Corps and Navy personnel stationed at this U.S. outpost.

Apparently the letter arrived at Wake Island and was returned to the sender sometime during the period when the Japanese began their attack on December 7 and overtook the Island on December 23, 1941.



During its return the cover was marked with a violet pointing finger auxiliary “Return to Writer” marking. Added is the “MISSING IN ACTION” handstamp used to explain the reason (Is this the earliest reported U.S. World War II cover with this marking?). Since Wake had no post office, most likely the markings were applied on the returning ship or at Honolulu when it arrived back there. I would venture that they were applied at Honolulu since, by the time of the letter’s return, there would have been such an “MIA” marking produced for use there.

I did not find Ensign J.J. Davis’ name on the list of POWs taken by the Japanese at Wake Island so I presume he perished in the valiant fighting.

Posted just days before the Japanese attacks, I am uncertain just how significant the cover might be -- having traveled in the mails from and to the December 7 attack locations (Pearl Harbor and Wake Island) and returned shortly after the United States declared war on Japan. Can any reader shed some more light on this cover?

A Reader’s Request for Help

Reader Clyde Jennings has requested the following: I need, for a special collection, the following Prexies: Scott #s 808, 812, 816, 819, 822, 826 & 830. Must be used and superb or better -- i.e., perfectly centered; sound in all respects; no scuffs, thins, scrapes, short perfs; AND with an unobtrusive light face-free cancel. Cheap stamps, but I will pay a premium if you can furnish in this condition. Clyde Jennings, 319 West 70th Street, Jacksonville, FL 32208 (904-768-4602).

An Interesting Question From a Reader

Jim Felton has asked the following question: “What would be the most difficult foreign destinations to obtain during the Prexie Era? Perhaps this has to be refined as 1938 - 1940; 1940 - 1945; and, 1946 - onward. My sense, writes Jim, is that the Portuguese colonies, Dutch colonies and certain French colonies might be a lot tougher to find than destinations in Europe, South America or the British Commonwealth.

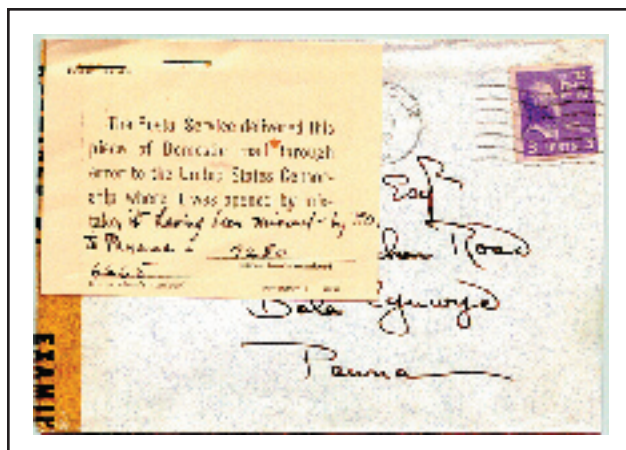
What do you think, Readers?

Missent Domestic Letter Erroneously Censored

by

Chip Briggs

This cover, addressed to Richard C. Chen, Esq., 202 Conshohocken Road, Bala Cynwyd, *Penna*, was mistakenly sent to Panama. When the error was realized, the letter was returned to the postal service in the U.S., which then turned it over to the Office of Censorship as an incoming foreign letter! When this error was finally discovered, the exculpatory label was placed on the cover. The cover is postmarked Norfolk, VA., November 9, 1942. There is a Panamanian marking on the back: “Agencia Postal/DIC/1942.”



Nutmeg's Suffet Sale Analysis Coming in Issue No. 27

John Grabowski is preparing an analysis of the sale of Steve Suffet's Prexies holdings which was held on April 15, 2003 (Sale #62) by Nutmeg Mail Auctions. To make the analysis meaningful, John needs your input. Because Nutmeg will not be issuing a list of prices realized, John asks that successful lot buyers contact him (minnjohn@alum.mit.edu) and tell him the lot(s) number(s) and the purchase price(s) (**without the buyer's premium**). Your identity will not be revealed by John who is interested only in compiling a record of, and analyzing, the prices realized.

A Prexie Puzzler

by

Leonard Piskiewicz

The illustrated cover has 10 cents in Prexies (3x3c + 1c) and was postmarked with a seapost CDS of "SJP 7 GOTEBOG - NEW YORK", with date "11.12 39" (European style for December 12, 1939). The light purple marking at the lower left indicates the cover was carried on the GRIPSHOLM of the Swedish-American Line; the word "Paquebot" is at the upper left. The postmark is well known from both the GRIPSHOLM and the KUNGSHOLM from at least the early 1930s. The cover has no backstamps and no return address.



The question is: what is this cover? Since the cover was carried on a Swedish vessel, it must have been mailed in an American port because it has U.S. stamps. The GRIPSHOLM departed New York December 9, 1939, at 3 PM (a Saturday) for Gotesborg. My opinion is that this is probably a supplementary mail cover (double sea postage) mailed at dockside just before the ship left. The seapost clerks probably did not get around to postmarking it until the following Monday, the 11th. Do any of our readers have any suggestions to explain this cover? Are there any pictures in existence of mail boxes at dockside in New York for the collection of such mail? Are there any pictures in existence of the supplementary mail offices at the New York piers?

Readers Reply to Issue No. 25

Several readers responded to questions raised in the last Newsletter.

Ken Lawrence had this to say about the airmail cover to Argentina that was censored by Germany [Issue No.25, page 6]: "Your cover was censored at Frankfurt/Main (code e below the eagle), the designated control office for airmail to and from North and South America, so it could either be inbound or outbouns censorship. The tape is Rierner E-53, used April 1940 to May 1941. The handstamp that tied it appears to be Rierner E-2, in use about the same time. I'd guess it just got misrouted to Germany, but even that requires explanation. By mid-1940, all such mail was being examined, if not typically marked, by the secret U.S. - British joint intelligence collection office at Bermuda."

Jim Felton observed that "...the cover to Argentina apparently censored by the Germans is intriguing. What if the recipient, Hooft, is connected to the German embassy? Is there any way to find out what was at the cover's address?

Editor's Note: It also is possible that this mail was intercepted somehow rather than misrouted. I recently acquired an airmail cover addressed to England that was intercepted by the Germans, censored at Frankfurt/Main, and then returned to the sender. This cover had originated at a secret undercover address (Box 1754, 25 South Street) located at the Seamen's Institute in New York City.

Len Piskiewicz' article [Newsletter No. 25, page 8] "Unusual Prexie Usage: International Airmail Message Postal Card with Attached Reply Card", elicited several thoughtful e-mails. We reprint this one from **Chuck McFarlane**: "I don't have access to literature on Australian postal rates, but my guess is that the attachment of the Message Card, mailed back still attached to the Reply Card, required payment of the letter rate. Two reasons: Generally, when double cards of any type other than M&R cards are mailed within the U.S., the letter rate applies. The portion "attached" to the mailed card is considered an attachment, thus subject to the letter rate. Second, an analysis as a bureaucrat might think (I'm a retired one): The Message Card carries a tablet description "POSTAL CARD WITH PAID REPLY", implying that the rate paid conveys both cards, attached. The Reply Card carries a tablet description "REPLY POSTAL CARD", implying the rate paid conveys a single Card. The second explanation is likely correct based on reading Chapters 4 & 5 of Tony Wawrukiewicz on International Rates. Though not specifically mentioned, the use of the plural in the initial mailing, and the singular in the mailing of the Reply Card, implies that the rate paid for the Reply Card is for the single card only. ... [Also], it seems logical that the Australian Post Office required that the return mailing be paid with full payment of the Australian Rate with no "credit" for the 4 cents US paid". The 7-1/2 cents letter rate is correct per Tony Wawrukiewicz. Also, the Australians should not have applied its postmarks, but marked the upper left of the Card with a "boxed" red pencil to the left of the 1 cent Prexie and continuing below the stamp and indicia to the right margin, acknowledging the invalidity of the stamp and indicia to pay the letter rate to the Australian post office."

Len Piskiewicz replied: "Chuck's explanation...is exactly right and rings true, especially the singular and plural "card" and "cards" business. That's an aspect of *bureaucratese* that the Post Office always used (and I have a hard time recognizing sometimes).

Louis Fiset wrote with respect to my note on "A Security Marking in WW II" [Issue No.25, page 2]: "I think the six bar marking is a *jusqu* marking indicating from a certain point onward the letter is to be carried by ordinary means. The key here may be the 'HMS Alternham', which suggests to me the addressee is on a ship somewhere. Likely applied in London indicating from this point on the letter is to be sent by ship. Perhaps that was the only means to reach the Lieutenant's ship at this particular time.

So, to answer the questions you pose, here is what I think: (1) To indicate the letter should be sent from that point on by surface; (2) Not in the U.S., but by British postal authorities, usually London; (3) I've seen this marking on civilian mail. [By the way, the marking seems to have been applied by a roller.]; and, (4) Usually applied at the exchange office, which means somewhere in transit.

There are many *jusqu* designs. In this country the only ones I've seen are text in boxes reading something like 'By airmail over U.S. domestic routes only.' "

Editor's Note: I pointed out to Mr. Fiset that R.G.Wike describes similar markings as security devices in his monograph, "British Empire Civil Censorship Devices/World War II/Trinidad and Tobago". Mr. Fiset then correctly pointed out that the illustrations in Mr. Wike's work have no more than five bars, not six. So.....?

An Early Cold War Prexie Usage

by

Jeffrey Shapiro

The illustration shows a seemingly ordinary Prexie Era cover franked with two 15 cents Buchanan stamps paying two times the 15 cents per half ounce uniform airmail rate to Europe, in effect from

November 1946 through June 1961, but is in reality a dandy little piece of post-World War II history.



This cover was mailed and postmarked in Middletown, Connecticut on September 20, 1948, and was addressed to Berlin, Germany where it was received and cancelled on the reverse, September 24, 1948. This speedy four day trip across the Atlantic suggests airmail transport directly into Berlin --- NOT just any air transport, but transport by the famous Berlin Airlift.

With the defeat of the Nazis in 1945, Germany was occupied by the victors: the United States, Britain, France and the Soviet Union. Each controlled a zone of the occupied country. In addition, Berlin, the former capital, surrounded by the Soviet Zone, was divided into four sectors.

After the United States, Britain and France took initial steps to consolidate their three Occupation Zones to create a West German government, the Soviets retaliated on June 24, 1948 by cutting off all surface traffic into the western sectors on Berlin, with the ultimate goal of controlling all of the city.

Faced with the choice of abandoning the city to the Soviets or attempting to supply the city's 2.5 million residents by air, the Western Powers, in the first major test of Soviet aggression of the Cold War, chose the latter solution, and Operation Vittles, as the Berlin Airlift was unofficially known, began on June 26, 1948.

The U.S. Air Force and the British Royal Air Force started slowly, carrying 80 tons of food on the first day, but slowly escalating to 600 flights a day, transporting 2500 tons of provisions, by July 15, 1948. By Easter Sunday, 1949, a record 1398 sorties (about one per minute!) flew into Berlin bringing well over 5000 tons of food, coal and other essential materials to the city's residents. In a propaganda coup for the U.S. and Britain, 10,000 Christmas gifts were flown in for the children of Berlin in the last two weeks of December, 1948.

In the face of this determined opposition and the growing propaganda nightmare, the Soviets lifted the land blockade to Berlin on May 12, 1949, but because of the huge backlog of material needed for Berlin's residents, the Airlift continued until September 30, 1949.

Two Airmail Covers from the United States via the Horseshoe Route

by

Steven M. Roth

Airmail from the United States to points in the Middle East and Asia flown over the British Horseshoe Route are not common. One example I recently acquired is shown below.



This letter would have traveled from England to Durban, South Africa by ship; then by air to Palestine.

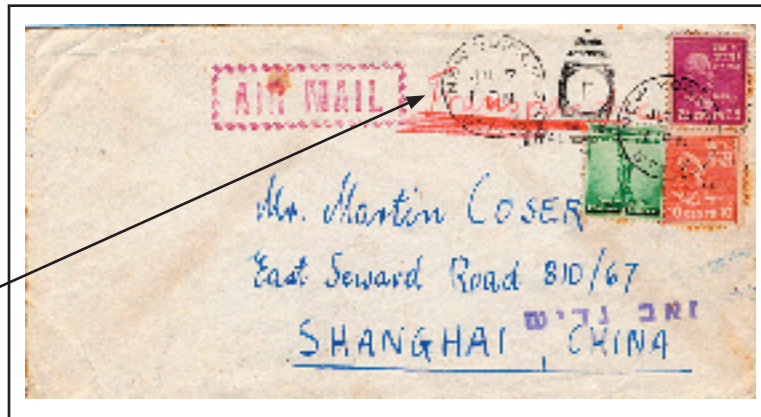
This appears to be a 1-1/2 oz. letter, franked with 30 cents, as follows: double weight airmail in the U.S. (Tucson to New York) = 2 x 6 cents (per ounce) [= 12 cents]; surface from Europe, and airmail from South Africa to destination, 6 cents per 1/2 ounce [3 x 6 cents = 18 cents], hence the 30 cents franking.

I also recently purchased a cover going to Shanghai from the U.S. that traveled via the Horseshoe Route.

This cover is dated July 7, 1941. It originated in New York City. It contains the sender's manuscript admonition "Trans Pacific". It is franked with 36 cents postage. The letter arrived in Shanghai on September 3, 1941, as evidenced by a Shanghai backstamp receiving marking.

The cover traveled from the United States to London via ocean mail. It went from London to Durban via ship, as well. From Durban, the cover traveled via air to China via Calcutta, etc. The rate was

calculated as follows: 5 cents surface mail from New York to London; 31 cents for surface to Durban and airmail from Durban by BOAC to destination.



The sender's admonition that the letter be routed via the trans-Pacific route (for which the basic airmail postage was 70 cents) was ignored [See, arrow for admonition inscription].

This cover was addressed to Martin Coser, a member of the large Jewish refugee community that had fled Nazi Germany and settled in Shanghai [1933 - 1948].

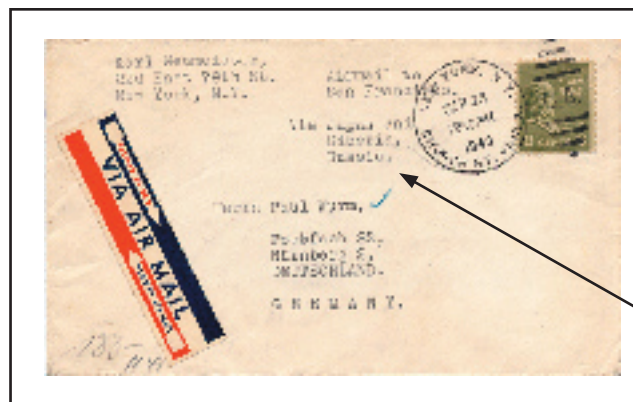
My thanks to Roger Schnell and Robert Wilcsek for their comments on these covers.

Editor's *Prexie to Tibet* Cover Available to Trade

I will trade the *Prexie Tibet* destination cover described in Newsletter No. 23 for a comparable airmail foreign destination *Prexie Era* cover used during WW II from the United States. Contact me at the e-mail address shown on page 1 of this Issue. This offer is subject to prior trade.

Temporary Rerouting of Ship Mail via Japan and Siberia

For approximately thirteen weeks in September, October, November and the first week of December, 1940, ocean mail from the United States to Germany, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and the USSR was sent via San Francisco to Japan, then to Siberia where it was carried by the trans-Siberian Railway to St. Petersburg and on to Berlin for distribution to its destination. Trans-Pacific airmail service was not then available to these countries. [PB Nos. 18022 and 18026]



The Prexie Era

Inside this Issue:

Another British Horseshoe Route Cover from the United States by Steven M. Roth

A photograph of a vintage postcard. On the left, a vertical orange stamp reads 'CENSOR' and 'BY AIR MAIL'. The postcard features a blue and white illustration of a biplane flying over a landscape. The text on the postcard is handwritten in cursive: 'Lewis Charles', 'Missus Mrs. Peter G. (Pitt)', 'Aug. Wash. House, Ford Street', 'Johannesburg', 'South Africa'. There is a red 'AIR MAIL' label and a green '30' stamp. A circular postmark is visible over the biplane illustration.

A M.S. Gripsholm Exchange Forerunner

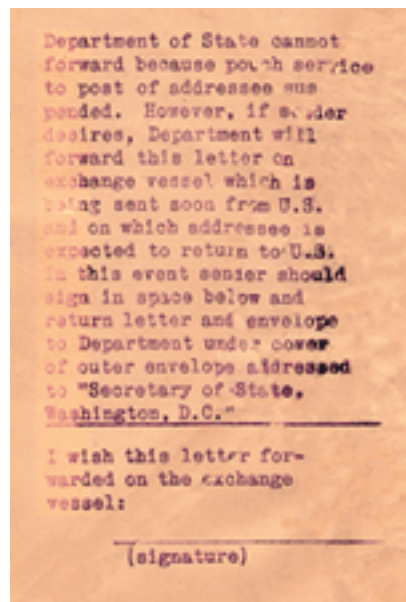
by

Louis Fiset

This World War II era cover, originally postmarked October 21, 1941, was addressed to the writer's husband via the State Department in Washington D.C. Gerald Warner, Esquire was a member of the diplomatic corps in Japan with an assignment to Kobe. The letter, properly franked for international surface mail, would have been forwarded by diplomatic pouch had war not intervened. The letter, however, was returned to the writer.



The interesting details of this cover lie with the instructions on the back.



In them, the State Department advises the writer of the suspension of mail service, but “will forward this letter on exchange vessel which is being sent soon from U.S. and on which addressee is expected to return to U.S.” The vessel referred to would be the *M.S. Gripsholm* which sailed from New York harbor on June 18, 1942,

and rendezvoused with the Japanese exchange ships *M.V. Asama Maru* and *S.S. Conte Verde*, at Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, the Portuguese colony in East Africa. On this first of two exchanges with Japan, most of the diplomatic corps of the two countries were exchanged, including Ambassador Joseph C. Grew and his staff as well as the addressee. Each country exchanged approximately 1,500 civilians.

This cover, postmarked ten weeks prior to the *Gripsholm's* departure for Mozambique, is a forerunner of the interesting postal history associated with the *Gripsholm* in World War II. The Swedish vessel, under charter to the State Department from May 1942 to March 1946, undertook sixteen "voyages of mercy" to deliver tons of relief supplies and to repatriate 20,000 civilians and wounded servicemen whose motherlands fell on both sides of the conflict.

I know of only one other cover similar to this one, and neither this one nor the other has a signature authorizing the letter to be forwarded on the exchange ship. Prexie Era collectors should watch for these.

[**Editor's Note:** The International Society for Japanese Philately recently published Monograph 14, "United States and British Exchanges With Japan 1942 - 1943" by Michael Ruggiero. I recommend this 62 page, highly illustrated study to anyone who is interested in the subject matter. Several of the illustrations are from Louis Fiset's collection.]

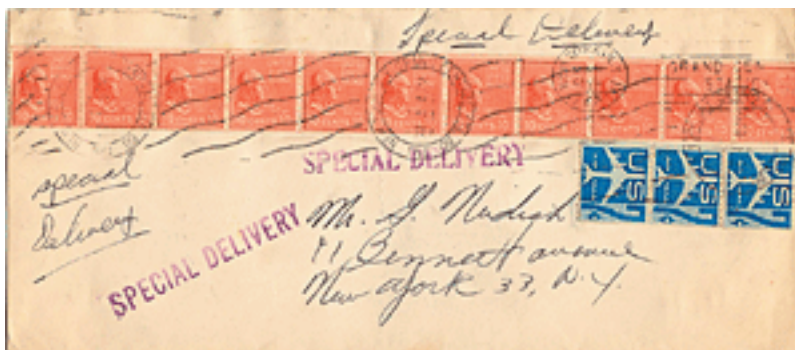
Two 10 Cents Prexie Coil Items *Extraordinaire!*

by

George Wagner

Here are two Prexie 10 cents coil items that reside in my holdings.

The first is a cover dated March 9, 1952. The roller cancel is repeated on the back.



Just when I thought I had seen everything, I got lucky again. Here is a wonderful example of the coil that I found on Australian Ebay. It is on a package front, and is dated August 4, 1956. [The illustration appears on the next page] Can anyone show any other spectacular usages of the ten cents coil?

Many subscribers have switched to the Newsletter's digital edition. They not only see all illustrations in color, but they also have received a full run of back Issues on CD-R.

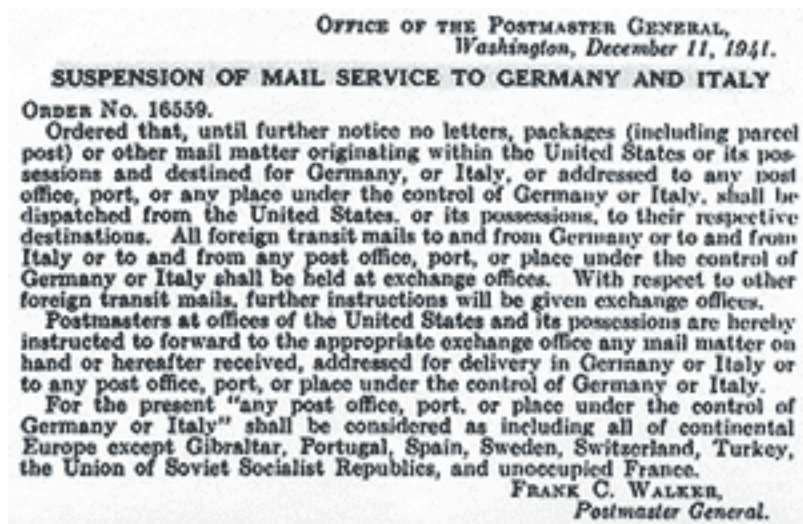


First Day of Suspended Mail Service to Italy

by

Steven M. Roth

On December 11, 1941, the Post Office issued its Order suspending mail service to Germany and Italy as well as to Axis occupied and controlled countries. The Order was published in the *Postal Bulletin* on December 12, the effective first day of the suspension.



There were exceptions to the suspension of service although the exceptions were not set forth in the Order. For example, mail addressed to prisoners of war or to internees was permitted, provided the sender followed strict rules imposed by countries on both sides of the conflict.

I show on page 5 a cover addressed to Italy, postmarked December 12, 1941, demonstrating the first day of the *blanket* suspension of service to an Axis country imposed by the United States. I also have in my collection several earlier service suspended covers which illustrate the *ad hoc* suspension of service as the result of local conditions and/or actions taken by belligerents (*e.g.*, covers intercepted at the border by Italy during its invasion of Greece in 1940) or by reason of temporary decisions made by the United States as the result of

unstable conditions in combat areas (e.g., the temporary suspension of mail service to Finland during the “Winter War” fought between Finland and the USSR.)



The \$1.00 Wilson Watermark Error

by

John Borgeaud



In March 1953, a New York stamp dealer was sorting through some used blocks of stamps. As he inspected a block of the then current \$1.00 Woodrow Wilson Prexie definitive, he noticed what he thought was a crease. On closer inspection, he discovered that the block was not creased at all, but that the block bore the double-line USIR watermark. Since the Post Office Department had ceased using watermarked paper for postage stamps in 1916, and the USIR watermarked was intended for use for revenue stamps, the alert dealer knew that he had found something special.

The dealer kept his discovery secret, and he and a friend traveled the East and the South in search of additional copies of the error. During the next 7 months they would visit approximately two hundred post offices. They located approximately four hundred mint stamps from the Charleston, South Carolina vicinity. They also found about one hundred-fifty used copies in wholesale lots. In October 1953, the Associated Press revealed the find, and the “cat was out of the bag.” The hunt was now on. Dealers and collectors searched dealers’ stocks, albums, and trash bins for the stamp that we now know as Scott 832b. So..., in the fifty years that have passed since its discovery, what, if anything, have we learned about Scott 832b?

While speculation abounds, it still is not known exactly how the whole thing happened other than that some sort of mix-up had occurred. No one has come forth to admit guilt, and postal officials have not offered any definitive answers.

Some of the production facts we do know are: (i) the paper used for the \$1.00 Prexie was cut from sheets of the same size as that supplied to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing for revenue use; (ii) the watermarked revenue stamps were printed on the same type intaglio presses used for the \$1.00 Prexie; and, (iii) the watermarked revenue stamps paper had to be accounted for just like the paper that was used for currency. Theoretically, watermarked paper could not go from one location to another like a “phantom in the night”.

One clue to where the paper came from might be the watermark itself. The watermark is sideways. The watermark letters can be found upright or inverted. They also can be found in left to right orientation or in right to left orientation. [See illustration] Paper fresh from the mill would tend to have the watermark in the same orientation on each sheet. No such care would have been taken in forming a pile of scrap paper, like the odds and ends left over after short revenue press runs.

Another 832b mystery is its date of issue. Having been unplanned with apparently no documentation of its origin, an exact issue date is impossible to determine; however, clues exist to narrow the possibilities. There were three distinct printings of the \$1.00 value. The first two printings were done by the wet print intaglio process on ungummed paper, which are indistinguishable from each other as single stamps, and both printings share the same plate numbers. The first printing, however, is characterized by plate number blocks which have arrow and crow foot alignment markings between the plate numbers for proper color registration. The second printing, which began in 1950, lacked both the arrow and crow foot markings. The third printing, which began in 1954, was performed by the dry print method on pre-gummed paper, and the second color was red-violet rather than purple. This printing is different enough to have earned the Scott catalog number 832c.

All known watermark error copies have been of the wet print variety; all plate number blocks and sheets are missing the arrow and crow foot markings, as with the example pictured, which places them in the second printing produced between the years of 1950 and 1954.



Sixteen possible plate number combinations are attributed to error plates. All but the one (the underlined combination indicated below) have been observed by this author:

22096-22085 22097-22085 22098-22085 22099-22085 22096-22086
 22097-22086 22098-22086 22099-22086 22096-22094 22097-22094
 22098-22094 22099-22094 22096-22095 22097-22095 22098-22095
 22099-22095

A more precise clue to the date of issue comes from the cancellations on used copies. All date indicative copies that I have seen have been from either 1951 or 1952, with the earliest being May 9, 1951 from Niagara, Wisconsin. In a 1987 update of his 1954 report, long-time stamp dealer and researcher of this error, Al “Tag” Boerger, identified this as the earliest known use he had seen. As in early United States stamp issues, an

EKU is a record just waiting to be broken; and, with the stamp still being found on sale in 1953, later year cancellations should be expected to turn up as well.

Unlike other 832b uncertainties, it is clear that this error stamp received widespread distribution. By 1954, mint copies had been found in post offices from both coasts, the South, the Midwest, and even Guam and Japan; and cancelled copies appeared from 15 states, and 4 APO's also were reported. Since that time numerous other state cancels have been added to the list, as well as an October 19, 1951 used block of 16 from Guam and a used block of 4 with a San Juan, Puerto Rico roller cancel. No identifiable distribution pattern seems to exist. Both large city and small town cancellations are represented, including several copies from the small northern Wisconsin town of Niagara, covering an 8-month period during 1951 and 1952, one of which appears to be the earliest known use of this stamp.



Just how scarce is this error? That is another 832b mystery as well. No one really knows exactly how many were printed, or how many were used and destroyed during the 2-years or so before their existence was discovered. By February 1954, at least 21 full sheets had been reported with more to follow. In the June 1, 1956 edition of *Mekeel's*, a letter from H.J. Holtzclaw, Director of the BEP, to Philip H. Howard, Jr., stated, "that perhaps a stock of 1000 sheets of the watermarked paper went to press inadvertently, thereby resulting in 200,000 stamps being placed in circulation." While probably thousands of single copies exist today, many U.S. dealers have never owned either a mint or used copy, and this stamp is missing from most U.S. collections. One old-time dealer friend of mine has watermarked thousands upon thousands of the \$1.00 Wilson stamp without success. In 1996-7, a small hoard of about 6 full sheets appeared and was quickly absorbed by the market. Well centered mint NH copies and sound used singles or blocks with clean, readable city/date cancels are the exception rather than the rule, and should not be expected to be had for only a small fraction of catalog. And, with plate blocks being only 1 of every 100 stamps printed and with only a small fraction of the original production surviving, they are only rarely available.

So, if you like mysteries and would like to extend your collecting horizons, perhaps the \$1.00 watermark error is for you. If you are a cover collector, remember to keep your eyes peeled for \$1.00 Prexie covers and parcel tags from 1951 and 1952, especially if they are from Guam, a Pacific APO, Camp Pendleton, CA, or little Niagara, Wisconsin. And, don't forget, should you have an earlier first use cancel or additional information on this stamp, feel free to contact me through the Newsletter's editor. Good hunting.

Acknowledgement: I would like to take the opportunity to credit the late Al "Tag" Boerger for much of the early 832b accounts, quotes, and information presented here. His personal curiosity, research, and willingness to share his knowledge have provided much towards our understanding of the \$1.00 Prexie watermark error.

A Scarce Famous Americans Airmail Rate to South Africa

by

John Grabowski



Upon first glance this airmail cover from Sumter, SC (postmarked March 11, 1940) to South Africa does not seem too unusual. The 55¢ per ½ oz. airmail rate was in effect for over 13 months, between July 1, 1939 and August 5, 1940 (after which the rate was raised to 95¢). It is only when you consider that the 5¢ Famous Americans stamp first became available on February 5, 1940 (the first 10¢ was released on February 13) that the scarcity becomes evident – it was only possible for 5¢ and 10¢ Famous Americans stamps to pay this 55¢ rate for a period of 6 months.

The only shorter rate is the \$1.10 per ½ oz. airmail rate to South Africa (via the trans-Pacific route due to wartime mail disruption) which was only in effect July 18, 1941 to December 1, 1941 – about 4 ½ months. A Prexie cover, from Steve Suffet's collection with this \$1.10 airmail franking to South Africa sold for \$1,300 (+10%) in Nutmeg's April auction! The 55¢ cover pictured above sold on eBay in May for \$85.

Editor's Note: I was the underbidder for the cover shown above. I had no idea of the significance of the Famous Americans until I had lost the Lot and asked John why he had bid as he did. I was interested only in the route and the rate. FYI, here is an example of the \$1.10 rate trans-Pacific airmail cover showing the 4-1/2 month rate John mentioned. Now, see the **mystery cover!**



Mystery Cover

The mystery cover (see page 1 for illustration) is franked with \$1.10 postage for airmail carriage from the United States to South Africa. The cover is postmarked March 17, 1942. It contains a lightly written admonition "Via/Trans Atlantic Air Mail" below the address. The cover was censored upon arrival in South Africa. The only marking on the back of the cover is the postmark of the mailing post office; there is no Miami, Florida transit marking.

1. Was this cover properly franked for either \$1.10 postage or for 55c [x2] out-of-perod?
2. What route did this cover travel?
3. Was this merely a convenience (or an erroneous) over-franking?

Please send your thoughts to me. I will publish a response(s) in the next Issue.

The Steve Suffet Presidential Postal History Auction

by

John Grabowski

This premier Prexie postal history collection was sold via a mail auction by Nutmeg Auctions on April 15, 2003. Although the realized prices were not made public, several Prexie Era Study Group members have pooled their knowledge to reconstruct at least some of the auction prices.

Looking at some of these realized prices, the sale appears to have been quite successful. There apparently was fierce competition for some key items, including many which might not be offered again for a generation. No doubt, as time passes, and collectors scrounge the hinterlands, a lot of this material is becoming genuinely scarce.

I have reports on 128 of the 400 lots offered for sale. These 128 lots sold for a total (hammer) price of \$39,174. Anyone desiring a listing of the 128 prices, in Excel spreadsheet format, may send me a request at minnjohn@alum.mit.edu.

Fourteen of the 128 known prices realized at least \$500 and deserve special mention:

| Lot # | Description | Hammer Price |
|-------|---|--------------|
| 1173 | \$5 solo on piece, 1956 APO | \$7500 |
| 1157 | 11c solo, 3 oz. UPU letter parcel to Denmark | \$2000 |
| 1504 | 50c Phil. a/m rate, 12/5/41, re-routed, due 20c | \$2000 |
| 1434 | \$1.10 short 4.5-mo. a/m rate to S. Africa | \$1300 |
| 1165 | 19c unusual solo, registry + 1c indemnity | \$1100 |
| 1172 | \$2 solo, registry + indemnity | \$1100 |
| 1281 | 35c Wake Is. airmail rate | \$1000 |
| 1288 | 10c Midway to Hawaii airmail rate | \$900 |
| 1494 | 45c reg'd a/m PC w reply, to Warsaw, 1941 | \$700 |

| Lot # | Description | Hammer Price |
|-------|---|--------------|
| 1228 | \$3.06 reg'd cover | \$650 |
| 1283 | 40c Guam airmail rate | \$650 |
| 1341 | \$3.00 airmail + registry rate to Chile | \$625 |
| 1517 | 3c Prexie coil to the Manhattan Project | \$600 |
| 1372 | \$1 solo to G.B., a/m + registry | \$500 |

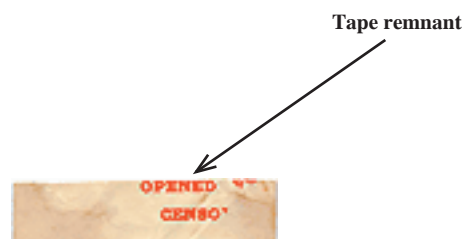
Steve's collection was the 3rd "pioneer" collection to be disbanded over the last few years – the others being Rustad's (sold as two lots by Siegel!) and Len Piskiewicz's, sold via net price sale and on eBay. It will be interesting to view the progress of the new generation of Prexie postal history collectors, especially with all this material disbursed.

Another British Horseshoe Route Cover from the United States

by

Steven M. Roth

At first blush this cover seems to be an obvious candidate to be one which traveled to its destination via the trans-Pacific route. At second look, however, it would seem to be a candidate for routing via FAM 22 [because of its date of mailing]. In fact, it probably was neither.



Although the sender's (or post office clerk's) admonition handstamp requested routing via FAM 14, this route no longer was available to Asia or the Middle East after December 1941. It would seem, therefore, that this March 1942, cover would have been flown via FAM 22 which began operations on December 06, 1941. I do not believe it was so flown.

Bob Wilcsek, an authority on airmail rates and routes during the Prexie Era, has published a very convincing case that (i) commercial airmail over FAM 22 did not take hold until sometime in May 1942, and (ii) covers without a Miami, Florida transit backstamp (such as this cover) most likely did not travel over FAM 22 even after May 1942. ["FAM 22: The First Six Months/When Did It Start, Where Did It End and Who Flew It?", *Airpost Journal* (January 1999)]

I believe that this cover was flown to Lisbon via FAM 18 (trans-Atlantic route) and then to England. Then it traveled by ship to Durban, South Africa, and then went by airmail to Palestine. I am confirmed in my belief by a remnant of censor tape present on the back of the cover which was applied by South African Censorship.

I discussed two other United States via British Horseshoe Route covers in *The Prexie Era*, Issue No.26.

Winter 2004



Issue No. 28

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

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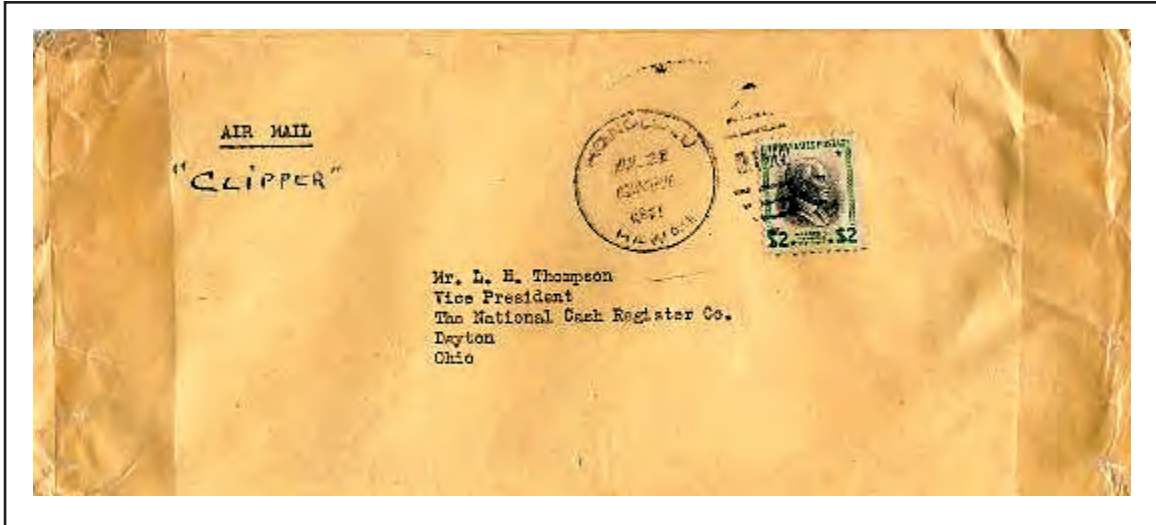
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Mystery Cover

Coming Next Issue: Censorship of Philatelic Material in World War II

A Prexie Cover Sells on Ebay For \$1,560.13!

When the auction closed on October 24, 2003, and the last of eighteen bids had been cast by 5 bidders, Chip Briggs was the winner of Ebay Item #2958580643 -- a solo use of a \$2.00 Prexie [Scott #833] from Hawaii to Ohio via Clipper over FAM Route 14. The franking represented ten times the minimum required franking for airmail from Hawaii to mainland United States [20 cents per 1/2 oz.]. The cover was postmarked July 28, 1941.



When Did Mail Service Resume in Hawaii After December 7, 1941?

Postal history dealer Labron Harris raised this question last summer when we were talking at BALPEX. We know that mail was suspended for a short time after the attack on Pearl Harbor, but we do not know for certain when the mail resumed.

In my attempt to answer the question I looked through all of the *Postal Bulletins* and *Supplements*, but did not find the answer. The only reference I could find anywhere was a brief statement in the recent update of the 1951 Report to President Truman stating that the Office of Censorship opened in Honolulu on December 13. [THE UNITED STATES POST OFFICE IN WORLD WAR II, p.78, L. Sherman, M.D., ed., 2002] This, of course, does not answer the question of resumption of service or the start date of the censoring of the mail.

Can anyone produce a cover to or from Hawaii earlier, say, than December 31 [so we can begin to establish a date of service resumption and of the start of censorship?] Send your answers and images to me. I will report the results.

A Prexie Forerunner to U.S. Internment Camp Mail

by

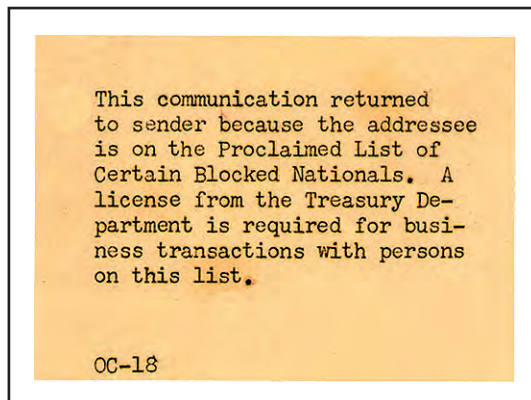
Louis Fiset

This 1942 Prexie cover (IMAGE 1), paying the correct 35 cents airmail rate to Bolivia, was returned to the writer by a censor at the Miami censor station (Examiner #1747). The letter never left the country. Why this is so became evident upon examining the censor's explanatory note [BRODERICK & MAYO, CIVIL CENSOR-

IN THE UNITED STATES DURING WORLD WAR II, F.18.2, p.93] tucked inside the cover.



The note (IMAGE 2) indicates the addressee, a German business, is on the Proclaimed List of Certain Blocked Nationals, and that without a license from the Treasury Department business transactions with persons on the list are forbidden.



Beginning in July 1941, the United States initiated unilateral economic warfare on Germany by blacklisting certain German companies and individuals residing in Latin America. This included the cancellation of contracts of Germans working for U.S. companies and the boycotting and blacklisting of Germans without any regard to their activities, political stance or loyalties. This foreign policy was in response to the State Department's perception that Germany posed an economic threat to the United States' trade interests in the Western Hemisphere, which it arrogated to itself. Moreover, government officials believed that this advantage further abetted pro-Nazi German ex-patriots living and working in the region. By March 1942, the Proclaimed List of businesses and individuals reached nearly 6,000.

The blacklisting was only the first step in the State Department's effort to rid the Western Hemisphere of Hitler's presence. It became the primary means for producing lists of deportees who would be heading north to Texas internment camps by the hundreds beginning in April 1942. In Bolivia alone 221 German aliens were deported during the War. IMAGE 3 [shown on the next page] shows a cover with a 6 cents Transport stamp from a German deportee at the Kenedy Internment Camp, one of three INS camps that held the majority of the 4,000 German deportees sent to the United States during World War II.

Collectors should be on the lookout for other "Return to Sender" covers destined for German-named businesses and individuals in Latin America. Nineteen Latin American companies cooperated in the deportation pro-

gram by assisting the State Department in identifying businesses and individuals to blacklist. Such covers might well be viewed as forerunners to United States internment camp mail.



When Do Subscriptions Expire?

This question comes up often. All subscriptions will expire with the publication of Issue No. 32 [Winter 2005]. At that time subscribers to the digital edition will be able to renew for \$5.00 for four Issues.. They will receive a CD-R containing all Issues from 1-32. Subscribers to the paper edition will be able to renew for \$10 [unless postage increases between now and then]. They will not receive the CD-R

Another Nice 10 Cents Prexie Coil Franking

by

Dickson Preston

George Wagner, in his stimulating piece on the 10 cents Prexie coil in the Fall 2003 number of *The Prexie Era Newsletter*, asks for other unusual usages of this stamp, which is so difficult to find on cover. I would like to report a recent acquisition, a war-time cover sent to Vichy France (established June 1940) with a strip of three 10 cents coils paying the 30 cents transatlantic clipper air rate to Europe.



The cover, from one Wm. M. Wilson, was postmarked Philadelphia 7 April 1941, and backstamped in Lyon,

but the date of arrival is not readable. The letter was opened twice, first by French censors and second by French customs. The censors closed the letter with a white paper strip imprinted “Controle,” which is now hidden under the customs tape on the right end of the envelope. They also applied lozenge-shaped censor markings with code letters “WK”, for Marseilles, front and back. The customs people subsequently re-closed the letter with translucent tapes imprinted “POSTES, TELEGRAPHES ET TELEPHONES (Art. 29, IV’ fasc. de l’Instruction generale),” which are tied by double-circle handstamps reading “DOUANE GARE MARSEILLE” (customs railroad station Marseilles).

The letter would have been flown on Atlantic FAM 18, via Lisbon to Marseilles, more than a year before service to unoccupied France was suspended in November, 1942. Following this route, it was not censored by the Germans.

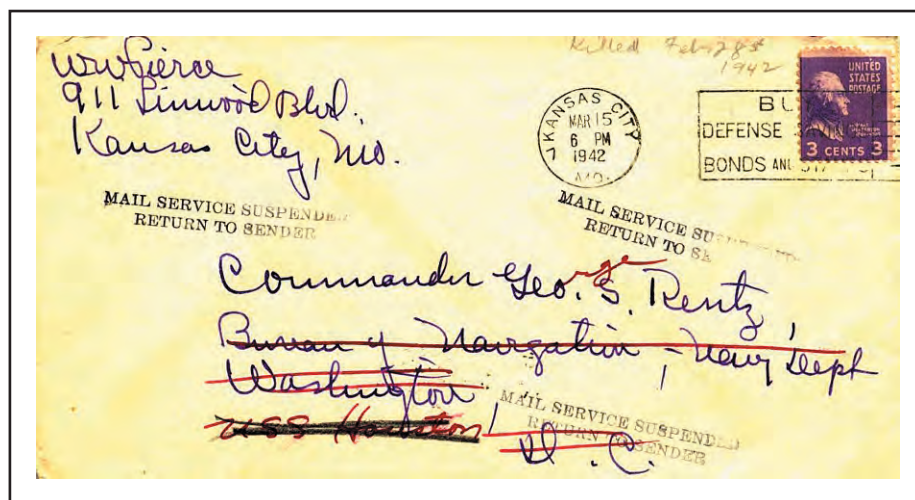
Correction from Issue No. 27: Postal history dealer Jim Forte has pointed out that the year “1952” on page 3, line 2, should be “1962”.

USS Houston

by

Jeffrey M. Shapiro

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the *USS Houston* (CA-30), the flagship for the Asiatic Fleet, commissioned in 1930, was ordered to sail from the Phillipines to join American, British, Dutch and Australian (ABDA) forces to destroy Japanese naval units operating in the southwest Pacific Ocean.



On the evening of February 26, 1942, the *Houston*, along with 10 ABDA destroyers and cruisers, entered the Sunda Strait in an effort to thwart the Japanese invasion of Java. In the Battle of the Java Sea which followed early in the morning of March 1, after a furious confrontation with two Japanese cruisers, the *Mogami Maru* and the *Mikuma Maru*, the *USS Houston* sank.

Of the 1,000 men on board, only 368 survived the sinking. These men would become slave laborers for

the Japanese throughout Southeast Asia, with many forced to build the infamous bridge over the River Kwai.

The *Houston*'s fate was kept top secret by the United States for almost six months. This secrecy can be seen with this Prexie cover addressed to George Rentz, an officer on the *Houston*, and mailed on March 15, 1942, from Kansas City, two weeks after the ship had been sunk. The letter was returned to the sender fifty days later, with the auxiliary marking "MAIL SERVICE SUSPENDED". Records indicate that the addressee died when the vessel sunk.

New Census Being Conducted; Solo Prexie Rates CD-R Now Available

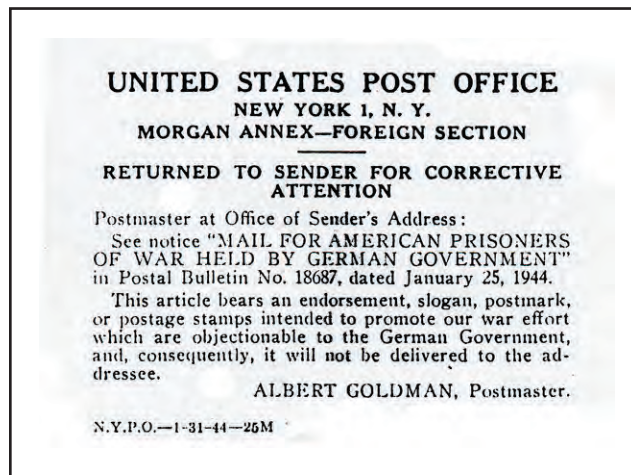
Jeff Shapiro is compiling a census of non-philatelic covers with uses of the following Prexie values: 1-1/2 cents vertical coil [all uses]; and, solo uses of the 14, 19, and 22 cents and \$1.00, \$2.00 and the \$5.00 values. He will report his results in the *Newsletter*.

I have compiled a CD-R which contains the solo rates for Prexie values 1 cent through 50 cents taken from Issues Nos. 9 - 15 of the *Newsletter*. No multiple rates were included so there are no Dollar rates in the compilation. I will make this CD-R available to any subscriber who sends \$10.00 to the publication fund. Why do we need this contribution? Because the costs of printing and mailing remain high even though we have drastically cut our expenses thanks to more than 40% of our subscribers who take the online digital edition.

World War Two Letter Mail Labels [continued from Issue No. 25]

by

Steven M. Roth



This label generally is found on mail that was sent to United States military personnel who were held as prisoners-of-war, when the outside of the envelope contained some patriotic matter (such as the popular "Win the War" adhesive stamp). The letter would be intercepted by the U.S. authorities who would place this label on the envelope and return it to the sender. If the letter made it past the U.S. authorities, the Red Cross or the Axis Powers would remove the stamp before delivering the letter to

the POW. Below is an example of such a letter.

PRISONER OF WAR POST
KRIEGSGEFANGENENPOST
SERVICE DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE
BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
RANK AND NAME (CAPITAL LETTERS) L.T.H. LAWSON CORLEY
UNITED STATES PRISONER OF WAR.
PRISONER OF WAR No. _____
(SEE NOTE ON FLAP)
CAMP NAME AND No. STALAG LUFT 3
SUBSIDIARY CAMP No. _____
11829 COUNTRY GERMANY
U.S. CENSOR
1007.25 VIA NEW YORK, N. Y.

In this case, the form letter made it past the U.S. Censor, but the German censor removed the U.S. stamp, possibly a “Win the War” or similar stamp, but clearly not a Prexie.

Some Forerunners of World War II Interrupted Mail

by

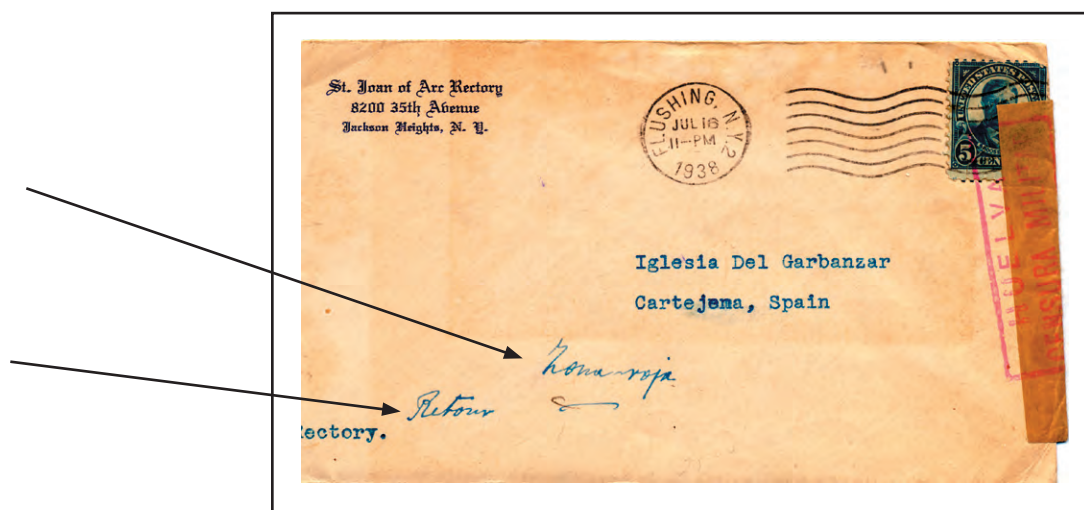
Steven M. Roth

Even before the outbreak of World War II in Europe on September 1, 1939, a letter sent abroad from the United States to a destination that was undergoing conflict often was interrupted in its journey. I include such mail in my forerunners collection if the conflict is considered by historians to have been a harbinger of the World War. Here are some examples from my holdings.

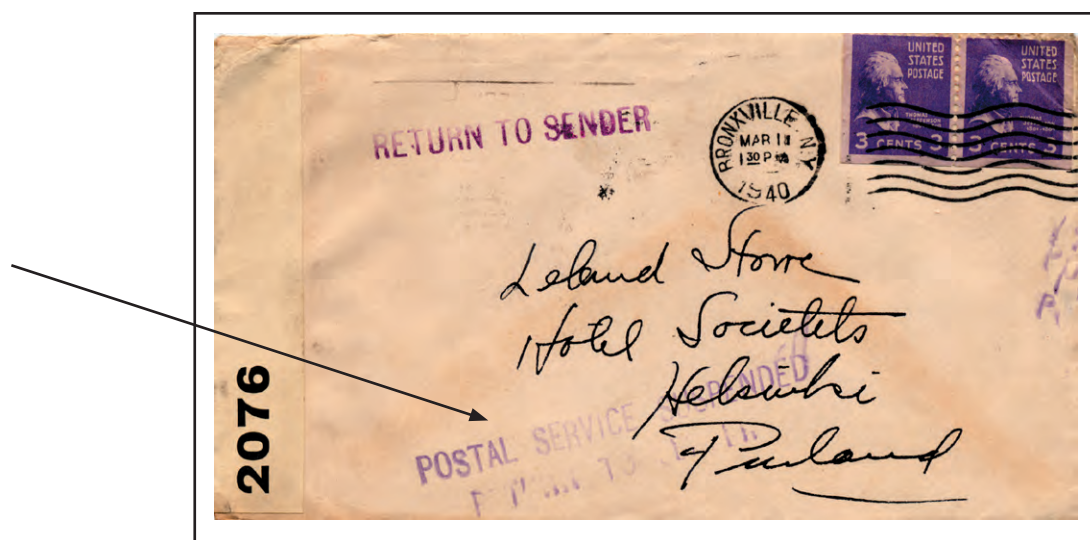


This letter was sent to Mongolia [China] in 1936 just after the Japanese occupied that northern Province. The letter was returned with the handstamp: “SERVICE TEMPORARILY/SUSPENDED/RETURN To SENDER.”

This cover, addressed to Cartejena, Spain, was mailed on July 16, 1938, during the Spanish Civil War. It was received by the Loyalist [Franco] forces, marked in manuscript “Retour/Zona rosa” [Return/Red Zone], and not sent on to the town then held by the leftist Republicans.



The last cover was sent to Finland during the so-called “Winter War” which lasted from November 30, 1939 through March 13, 1940, between the Soviet Union and Finland. Mail to Finland was temporarily suspended. The letter was marked: “RETURN TO SENDER” and “POSTAL SERVICE SUSPENDED/RETURN TO SENDER”. This cover was postmarked March 1, 1940.



A New Newsletter That Might Interest Subscribers

I recently received from subscriber Ken Pitt the digital edition of a newsletter called “King George VI Post & Mail”. It is published by the King George VI Study Group of the British North America Philatelic Society. I suspect that many topics to be covered in future issues will interest subscribers to the *Prexie Era Newsletter*. Information and a sample digital copy can be obtained from Gary Steele at GARY.STEELE@NS.SYMPATICO.CA

By Steamer, Airplane and Pneumatic Tube

by

Dickson Preston

One of my delights in Prexie era collecting is to find combination frankings of the Fourth Bureau Issue with the Prexie series. So I was pleased when Ebay sent me this pre-clipper air mail cover sent from New York to Prague in January 1939, franked with a 20 cents Golden Gate and two 3 cents Jeffersons. The sender paid 5 cents per ounce for an international surface letter, two times 3 cents per half ounce for delivery by air in Europe, and 15 cents international registration, for a total of 26 cents. Since the letter was sent from New York, there was no need for domestic airmail. The New York Post Office applied the blue airmail Form 2978 to show that postage for airmail delivery within Europe had been paid. The letter was mailed 28 January 1939 in New York, was routed via the SS Roosevelt, and arrived in Prague on 10 February 1939, where it received the rectangular Prague 7 airmail arrival marking. It was sent before both the Nazi takeover of Czechoslovakia in March and the opening of the transatlantic clipper service in May 1939. Thus this historical cover shows a fine combination of an unusual rate, a good destination, and a mixed issue franking.



But the really exciting aspect of this cover is the red sequence number 2063 placed below the 3 cents stamps. This sequence number identifies this letter as one which was carried on a network of pneumatic

tubes within the city of Prague. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the Prague Post Office used this network for rapid delivery of mail within the city. Mail was loaded into cylinders, and pushed by air pressure through a network of tubes which connected all the major post offices in the city. For an extra fee, a sender could have his message whisked across the city in a matter of minutes. Similar systems operated in Vienna, Paris, Berlin, and other large cities.

With the advent of air mail services, the pneumatic systems were also used to provide rapid delivery of airmail letters and cards. In Prague, air mail sent to addresses outside the central part of the city was forwarded across town by the pneumatic mail, with no extra fee being charged for the service. The letter shown here can be identified as a pneumatic one in three ways. First, the letter displays the large four-digit sequence number 2063, mentioned above, which was used to keep track of the items sent through the Prague's pneumatic system. This sequence number confirms that the letter was carried on the pneumatic network. Second, the address is in District II, away from the city's center. Third, the letter carries a telegraph office backstamp dated 10 February 1939, at 1900 hours. In European cities, the pneumatic network was often operated by the telegraph-side of the postal-telegraph organization.

Pneumatic mail was also provided to arriving airmail on a regular basis in Vienna, and occasionally in Berlin. Can anyone show a Prexie example from either of these two cities?

Mystery Cover

Can anyone explain this cover? Why the 30 cents rate to China rather than the 70 cents FAM 14 airmail rate?



The cover was postmarked in New York City on September 14, 1941. It does not have any transit markings on its back other than a Shanghai receiving chop in Chinese. The arrival date in China was October 14, 1941, as indicated by a docketing on the back.

Coming Next Issue: Censorship of Philatelic Material in World War II

I will discuss this topic in our next Issue. It has nothing to do with so-called "philatelic covers", but relates to the treatment of stamps as currency for import and export purposes. If anyone has any covers relating to this topic, I would appreciate having a scan to use in the article; I have none.

Spring 2004



Issue No. 29

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

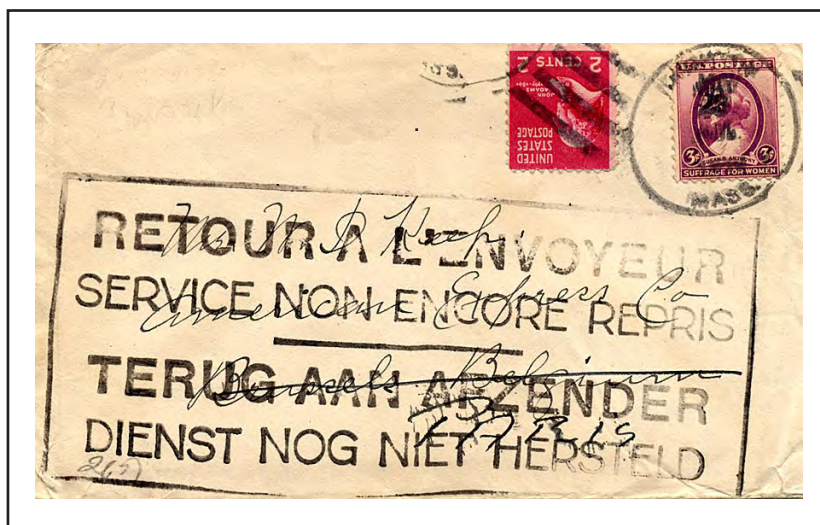
Published in the Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer of each year

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An Unusual “Return to Sender” Handstamp

From postal history dealer Ken Pitt comes the following cover with this unusual handstamp:



The handstamp measures 5.25 inches by 2.25 inches. This cover was received in France on August 2, 1940.

Executive Order 8389

I have received several inquiries concerning Executive Order 8389 issued by President Roosevelt in 1940. The first question came from subscriber Rob Haeseler. He wrote to me in June 2002: “I am searching for the text of an executive order....It is a purple rubber handstamp marking on a commercial, censored cover from Peru to New York City, in June 1942. It says, “Supposed to contain matter subject to the provisions of Executive Order 8389 as amended.”

SUPPOSED TO CONTAIN MATTER
SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF
EXECUTIVE ORDER 8389 AS AMENDED

I barely had time to say I would look into this when Rob wrote again to tell me he had found the answer. EO 8389 replaced EO 6060 which had been issued in January 1934. It regulated transactions in foreign exchange, transfers of credit, and the export of coins and currency. The EO originally was issued to safeguard American currency and property as a measure of the Great Depression. When the President signed EO 8389 on April 10, 1940, the purpose was to control or prohibit currency trading with Nazi occupied Norway and Denmark. Subsequent amendments to EO 8389 reflected events during World War II. This included authorizing the postal authorities to open mail suspected of containing contraband currency or coins.

When Did Mail Service Resume in Hawaii after December 7, 1941: A Follow-Up

Subscribers (and postal history dealers) Labron Harris (who originally posed the question) and Greg Sutherland followed up this question with the following information:

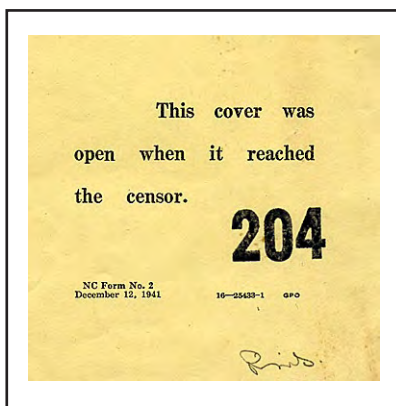
From Labron: I have researched my 1941 outgoing covers from Hawaii after 12/7/41. I have at least 36 covers of this time period with a fairly even dispersion of the dates. The one date I have the most of [4] is 12/09/1941.

This does not help in knowing when the mail was actually sent to the mainland or even to Hawaii; this just shows that the mail was received and cancelled by various post offices to be sent out at some date. I have one airmail special delivery cover cancelled 12/10/41 at 1PM which was received 12/20/41 in Washington, DC, at 8PM. It was censored "ICB 45". The 9 covers I have censored before 12/11/41 are either Navy or ICB censored, and while the covers' cancels are dated, the censor marks are not. I also have dated Army censors on the 12th and 13th so I know local censorship began at least by 12/12/41. I hope these thoughts have helped you understand the problems I have had in trying to make sense of this interesting time in our country's postal history.

Editor's Note: The reference to "ICB" is to the Information Control Board. The reference was found on civilian mail. An example [postmarked January 28, 1942] on mail from the mainland to Hawaii, from my collection, is shown below.



This cover was accompanied by a label [NC Form No.2/December 12, 1941] from censorship, as follows"



Greg Sutherland sent along some literature from his library, as well as reproductions of relevant covers he holds in his stock. The literature consisted of a book by Charles C. Gill titled, "Hawaii Censored Mail 1941-45/ Illustrated, Classified, Tabulated". Greg also included two articles by Mr. Gill published in the WEEKLY PHILATELIC GOSSIP magazine in 1942. Gill studied the information from 2,300 censored covers in his collection.

Another Interesting 10 Cents Coil Cover

by

Robert Schlesinger

I would like to share with the readers of the Prexie Era Newsletter a 10 cents cover I have in my collection. The cover has a strip of four of the 10 cents coil stamp. Despite the relatively short distance traveled by this cover [St. Paul to Minneapolis] the cover is of great interest.



The cover was mailed on June 30, 1949. The total postal charges were 52 cents, as follows: 27 cents postage [First Class x 9] + 25 cents registration fee [indemnity of \$5.00 or less]. This registry fee was in effect from January 01, 1949 to December 31, 1951.

This cover is a wonderful example of a non-philatelic use of the elusive 10 cents coil stamp.

A \$1.00 Prexie Cover with Special Handling to Midway Island

by

Guy Dillaway

Here is an illustration of a \$1.00 Prexie cover with a 20 cents special handling stamp. This cover was mailed in Denver to Honolulu to be sent on to Midway Island. It was misssent to Manila. I assume the special handling stamp represented payment for the services at Midway Island.

Editor's Note: Illustration on page 5.

Remember: All subscriptions end
with Issue No. 31, Winter 2005.
Be sure to renew.



Return Receipt by Air from Guatemala

by

Dickson Preston

One of my special pleasures in collecting Prexie postal history is mixed uses with the 1922 Fourth Bureau issue or the 1954 Liberty issue. I was thus delighted to find the card illustrated here which shows a mixed use of a 7 cents Prexie with a 3 cents Liberty to produce an international usage I have not seen before — a return receipt card returned by air from a foreign country (Figure 1).

Return receipt cards returned by air in domestic service are scarce enough. Effective 15 July 1938, a mailer could have Form 3811, the return card, sent airmail by placing a 6 cents stamp on the form and adding “Return by Air Mail.” Six cents was the prevailing domestic airmail rate for either letters or cards.¹

An unusual example from 1941 in the Jeff Shapiro collection shows that the same principle applied for airmail to the territories (Figure 2). In this case the 20 cents clipper rate from the U.S. mainland to Hawaii was paid to send the card back by air to the original sender in Honolulu. So far, I have not seen any documentation for this use, but the rule seems to have been that a return receipt could be sent by air at the prevailing rate for airmail along the same route the card was sent.

Beginning 15 November 1949, or possibly earlier in 1949, the extra fee was changed to coincide with the 4 cents airmail post card rate which began 1 January of that year.² An example from 1954 was carried on the same transpacific air route as the 1941 return card, but by that time the postage was reduced to 4 cents since that domestic rate also applied to airmail between the U.S. and its territories (Figure 3).

The example sent by air from Guatemala in 1957 illustrates the same rule in international use. Effective 13 July 1954, the sender of a letter to a U.P.U. country could obtain delivery of the return receipt by airmail by paying a fee equal to the airmail rate for a single post card to the destination country.³ In this case, the amount paid is the 10 cents U.P.U. airmail post card rate, in effect 1 June 1954 to 30 June 1961. Like the two domestic examples shown, this fee was paid in addition to the registration and return receipt fees that would have been franked on the original cover.

Can anyone show some additional examples of this use involving Prexies to foreign countries? How about one on or after 1 July 1961, when the rate went up a penny – what a great opportunity for an 11 cents solo franking!



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Notes:

¹ Beecher and Wawrukiewicz, *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1993*, 1st edition, p. 197.

² *Ibid.*, p. 197.

³ Beecher and Wawrukiewicz, *U.S. International Postal Rates, 1872-1996*, p. 235.

An Interesting Prexie Franking

by

Joseph G. Bock

Here is an interesting insured mail tag used to ship raw fur [10 mink pelts] from Mountain Village, Alaska in July 1945. This was sent by surface parcel post. It was not flown via airmail.



First Class mail could not be insured. Parcel Post and Airmail 3rd and 4th Class could be. Air Parcel Post did not yet exist. My analysis of the rate is as follows: 15 cents insured mail [\$50 indemnity]; 15 cents 1st pound parcel post [Zone B]; 77 cents [7 pounds @ 11 cents per pound]; 2 cents discount for mail on Rural Route; 3 cents surcharge (3%) per parcel minimum = \$1.08 Total.

Censorship of Philatelic Material in World War II

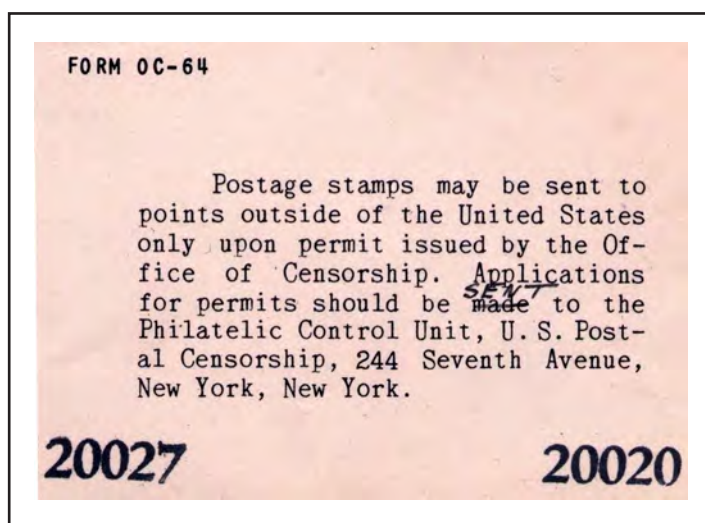
by

Steven M. Roth

During World War II, the United States Office of Censorship regulated the dispatch or carriage of postage stamps to points outside the United States (other than to Canada). A person who wanted to send or carry stamps had to apply for a permit to do so. This was in addition to any permit or license that might be required by the country on the receiving end of the package (for example, stamps sent to London would require an import license issued by the Board of Trade in England).

Obtaining a permit to send or carry postage stamps outside the United States did not, however, end the process. The permit holder remained subject to all the rules and regulations in respect of censorship, as well as to all instructions concerning postage stamps which had to be strictly followed.

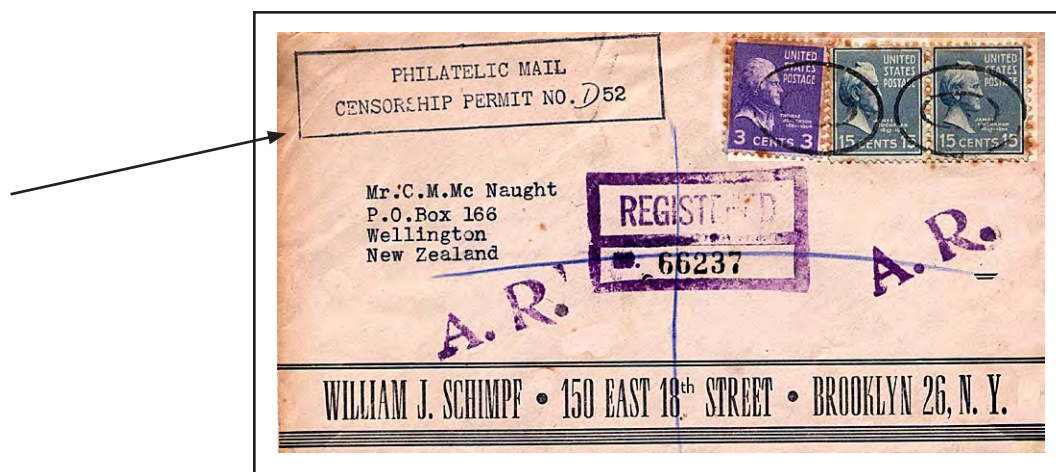
Mail found to contain postage stamps to be sent abroad, but for which no permit had been issued, was subject to being confiscated or returned to the sender by the censorship office.



The permits were valid for six months after the date of issuance. They were not transferable. Shipments of stamps under the permits were required to conform to all post office and censorship regulations applicable to other type packages. The permit was subject to cancellation at any time.

The Philatelic Control Unit of the Office of Censorship issued INSTRUCTIONS TO HOLDERS OF PERMITS FOR THE EXPORT OF POSTAGE STAMPS. This was Form 663-Rev. In summary, the Instructions required that postage stamps to be sent or taken to a foreign country had to be prepared for shipment and dispatched in accordance with the requirements of the Instructions [Section 1]; that a Philatelic Export Certificate had to be obtained [Section 2]; that prompt dispatch of shipments depended on strict adherence to the requirements of the Instructions [Section 3]; that shipments could not be made to persons whose names were on the list of Blocked Nationals or to persons in enemy countries [Section 4]; that shipments could not be made to certain neutral countries because the stamps would be readily available to our enemies [Section 5]; that certain stamps themselves are objectionable (*i.e.*, stamps of enemy or enemy occupied countries) [Section 6]; that a philatelic export permit issued by the Office of Censorship is required to carry stamps abroad [Section 7]; that no package may con-

tain any labels from the Office of Censorship [Section 8]; and, shipments of stamps to prisoners of war, interned civilians and detained civilians were prohibited [Section 9].



The Instructions required that the applicant disclose the names, addresses, countries of origin, years in the United States, and ages of all employees who were of “enemy alien nationality”. The form also set out five conditions to be obeyed. Specimen signatures also were required as part of the application.

Editor’s Note: I will make available by return e-mail (i) a copy of the Application for Philatelic Export Permit, and (ii) the Instructions, to anyone who sends me an e-mail requesting these.

I want to thank Louis Fiset who made available to me the label and cover I used as illustrations.

Stamp Removed From a POW Lettersheet: Another Viewpoint

by

Dickson Preston

I was intrigued by the POW lettersheet shown in Issue No. 28 [page 7]. You [SMR] suggested that the German censors might have removed the stamp because it bore a United States patriotic subject. I think this might have been the case, but I have another lettersheet on which part of the stamp remains. In this case, the stamp was the 6 cents John Quincy Adams Prexie. It does not seem likely to me that the Germans would have had any particular animus against our sixth president although with the Nazis you never really know. It is more likely that the stamp was removed to check for any secret messages underneath it. This kind of checking might also have been the case for the lettersheet shown in Issue No. 28.

Another World War II Forerunner of Interrupted Mail

by

Steven M. Roth

In Issue No. 28 I showed some “forerunners of interrupted mail” covers from Mongolia, Spain and Finland. Below is another forerunner cover -- this one addressed to China in December 1937. The cover was addressed to Soochow in Kiangsu Province in East China at the Yellow Sea. Japan had invaded China the previous

July, and occupied Soochow in September 1937. The letter was probably held by the Post Office at San Francisco since there is no evidence on the cover that it ever reached China.



Post-World War II “Return to Sender/Service Suspended” Cover

by

Steven M. Roth

The lettersheet below was sent to China in July 1949, at a time when Beijing was occupied by the Communist Army, and the Nationalist Army was in retreat from the North.



Editor’s Note: I need material for The Prexie Era Newsletter No. 30. Please help by contributing something.

Fall 2004



Issue No. 30

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published in the Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer of each year

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Restoring Postal Services to the Liberated European Countries

by

Louis Fiset

With the invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, the slow, difficult liberation of the overrun countries of Europe began. As German military forces were pushed back, the infrastructures in liberated areas, then whole countries, were restored. Civilian mail service to the people within these liberated areas soon followed, although it was severely limited at first.

Initially U.S. postal regulations permitted only non-illustrated post cards sent by ordinary means and whose content was restricted to personal and family matters. Gradually, one-ounce letter mail of a personal or business nature was allowed. Finally, airmail, registration, special delivery, money order, and parcel post services resumed. Pre-war postal rates prevailed.

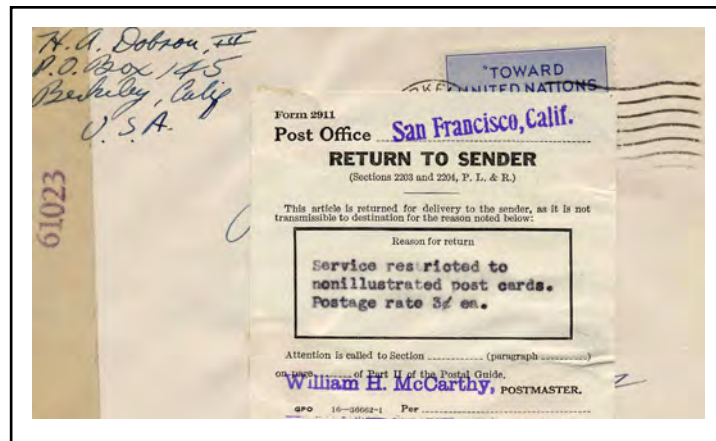
The timetable for the resumption of postal services to each country varied according to when it was liberated. However, by the end of 1945 most postal services to Europe had returned to normal.

The accompanying illustration shows part of this gradual return of full postal service. It is a non-illustrated post card to Paris. It was postmarked on October 5, 1944 and censored at the New York censor station. Post card service to Paris had recently resumed, on September 23, 1944. This card, with its French language personal message, was received in Paris on December 14, 1944.



The second illustration [see page 3] is a cover to Norway, which was to be sent by ordinary means. It was postmarked June 9, 1945, and censored at the San Francisco censor station. It was then returned to sender because one ounce letter mail was not yet permitted to Norway. This occurred on July 2, 1945, when all classes of regular mails were permitted, including airmail, registration and parcel post services. On that day the same increased mail services to Belgium, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands resumed.

Collectors should be on the lookout for mail reflecting this gradual resumption of mail service to the liberated European countries. This mail is scarce, but by no means rare. You simply need to know what you are looking for. A careful examination of relevant postal bulletins will reveal when a particular mail service resumed to an individual country. A useful discussion of resumption of postal service to liberated countries using the mail to France as a case study may be found in Lawrence Sherman, MD (ed.) *The United States Post Office in World War II* (Chicago: The Collectors Club of Chicago, 2002), pages 295-298.



My thanks to Steve Roth for providing the Norway cover illustration.

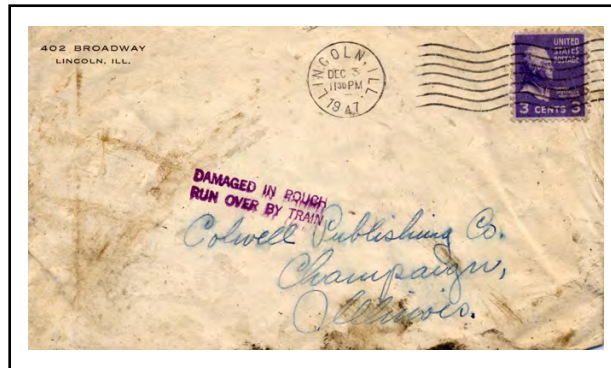
Disaster Covers: Some Covers That Survived A Train Wreck and Fires

by

Millard H. Mack

Here are some covers from my collections that survived some very rough travels:

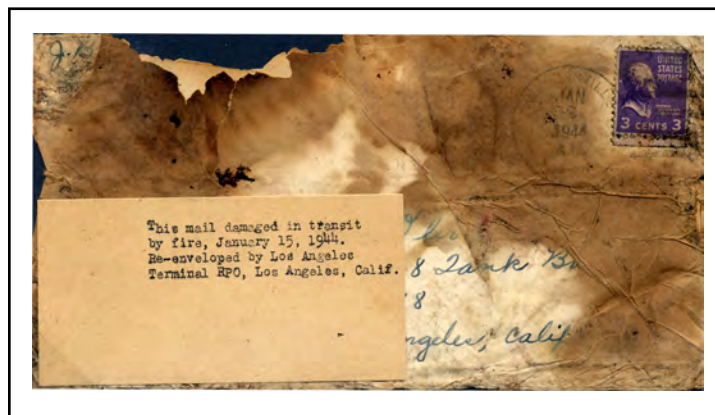
Damaged in Pouch/Run Over By Train



Damaged by Fire



Damaged by Fire with Re-Envelope Label



Continued at page 9

Collect-on-Delivery “Change of Terms” Fee

by

Terence Hines

The collect-on-delivery “change of terms” fee was imposed when a COD mailer wanted to change the terms by which the addressee of the package could pay. As listed in the second edition of the Beecher book (Table 41-3, p. 256) the fee was introduced July 1, 1930 at 10 cents. It was raised to 20 cents on March 26, 1944 and reduced back to 10 cents on Nov. 1, 1944. It stayed at 10 cents until July 25, 1968 when it was increased to 35 cents. Payment of the fee was evidenced by affixing appropriate stamps to USPOD Form 3818.

This is a truly obscure fee and, according again to the Beecher book (p. 251), used copies of Form 3818

“are very rarely seen.” The book illustrates two used Forms 3818, neither with Prexies. A Prexie usage on the Form is shown here. The front of the Form [not illustrated here] shows that it was mailed June 23, 1954 from Rutland, VT. The reverse of the form shows a solo use of the 10 cent Prexie postmarked in Rutland on the same date. The circular date stamp is from Rutland’s general delivery section.

Albert [Chip] Briggs showed a similar usage in his exhibit at NOJEX 2004: “Domestic Usages -- U.S. Presidential Series”.

A final comment. Obviously, any Prexie usage on a Form 3818 is rare. But note that the 20 cent fee was in effect for only a few days over 7 months in 1944. Now THAT would be an item!

Example of Unpublished Inter-Island Pacific Ocean Airmail Rates

by

Steven M. Roth

Ken Lawrence, writing in his column in AMERICAN PHILATELIST in 1997 [“FDCs, Nesbitt Envelopes and Presidentials”, April 1997, p. 312], described the previously undiscovered airmail rates applicable to inter-island mail (among other destinations) in the early 1940s. The discovery had been made by Stanley Jersey at the National Archives.

Here from my collection is an example of a cover which demonstrates the rate from Hawaii to the Philippine Island in 1941.



The rates for mail flown from the United States were: Hawaii - 20 cents; Midway Island - 30 cents; Wake Island - 35 cents; Guam - 40 cents; and, Philippine Islands - 50 cents. This cover was mailed at Honolulu, bound for Manila, on May 8, 1941. It was correctly rated 30 cents.

Reminder: All subscriptions will end with
the next issue of the Newsletter

Two Late Solo Uses of the 7 Cents Prexie

by

Dickson Preston

There really are no straight-forward solo uses for the 7 cents stamp during the normal life of the Prexies, from 1938 to 1958. Most collectors show either a parcel post rate, and insured third class letter, or the 7 cents return receipt fee paid alone on a registered federal government cover sent within the Washington, D.C. area, for which only the return receipt fee had to be paid. One possibility is the 7 cents air mail rate to Saint Pierre et Miquelon, in effect from 1 October 1946 to 31 December 1948, but I have never seen one of these paid with any kind of franking.

However, two mainstream rates which came into effect soon after the Prexie era provide good opportunities for 7 cents solo frankings. These are the 1958 7 cents domestic air mail rate and the 1961 7 cents international surface post card rate. Even though the 7 cents Jackson was replaced by the 7 cents Wilson from the Liberty Series on 10 January 1956, there were still enough Prexies around through the early 1960s to provide legitimate uses of the earlier stamp.

Figure 1 shows a 7 cents Jackson used to pay the 7 cents per ounce air mail rate in effect from 1 August 1958 until 6 January 1963. This was the airmail rate increase that accompanied the letter rate increase to 4 cents, which many regard as the beginning of the Great Postal Inflation.

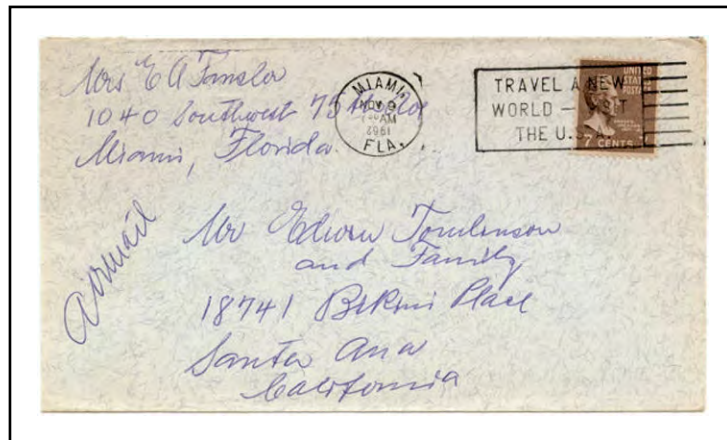
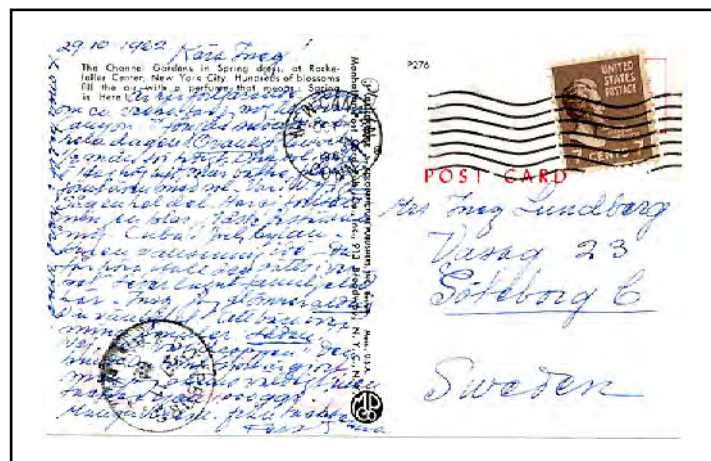


Figure 2 shows a scarcer usage, the 7 cents international surface post card rate in effect 1 July 1961 to 30 April 1967. This tourist card left New Canaan, CT on 29 October 1962 and arrived in Goteborg, Sweden on 27 November, after a journey of 29 days. For a mere 4 cents more, the sender could have had the card, delivered in less than one week using air mail, and, in the process, she might have created a real collectors' item, an 11 cents prexie solo franking.

[*Figure 2* illustration on page 7]

Figure 2

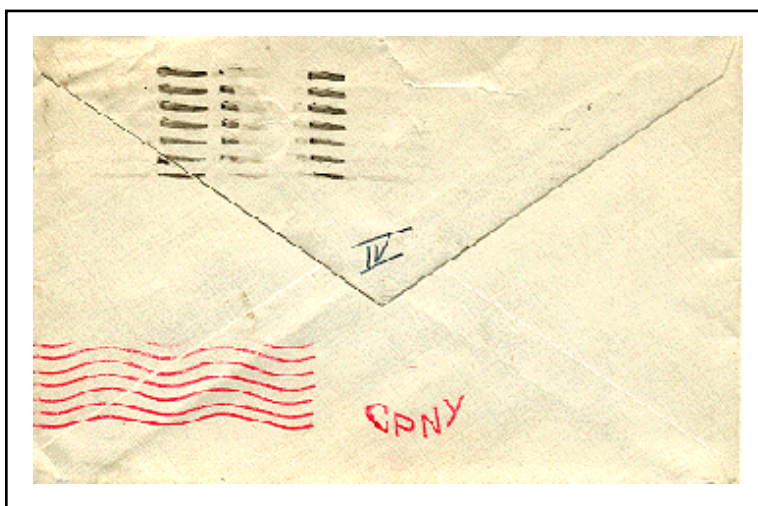


The International Postal Supply Company's Machine Marking “CPNY”. What Does It Represent?

by

Terence Hines

Subscriber Terry Hines submitted the following cover to me and asked if I know anything about the marking.



Terry asked that I solicit information from readers.

Here is what I have in my files with respect to this mark. This machine marking was produced by the International Postal Supply Company. It is found on mail to and from the military during World War II. Terry's cover is postmarked May 10, 1944. It is addressed to a sailor c/o Navy Fleet PO, New York, NY.

There are differing opinions as to what the letters “CP” in the marking mean. One school of thought is that they stand for “Control Point”. Another is that they represent the phrase “Censor Post”.

For the benefit of subscribers who do not take the digital edition of the Newsletter (and, therefore, cannot see the cover in color), the marking and the wavy canceller are in red.

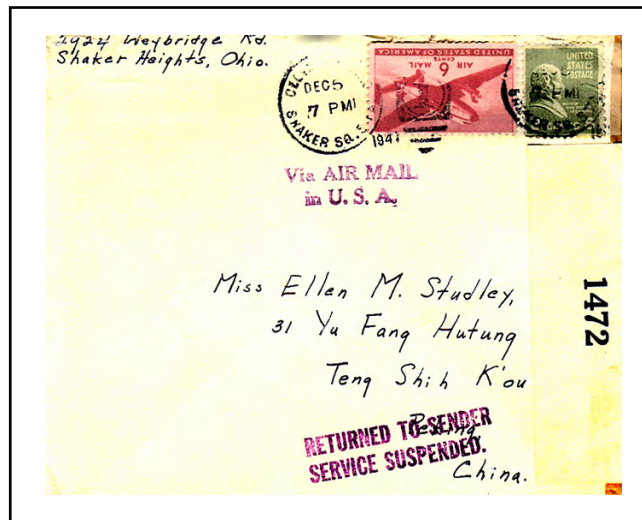
What do you know about this marking?

Combination Airmail and Ocean Mail Cover to China

by

Joseph G. Bock

This cover, postmarked December 5, 1941, was flown from Ohio to the exchange office at San Francisco. There it was to be placed aboard a ship for transport to its destination. Before embarking for China, however, the letter was sent to the San Francisco censorship office where it was open, inspected, and then resealed. In the meantime, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Postal communications with countries occupied or threatened by the Japanese had mail service suspended by the United States on September 11. This cover, therefore, was retained by the postal authorities at San Francisco, and marked “Return to Sender/Service Suspended” on or after December 11. It likely never left the United States.



Was 8 cents the correct rate for the combination of airmail in the United States and for ocean/surface carriage to China? Also, why the additional 6 cents airmail stamp?

Editor's Request: When you send me scanned images for your articles, please scan them at actual size, at 300 dpi, to give me flexibility in resizing the images for publication.

Comments on “An Interesting Prexie Franking” in *Prexie Era Newsletter*, No. 29

by

Ken Lawrence

Subscriber Ken Lawrence sent the following thoughts with respect to Joe Bock’s analysis of his parcel tag.

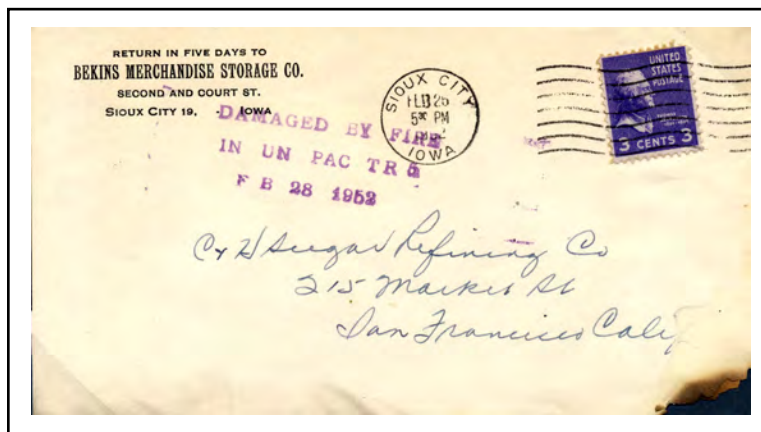
Ken wrote: “For a couple of reasons I feel certain your analysis is mistaken. I don’t believe there was rural delivery in Alaska. To the contrary, most mail was carried by air only. But more important than that, special regulations applied to fur mailed from Alaska. Every postmaster had to send a form filled out and signed by the sender to the Alaska Game Commission at Juneau listing each pelt, verifying that protected animals were not included, verifying that no unprimed skins were enclosed, and providing serial numbers of commission seals for beaver and marten skins. The postmaster also had to verify that each package for furs was labeled on the outside with the complete contents, which is why these mailing tags all have checklists of animals authorized to be shipped.

“You are correct that the destination was Zone 8 (all parcels mailed in Alaska were rated Zone 8 unless they were registered, in which case they were charged first class postage regardless of zone). So your insured fee was 3 cents, 10 cents, 15 cents, or 25 cents, depending on the level of indemnity, with the rest for postage.”

Joe Bock replied: Thanks, Ken, for your excellent analysis. So despite the remote Alaska origination, it was FLOWN, although it was NOT AIRMAIL. The relatively high fee was thus attributable to insurance and a location in Zone 8 which had the highest Parcel Post (4th Class) rate per pound.

Continued from page 4

Damaged by Fire



Millard H. Mack’s Challenge to Readers

Frequent contributor Millard Mack sent me an interesting cover from his Prexie collection and used it to pose a challenge to our subscribers. The cover he submitted [illustrated on page 10] contains thirty-four 3 cents Jefferson Prexies. Millard asks: what other Prexie Era covers can/will readers submit that are franked with a very large number of the same stamp?

Twenty-seven 3 cents Jeffersons on the front and seven 3 cents Jeffersons on the back:



What do you have that you can submit to meet Millard's challenge?

Mystery Cover: Can You Explain Its Routing?



Postmarked New York City December 9, 1941. Calcutta arrival backstamp March 6, 1942. Passed by Censor handstamp applied in India. Orange crayon date [probably date of answer to letter] July 3, 1942. [Answer will be given in Newsletter No.31.]

Winter 2005



Issue No. 31

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS/BIA 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

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“C” Marking on the Presidential Issues

by

Doug D’Avino

Chairman, USSS Marginal Markings Committee

The article “C” For Chromium” in the August 2004 issue of The United States Specialist updated a February 1980 article on the occurrence of the letter “C” (for chromium) in the margin of U.S stamps. The USSS Marginal Markings Committee has found additional examples, including on the Presidential issues, and is soliciting the assistance of the Presidential Era Study Group in identifying examples of this marking.

Figure 1 and **Figure 2** illustrates the “C” marking on the \$1 and \$2 Presidential issues. It also appears on the \$5 issue. The marking is from the black vignette plate (\$1 – 22120 and \$2 – 22099).



Figure 1



Figure 2

The \$1 Prexie (**Figure 3**) shows three ‘C’ markings two of which was cancelled by dot patterns; the \$2 Prexie (**Figure 4**) shows two ‘C’ markings, one of which was cancelled by a dot pattern. The \$1 Prexie has a 5 x 5 4.8 mm-square dot pattern; the \$2 Prexie has a 4 x 4 3.8mm-square dot pattern and its two ‘C’ markings were different sizes and fonts. The ‘C’ to the left is 3 mm high; the other ‘C’ is 3.5 mm high with what appears to be a serif at the top. In each case, the black vignette’s plate number also shows an adjacent “F” marking, indicating the plate has been hardened.

[Figures 3 and 4 on page 3]

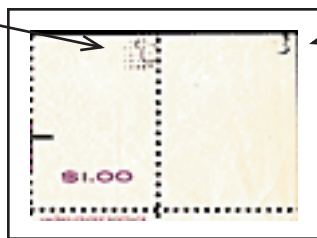


Figure 3

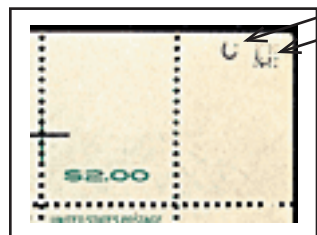


Figure 4

Two proofs for vignette plate 22099 were found at the National Postal Museum. **Figure 5** illustrates the original proof (with arrow) and a single small 'C' in the UR corner. This proof is dated August 17, 1938. The second proof (**Figure 6**), dated January 28, 1946, shows four 'C' markings in the UR corner. Note in the blowup **Figure 6** of the later proof that the original small 'C' is now behind a larger 'C' and a grid. Comparing these markings to **Figure 3**, which contains three 'C' marks, a fourth 'C' has been added, indicating that the plate has undergone the chroming process four times. Re-chromed in 1946, this is the latest date of use I have seen for a sheet marked with the 'C' marking.

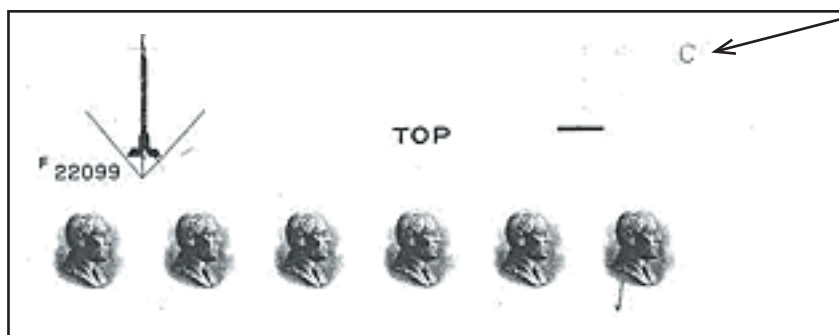


Figure 5



Figure 6

Two proofs for frame plate 22095 were found at the National Postal Museum. **Figure 7** illustrates the original proof (with arrow) and a single small 'C' in the UR corner. This proof is dated August 17, 1938. The second proof, dated January 25, 1946 (**Figure 8**) shows three 'C' markings in the UR corner. Note in the blow-up in **Figure 9** of the later proof compared to the lack of markings in **Figure 3**. The ink must have been wiped off the plate prior to going to press because if the markings were inked, though marginally higher than the markings on plate 22099, at least the bottom of the 'C' markings should be visible.

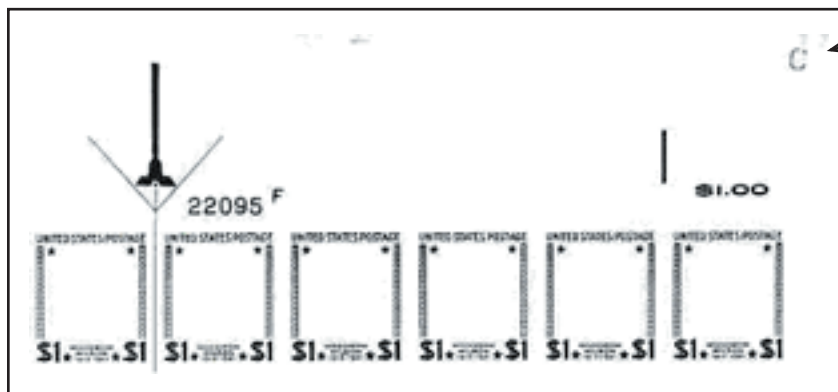


Figure 7

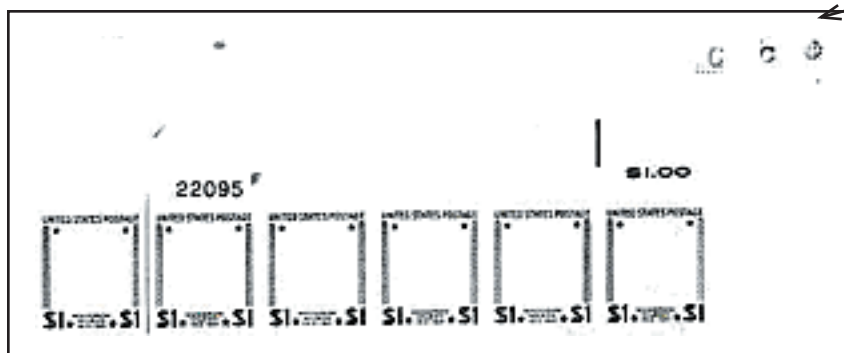


Figure 8

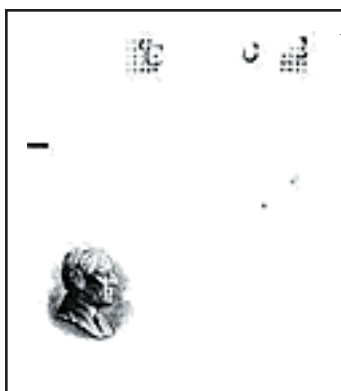


Figure 9

To date I have seen the "C" marking on the following plates:

| Value | Plate Vignette | Marking Black |
|--------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| | | |
| \$1.00 | 22096 | C + 2 Cs with grid |
| | 22097 | C with grid |
| | 22098 | 3 Cs with grid |
| | 22099 | C + C cancelled by 5x5 grid |
| | | |
| \$2.00 | 22120 | C + C cancelled by 4x4 grid |
| | 22121 | C + 2 Cs with grid |
| | | |
| | Frame | Violet |
| | | |
| \$1.00 | 22086 | C |
| | | |
| | | Red |
| | | |
| \$5.00 | 22169 | 2 Cs with grid |
| | | |

The markings are typically over stamp 10 or in the UR margin adjacent to stamp 10. Could you please examine your collection and report:

- Any examples which show a 'C' marking from a Frame plate?
- Any other plate numbers on which the marking occurs?
- Whether the 'C' has a serif?
- If the 'C' has a grid over it, is it a 4 x4 or 5 x 5 grid? Other?
- If any other dot patterns occur?
- If any other fonts occur?
- If this marking is on any of the lower value Prexie issues? Has anyone ever examined the plates?

Please send 300dpi JPG images (color preferred) or photocopies of the marking & plate numbers to me at: davinod@earthlink.net.

Time to Renew All Subscriptions

If you have not yet renewed your subscription, now is the time. The cost is as follows: For the print edition - \$10.00; for the digital edition - \$5.00. Send your checks to Jeffrey Shapiro, PO Box 3211, Fayville, MA 01745-3211. Please do not send them to me. Indicate which subscription format you want.

This will be your only notice. To receive the Spring (No. 32) issue and the subsequent three issues, you must renew.

We encourage you to renew and, especially, to subscribe to the digital edition. Your editor has been absorbing many costs relating to the print edition up to now. When postage increases, so will your print subscription cost.

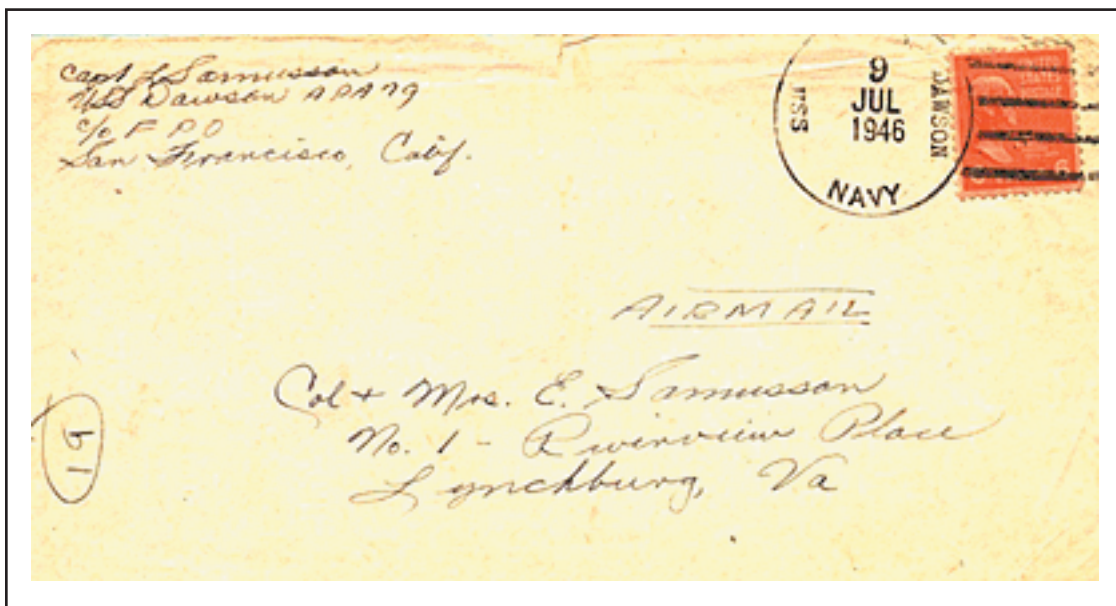
The Ship That Was a Target of An Atomic Bomb Test!

by

Jeffrey L. Shapiro

A solo 6c Prexie paid the 6c per half ounce military concession air mail rate (in effect December 25, 1941 thru September 30, 1946) on this July 9, 1946 cover from the Attack Transport USS Dawson. (I recently purchased the cover, which was described as being at the atomic bomb tests at Bikini Atoll. Not only was the ship there, it was one of the targets !) After successful service at the end of World War II, the Dawson was ordered to serve as one of the targets in the atomic bomb tests of Operation Crossroads at Bikini Atoll in the Pacific. On July 2, 1946 the Dawson survived the dropping of a 21 kiloton bomb (roughly the same size as "Fat Boy", the bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan). The ship was deemed safe and on July 25, 1946, the Dawson survived the underwater blast of a second 21 kiloton bomb, but was deemed too radio-active for further military use. (Note: The cover was cancelled on July 9, between the two tests !)

The Dawson was then towed to the Marshall Islands for study by scientists for the effects of radiation. When the study was completed, the Dawson was scuttled off Kwajalein by gunfire from the USS Helena on April 19, 1948.



A Reader's Response to an Inquiry

Lawrence LaLibertie responded to Terry Hines' inquiry concerning the marking "CPNY" by sending in relevant selections from the now defunct newsletter, Machine Cancel Forum [MCF No. 199, January 2002 and No. 200, April 2002]. According to the articles appearing in MCF, the marking was a machine service marking used by the International Postal Supply Company from 1943-1945. It was applied by the Armed Guard Center Postal Unit. It was applied to both censored and uncensored mail. The "CP" stood for Closed Pouch. The recorded covers were addressed to the Naval Armed Guard units rather than to particular ships. **Editor's note:** Terry Hines' inquiry appeared in Newsletter No. 30.

A Good Rate, But a Better Cover

by

Robert Schlesinger

Sometimes you buy a cover for whatever reason - a good rate, a good stamp on the cover, or whatever reason - and sometimes that cover turns out to be a better cover than anticipated. Such is the case about the subject of this article.

This cover is a 4 x 70 cents per half ounce air mail rate cover from New York to Egypt. The 70 cents rate would be in effect, via different FAMs, from August 6, 1940 through October 31, 1946, when the unified rates became effective. But there is quite a lot 'going on' with this cover that makes it quite an interesting cover!

The cover was mailed in New York on December 1, 1941, a date of some significance. The next day saw FAM 22 take off from Miami, handling eastbound mail to Africa and the Middle East. Postal Bulletin 18336, dated December 2, 1941, detailed the flight pattern and which mail would be handled on that flight. Had this cover actually taken FAM 22, its history would have been quite different.



As it happens, the cover traveled on FAM 19, with its intended route of San Francisco to Hong Kong, and the cover would have traveled by air to Egypt. But history intervened! As far as can be determined, this cover made it to San Francisco in time for the December 6 flight over the Pacific. One major factor in feeling that it made the December 6 flight was the fact that the mail on the December 3 flight was caught up in the fracas in the air over Hawaii and was destroyed at Wake Island. The ICB marking on the reverse of this cover indicates that the contents were censored IN HAWAII.

My feeling is that the flight that carried this cover WAS in the air over Pearl Harbor, or in the vicinity, and was diverted to Hilo, mail off loaded there, with the clipper returning to San Francisco. The mail would be taken to Honolulu for censorship, hence the ICB marking. Postal Bulletin 18348, dated December 18, 1941,

advised that mail for Africa should go to Miami for processing on FAM 22. The postal authorities in Honolulu were probably waiting for such instructions before processing this piece of mail.

In all likelihood, this cover made it to Miami and FAM 22. As noted on the backstamp, it finally arrived in Egypt on March 22, 1942, just shy of a 4 month trip! And all because it was mailed one day too soon.

Some Thoughts On Reading Robert Schlesinger's Article

by

Steven M. Roth

Bob Schlesinger's interesting article sent me back to my files and library. His article raised some questions for me since, as I read his piece, I found myself wondering, based on my prior reading in this subject, if I agreed with all of his statements.

Here are the most significant questions Bob's article raised in my mind:

1. Did FAM 22 flights actually begin on December 2 as Bob asserts?
2. Would his cover have been carried over FAM 19, but for the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7?

With respect to question "1", I believe the answer is "No". Even though the POB indicated flights were to begin over FAM 22 on or about December 2, the available evidence suggests that the first flight occurred on December 6, and that commercial mail was not carried until May 1942. For authoritative discussions of this subject, I refer readers to articles by Bob Wilcsek, "FAM 22: The First Six Months/When Did It Start, Where Did It End and Who Flew It?", *The Airpost Journal* (January 1999), pages 9-17, and by Richard Beith, "FAM 22 and Beyond", Part I, *The Airpost Journal* (October 1997), pages 407-458, and, Part II, *The Airpost Journal* (December 1997), pages 489-502. Note, too, the cover lacks a Miami Post Office transit handstamp.

As for the 2nd question, it is my understanding that FAM 19 offered a route to the South Pacific, to New Zealand and Australia, not to Hong Kong as a means to the Middle East. That route, if I understand Bob's contention correctly, would have been FAM 14, not FAM 19.

What do other readers think about Bob's interesting cover and subject?

A German Reply Card with Prexies Added for Return to Europe

by

Dickson Preston

One popular collecting field is the use of Prexie era stamps paying the extra postage to send United States surface postal cards by air mail. Cards rated up -n this way to foreign destinations are especially interesting. In this unusual example from 1941, a mixed franking between the postal issues of two countries is created as well. The postal card is the reply half of a German 15 pfennig international reply card issued in 1933, Michel number P231A. The sender chose to reply to his correspondent in Germany by air mail.

Since the German 15 pfennig UPU post card rate was equivalent to the United States 3¢ UPU post card rate, the sender of this reply card added 27¢ in Prexies to the card to make up the 30¢ transatlantic air mail rate to Europe. The blue air mail sticker, Post Office Form 2978, shows that the New York office accepted the mixed franking as payment for the air mail postage.



Non-Philatelic Patriotic Covers

by

Louis Fiset

Often collectors shun twentieth century patriotic covers for their philatelic contrivance. World War II patriotics offer no exception. However, with a little search non-philatelic usages can be found that will dress up any war related collection or exhibit that attempts to convey the postal history of the era.

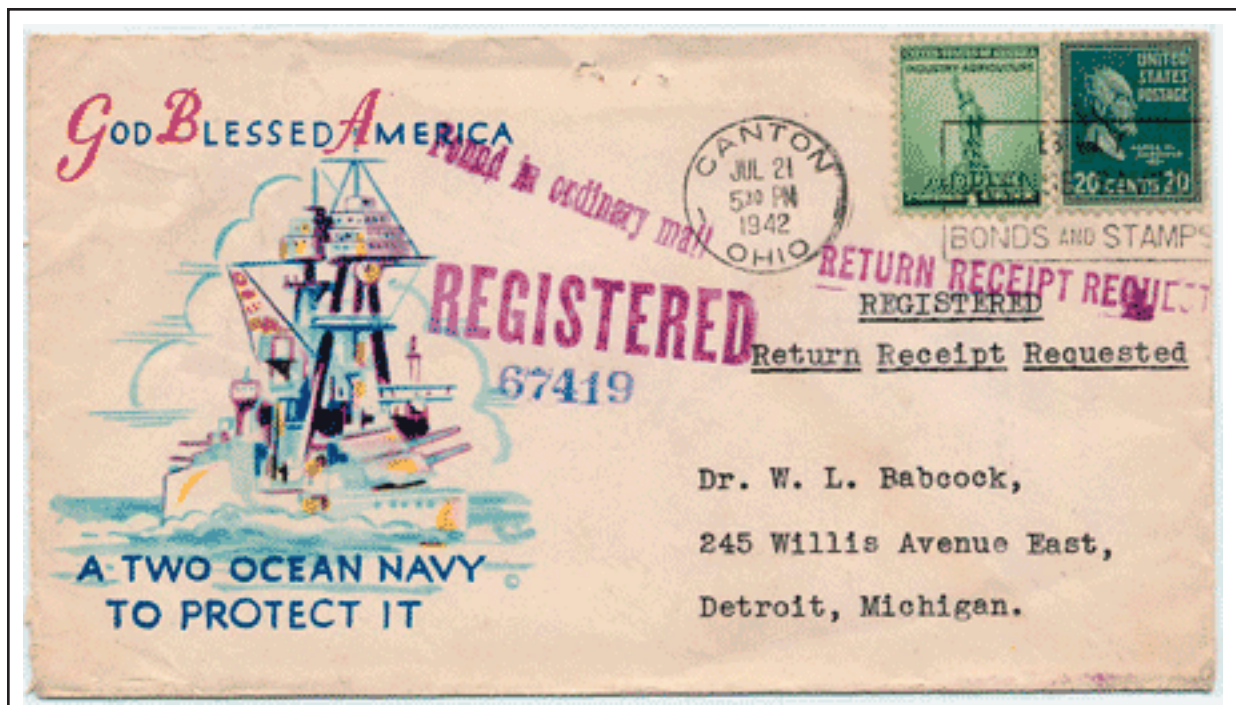
Two covers here illustrate my point. Both cachets were produced by Jacques Minkus, the New York stamp dealer, who hoped people would use his envelopes on general correspondence during World War II. Minkus produced 52 wartime patriotic cachets.

The first cover may readily be seen as third-class mail, with two half-cent Prexies paying the regular, bulk quantity-discount rate. To qualify for this rate a permit holder had to mail two hundred or more identical pieces of mail. The sender also had to cite the section in the Postal Laws and Regulations on each piece of mail: "Sec. 563 P. L. & R." In this case the mailer, in Gloversville, NY, chose to employ a patriotic cover for this particular commercial mailing.

[Covers appear on page 10]



The second cover shows a piece of ordinary looking registered mail, with return receipt requested. An auxiliary marking indicates it had not been properly handled by the post office as registered mail. It subsequently received registration service. Philatelic mail? Unlikely.



Lawrence Sherman, in his fascinating book, *United States Patriotic Covers of World War II* (Collectors Club of Chicago, 1999) identifies more than 9,200 patriotic cachets. He devotes a chapter to patriotic covers used on non-philatelic mail. It is available through the APS library.

Spring 2005



Issue No.32

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS/BIA 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer

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Holocaust Aftermath: War Crimes Trials – An Exhibit Preview

by

Ken Lawrence

Editor's Note: Ken Lawrence recently sent me a note accompanied by two exhibit pages, offering them to me for inclusion in an issue of the Newsletter. I have included Ken's note below, verbatim. I also, with Ken's permission and review, have included the exhibit pages, but not in the format submitted by Ken since exhibit pages do not lend themselves to newsletter format. I have taken all of the text, however, directly from the exhibit pages.

"Recent additions to my Nazi Scourge exhibit are in the last row of frame ten of my exhibit. They illuminate the trials of major Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg, Germany, after the war.

One page shows covers addressed to the chief American prosecutor, Justice Robert H. Jackson, and his deputy, Robert W. Kempner. As "postal history" they are pedestrian; as history, they serve my purpose well.

Another page shows a Soviet Zone postal card addressed to Nazi war criminal Professor Doctor Eugen von Haagen, who infected concentration camp prisoners with typhus and then recorded their agony.

Having found no contrary information, I relied on the seller's statement that the cover addressed to Haagen at the Nuremberg Justice Palace bears the only reported example of the IMT censor marking. Can any Prexie Era Newsletter collector or reader show me another example, or provide me with other insights?

The exhibit will be on display at APS Stampshow in Grand Rapids.



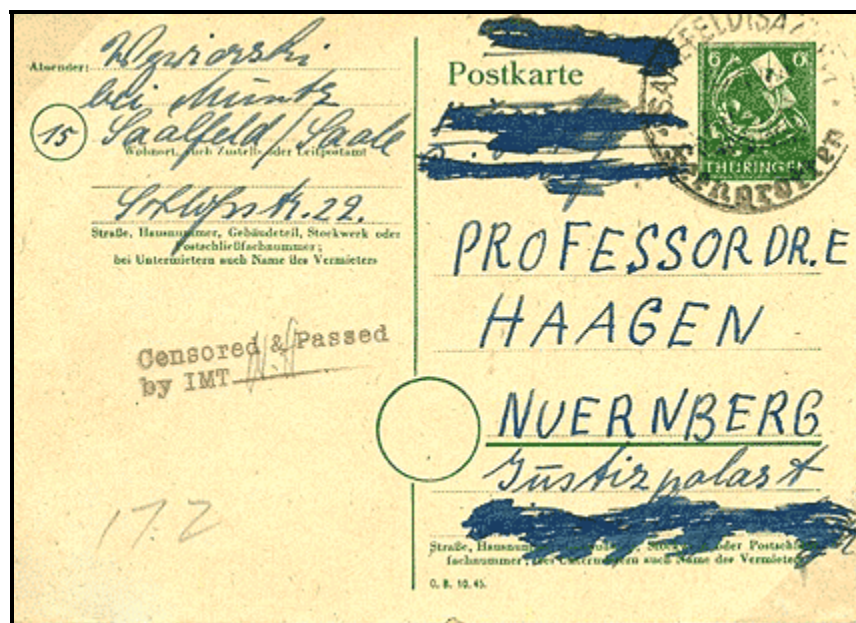
The concessionary U.S. domestic rate for airmail letters to and from over-seas active duty military personnel and civilians employed in militarily essential occupations was 6¢ per ½ oz.; postage on the Kempner letter paid double rate.

“The chief American prosecutor at the International Military Tribunal was Justice Robert H. Jackson of the United States Supreme Court. He had been Attorney General of the United States in 1940 and 1941, as the August 21, 1946, cover from a Jewish sender at Geneva titled him.

Robert W. Kempner, addressee of the October 22, 1945, cover at APO 403 (Munich), was an anti-Nazi attorney who had fled Germany in 1933. As the United States assistant chief counsel for the IMT, he was credited with finding the Wansee protocol that ordered the “final solution” of the Jewish question (*i.e.*, extermination).”

* * *

“The major Nazi war criminals were put on trial at Nuremberg. Between October 18, 1945 and October 1, 1946, twenty-two leading Nazi officials were tried by the IMT, which consisted of judges from the United States, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union. Twelve of the defendants were sentenced to death, three to life imprisonment, and four to prison terms from ten to twenty years. The IMT acquitted three defendants. Hundreds of lower level Nazi war criminals were tried by military courts in occupied Germany, Austria, and Italy, and in the countries where they committed their crimes or where charges were brought.



6-pfennig local postal card of Thuringia in the Soviet occupation zone of Germany. Obliterations on the December 11, 1945, postal card to Professor Doctor Eugen von Haagen at the Nuremberg court reflect the change in his official status from defendant to witness. This is the *only reported example of the IMT censor marking*.

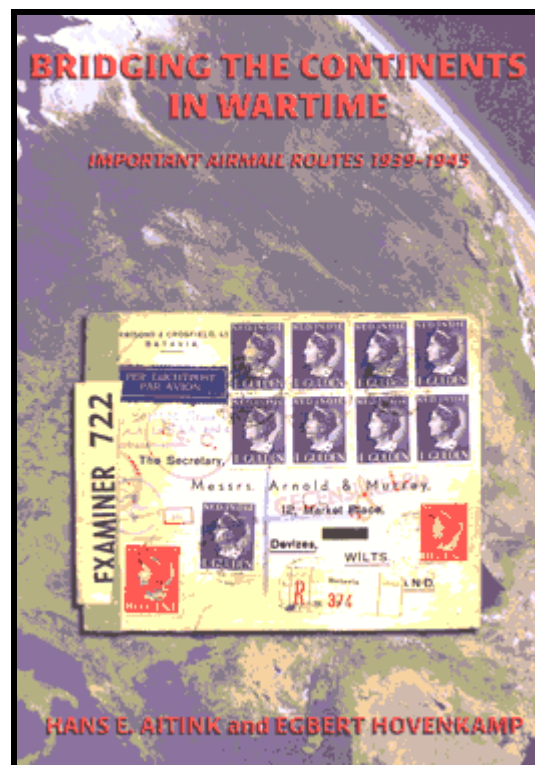
“Haagen was a professor at the University of Strasbourg and a Luftwaffe medical officer. He infected prisoners at the Natzweiler concentration camp in Alsace with typhus and hepatitis, causing many to die.

American prosecutor Telford Taylor told the IMT tribunal: ‘The general pattern of these typhus experiments was as follows: A group of concentration camp inmates, selected from the healthier ones who had some resistance to disease, were injected with an anti-typhus vaccine, the efficacy of which was to be tested. Thereafter, all the persons in the group would be infected with typhus. At the same time, other inmates who had not been vaccinated were also infected for purposes of comparison. These unvaccinated victims were called the *control group*. But perhaps the most wicked and murderous circumstances in this whole case is that still other inmates were deliberately infected with typhus with the sole purpose of keeping the typhus virus alive and generally available in the bloodstream of the inmates.’

Prosecutors brought evidence against Haagen, and he testified before the tribunal as a recalcitrant witness. He escaped prosecution at Nuremberg after U.S. intelligence agents recruited him to Project Paperclip, a secret Cold War program that employed German scientists in biomedical and aerospace military research. In 1951, French authorities arrested Haagen, convicted him of war crimes, and sentenced him to twenty years in prison.

New Book: Bridging the Continents in Wartime/Important Airmail Routes 1939 – 1945

I recently acquired the above-titled book and have started reading it. It was published in Germany, but written in passable English. As the title implies, its focus is on airmail routes and the impact of the War on those routes. It does not cover all the important routes, but only those considered important by the authors. I am, however, very glad to have this book since it has given me some new insights into some routes, their establishment, and their termination. The real value of the book lies not in the text, but in the many tables of flight lists of the routes and in the excellent route maps.



Information about the book and how to purchase it is found on the publisher's web site at www.philabooks.com.

Failure to Renew Subscriptions : Jeff Shapiro Gives Reprieve

Those of you who failed to renew either your print or digital subscriptions are nonetheless receiving this Issue of the Newsletter at the specific request of Jeff Shapiro. However, if you do not renew your subscription before the publication of Issue No. 33, you will not receive that Issue nor any subsequent Issues under this Editor.

Thoughts on the Machine Marking “CPNY”

by

Dann Mayo

Jeff Shapiro sent me a copy of the Prexie Era Newsletter with the LaLibertie response to Terrence Hines's enquiry about the CPNY machine marking. I think that LaLibertie got it wrong.

Based on Office of Censorship documents that I read in the National Archives (but did not copy) back in the 1990s, this was an Office of Censorship marking applied by the New York branch for a short period of time (maybe only 2-3 weeks, as I recall).

“CPNY” stands for *Censorship, Postal, New York*. There are other Office of Censorship station markings for CPNO, CPSA, etc., -- there is no question about those formulations applying to the Office of Censorship field stations.¹

The reason that the correspondence located at the National Archives about this came up is because it was a non-standard marking, and the Office of Censorship was firmly against the use of non-standard markings (on the premise that people might try to evade censorship by applying their own “censor” markings).

From my recollection, the sequence of the correspondence went something like this (I am paraphrasing from memory):

- We have detected a non-standard marking on mail from New York. Is it legitimate? What do you want us to do about it? [A field office writing to the Office of Censorship]
- Office of Censorship to NY Branch: What the hell is this? [DM: The Office of Censorship tended to be a bit preemptory in its correspondence with the branches. This certainly was the tone of the letter, if not the actual text]. Are you using a non-standard marking? If so, cut it out now, if not sooner.
- New York Branch to Office of Censorship: Yes, it's ours. We have been getting lots and lots of military and merchant marine mail that has not been censored. Since it is mostly surface mail and we were not opening it, it had gone back into the mail bags unopened to be sent on. But the Post Office kept bringing it back as uncensored mail. We just could not make it go away. We decided that we needed a way to mark a very large bunch of letters all at once, so we got this canceling machine and we put in the CPNY slug. That worked just fine. But since you told us to stop using it we have.² Now we are marking the mail bags and hoping for the best.

I hope this clears up the meaning of this marking.

Third Reich Censored Transport Issue Cover

by

Steven B. Davis

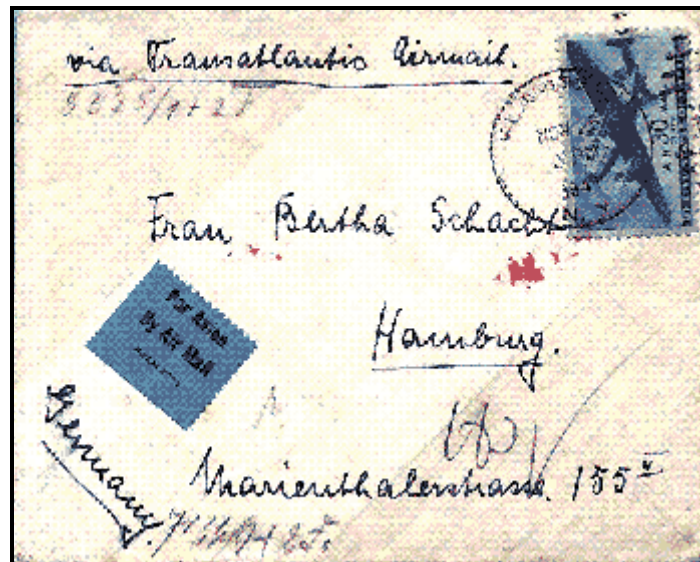
The cover shown below is postmarked November 26, 1941. It is from Plandome, NY to Hamburg, Germany, and has handwritten on the front “via Transatlantic Airmail” to indicate the desired service.

¹ See, Section 2.8 in Broderick & Mayo, *CIVIL CENSORSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES DURING WORLD WAR II* (1980). See also, Civil Censorship Study Group Bulletin, December 1981, page 46.

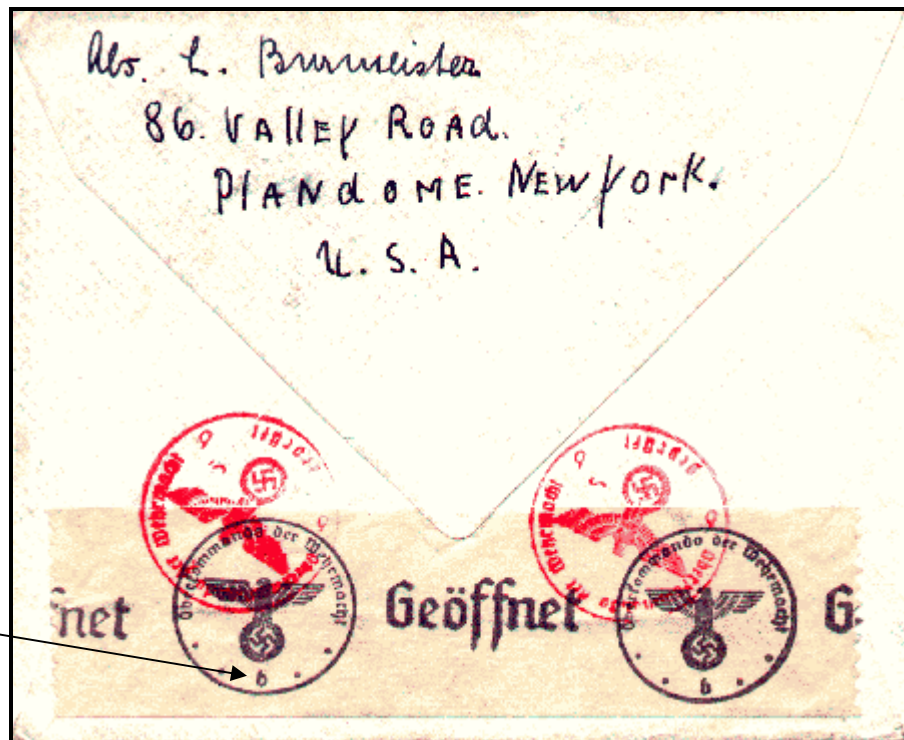
² This accounts for the short period of known uses of this marking.

At this time the United States was still a neutral country. America declared war on Japan on December 8, 1941. Germany then declared war on the United States on December 11, 1941, although Germany was under no obligation to do so under its Axis treaty with Japan.

The valid airmail rate of 30¢ per ½ oz is paid with the 30¢ Transport stamp. This cover was carried on FAM 18, New York to Lisbon, Portugal. From there Deutsche Lufthansa had an airmail route from Lisbon to Munich, Germany. Airmail letters to Germany from the United States were not accepted by the U.S. Post Office from December 11, 1941 onward when postal service was suspended to all German controlled and occupied territories. It appears that this cover made it through to its destination even though it must have arrived either just before or just after war was declared.



The reverse of the cover has Nazi German censor handstamps and a censor tape. The black censor tape markings and the red handstamps both have a small "b" inside which indicate that they were Berlin censor markings.



The red handstamp is listed as in use only between December 1941 and January 1943.

References:

- "Airmail Operations During World War II", Thomas H. Boyle, Jr., AAMS, 1998
- "Die Überwachung de Auslandsbriefverkehrs während des II", Karl-Heinz Riemer³

Reply to Editor's Comments

by

Robert Schlesinger

"Steven Roth, the editor of our newsletter, brought up⁴ two questions concerning my \$2.80 cover that ultimately went to Egypt.⁵ I would like to share what I feel are a few pertinent thoughts. I would like to address Steve's second point first, the question of which FAM flight the cover flew on. I made a typographical error; this should have been **FAM 14**, not FAM 19. I take responsibility for this mistake.

Steve's first point is, in my opinion, the more important issue, and should be explored more thoroughly than the point above. Firstly, the December 2 date was **NOT** my major point of what I was trying to say in the original article. The Postal Bulletin number 18336, dated December 1, 1941, announced that effective the next day (December 2), that there would be a new FAM route – FAM 22, and that the first flight would actually take place on December 6, 1941. My point in this regard was that all air mail going to Africa and the Middle East would be routed to Miami for that flight. My December 1, 1941, cover would not be involved in that 'gathering up' process.

One last point I would like to make. Postal Bulletin number 18348, dated December 8, 1941, (POST Pearl Harbor), stated that air mail for countries listed in the Dec 2, 1941, Postal Guide as going via the Trans Pacific route (Egypt was one of those countries) "shall be routed promptly via Miami." It seems very clear to me that this would indicate FAM 22. Since there is an ICB censor marking on the back of the cover (not shown in the article), I still feel that the cover traveled as far west as Hawaii, and was returned eastbound to Miami, Florida, to be transported to Egypt via FAM22.

The immediacy of the Pearl Harbor attack, and the extreme secrecy involved in anything coming out of Hawaii, may also explain the absence of a Miami backstamp for this cover on its way."

Mixed Frankings of Foreign Stamps with Prexie Era Stamps

by

Dickson Preston

Legitimate mixed frankings of Prexie era stamps with stamps of other countries always add spice to a collection or an exhibit. This article will consider a number of ways that such mixed frankings could occur. There are, of course, many other types of mixed frankings such as these. What examples other kinds of mixed frankings can members of the study group show?

One common way for a mixed franking to occur was international mail charged postage due. In this case the stamps of two postal administrations were used during a single journey through multiple postal services. Since many countries used regular stamps to pay postage due, a mixed franking could occur. In

³ Note: This is a catalogue in German listing the censor markings of World War II.

⁴ Editor's Note: See The Prexie Era Newsletter, No. 31, page 8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, page 7.

Figure 1, a 2¢ vertical coil underpaid the 3¢ post card rate to Sweden, so a 25 ore Swedish definitive was added to pay the postage due.



Figure 1. 1955. Short-paid card with Swedish definitive used as postage due.

Another way involved the redirection of foreign mail to a different address in the U.S. On letter mail (called first class mail in the U.S.), no new stamps were applied, because letter mail was forwarded free under UPU regulations. So in these cases no mixed franking resulted. However, if the mail was printed matter, then forwarding postage was required. **Figure 2** shows an example of printed matter from Guatemala, with forwarding postage within the U.S. paid by a 2¢ Prexie sheet stamp.



Figure 2. 1954. 2¢ Prexie pays forwarding postage on printed matter from Guatemala.

Figure 3 shows a much more unusual mixed franking resulting from the redirection of a foreign letter within the U.S. in 1940. In this case a surface letter from Australia was forwarded by airmail within the U.S. The 3 pence postage paid with the Australian stamp was equivalent to the 5¢ U.S. international surface letter mail rate. Since the U.S. domestic portion of this 5 cent rate was 3¢, only 3¢ additional postage was added to make up the 6¢ domestic air mail rate used to forward the letter.



Figure 3. 1940. Surface letter from Australia forwarded by airmail in the United States.

[To be continued]

Some Comments on Articles in Newsletter Issue No. 31

by

Chuck McFarlane

The gem of Issue No. 31, at least as far as I am concerned, is Dickson Preston's German card⁶ sent airmail with 27¢ in Prexies plus credit for the postal card.

There is always something new to be found!

The card, however, might be a regular postal card and not a reply card. I do not have an unused card for comparison, but a 15 pfennig Reply card would have had a printed indication both in German and French of its reply status. Furthermore, it likely would show evidence at the top of separation from the message card.

Another interesting item was the registered Patriotic shown on page 10 of the same Issue.⁷ While I agree that the cover was not "philatelic", it did have an interesting philatelic connection.

The cover is addressed to Dr. Babcock, a well-known Michigan philatelist from the past. He is considered to be the discoverer of the A.E.F. booklets, having indicated that he was there in France when the packing cases containing the booklets were opened. His statement on that significant event is contained in OPINIONS II.⁸

Secret Atomic Post Office Boxes

by

Jeffrey Shapiro

⁶ The Prexie Era Newsletter, No. 31 (Winter 2005) "A German Reply Card with Prexie Added for Return to Europe", page 8.

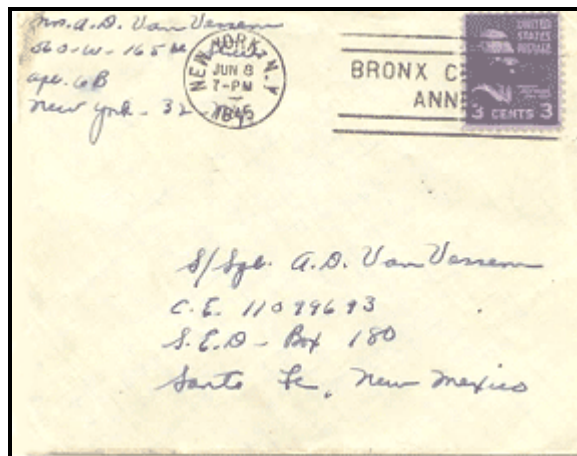
⁷ *Ibid*, "Non-Philatelic Patriotic Covers", by Louis Fiset, page 10.

⁸ Richard F. Larkin, "Determining the Genuineness of United States 'A.E.F.' Booklet Panes", pages 109-111 (Philatelic Foundation 1984).

Less than a year after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the United States authorized and funded the Manhattan Project to develop an atomic weapon. Three top-secret communities were established: Oak Ridge, TN and Hanford, WA, to research and manufacture the weapon, and Los Alamos, NM, where the atomic bomb would be assembled.

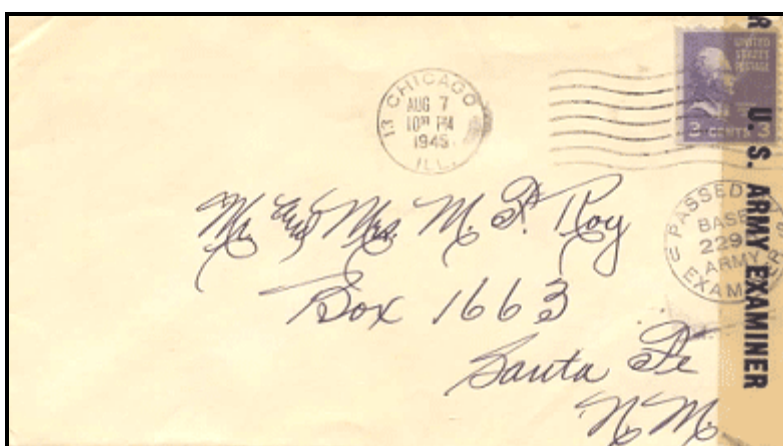
In order to maintain secrecy of the development of the atomic bomb, mail to the Manhattan Project's principal laboratory at Los Alamos, NM was funneled through a number of post office boxes in Santa Fe, 35 miles away, so this correspondence could be monitored.

One such was an unassuming P.O. Box 180, set up to monitor mail sent to the Laboratory's Military staff, as seen on this June 1945 Prexie franked first-class cover sent to a staff sergeant.



Another was P.O. Box 1663 which was established to monitor incoming mail for the scientists working at the Laboratory.

The cover below was addressed to the Assistant Director of Plutonium Bomb Implosion Research (Max Roy) and his wife. Note the August 7, 1945 postmark --- One day after the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Drop and two days before the destruction of Nagasaki.



Editor's Note: By coincidence, I have been reading the collected letters of Richard P. Feynman, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist who worked on the Bomb at Los Alamos.⁹ I had to laugh when I came across many letters addressed to Feynman at P.O. Box 1663, Santa Fe, NM, because the editor of the volume, who comments on virtually everything else in the letters, never mentions the secret mail drop.

⁹ PERFECTLY REASONABLE DEVIATIONS FROM THE BEATEN TRACK: THE LETTERS OF RICHARD P. FEYNMAN (NY 2005).

Summer 2005



Issue No.33

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS/BIA 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer

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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 / 10⁰⁰ 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.

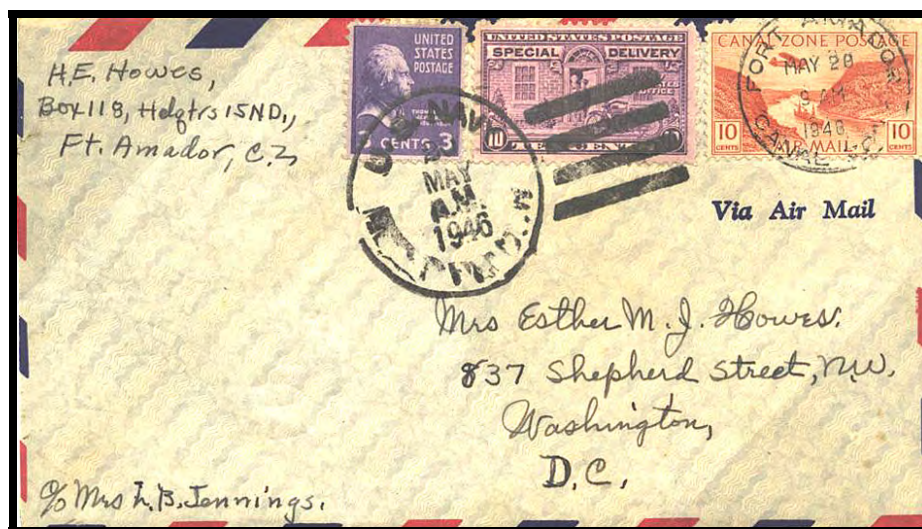


Figure 4. Letter from Canal Zone with UNITED STATES stamps paying the special delivery fee - 1946.

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.

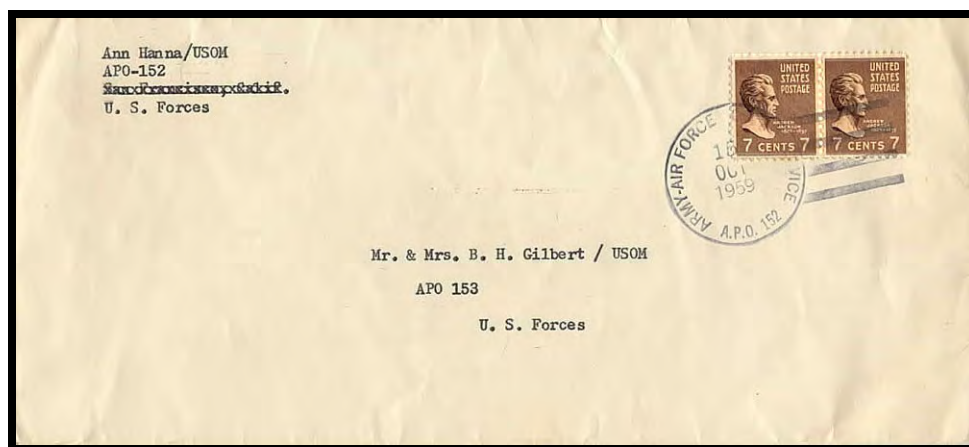
A Vietnam War Era Prexie Cover

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
Paige, 1145 Shillelagh Road, Chesapeake, VA
23323. larrypaige@cox.net (757.547.5296)

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],¹ 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.² 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

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

² 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 3rd and September 9th, 1940.³



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

³

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.⁴



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.



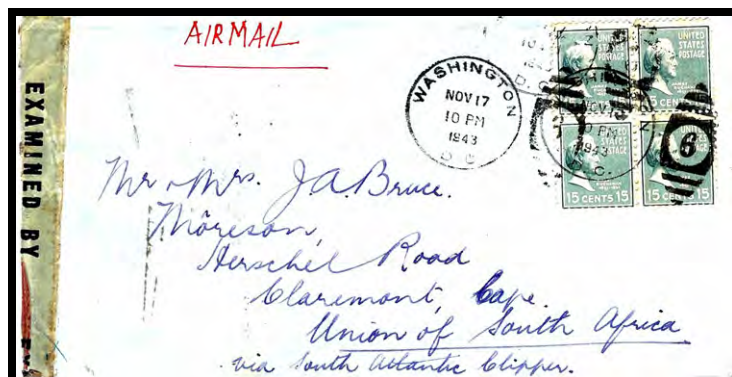
Figure 9



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



Fall 2005



Issue No.34

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer

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Wartime Emergency Trans-Pacific Airmail Route to Europe, Africa and the Middle East

by

Steven M. Roth

[Continued from Newsletter No. 33]

Mail to the Middle East also was flown over the emergency Trans-Pacific Route. **Figure 11** is a letter to Iraq. The sender's admonition (partly obscured by the CDS) was "By air mail via Pan American Airway/via Hong Kong". There is a Hong Kong transit handstamp on the back. This letter did not pass through censor's examination.



Figure 11. November 26, 1940.

Figure 12 was flown to Palestine on July 24, 1941. It has a Singapore transit marking on the back. It also has a British resealing tape from censorship in Palestine.



Figure 12

Figure 13 was flown on September 22, 1941 to Lebanon/Syria via Singapore. There is a “TO BE FORWARDED BY/AIR FROM SINGAPORE” handstamp on the front, a Singapore censor’s handstamp on the front and back, and the Singapore resealing tape on the left end. The sender’s admonition, “VIA PACIFIC CLIPPER” appears below the CDS.



Figure 13

Figure 14 was destined for Egypt on September 17, 1941. It has a Hong Kong transit handstamp on the back, an Egyptian resealing tape, and an Egyptian censor’s handstamp on the front.



Figure 14

The Trans-Pacific emergency route also was used for mail from the United States to India. **Figure 15** flew via Hong Kong. It has a Hong Kong censor's handstamp on the back, an India censor resealing tape, and an India censor’s handstamp.

[Figure 15 appears on next page]



Figure 15

Figure 16, a cover to Greece, is an example of the 30¢ legacy rate referred to in Part 1 of this article. This particular accommodation rate was established in the POSTAL BULLETIN SUPPLEMENT for February 1941.



Figure 16.

This cover was originally marked “VIA TRANSATLANTIC/AIR MAIL” by the sender, but this was crossed-out (probably by the postal service although there is no way to be sure). The letter made it as far as Singapore where it was opened and examined, then resealed and handstamped, front and back, by Singapore censorship. It also was marked with a handstamp “POSTAL CORRESPONDENCE SUSPENDED” in Singapore. It then was returned to San Francisco, its place of origin.

Figure 17 is a cover to Latvia via the emergency routing. This route for Latvia, as well as the 30¢ accommodation rate, was specifically covered in the POSTAL BULLETIN for June 21, 1941:

FOREIGN AIR MAIL SERVICE

Beginning at once, air mails for U. S. S. R., Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, shall be dispatched via the Pacific coast and the trans-Pacific air-mail route, to be sent onward from Hong Kong by ordinary means. The total postage shall be 70 cents per half ounce. However, for a time mails for those countries prepaid at the air-mail rate heretofore required, shall be given dispatch via the trans-Pacific route. Inquiring mailers may be informed that the sending of articles for the above-named countries by air mail may not expedite the articles materially over service by ordinary means.

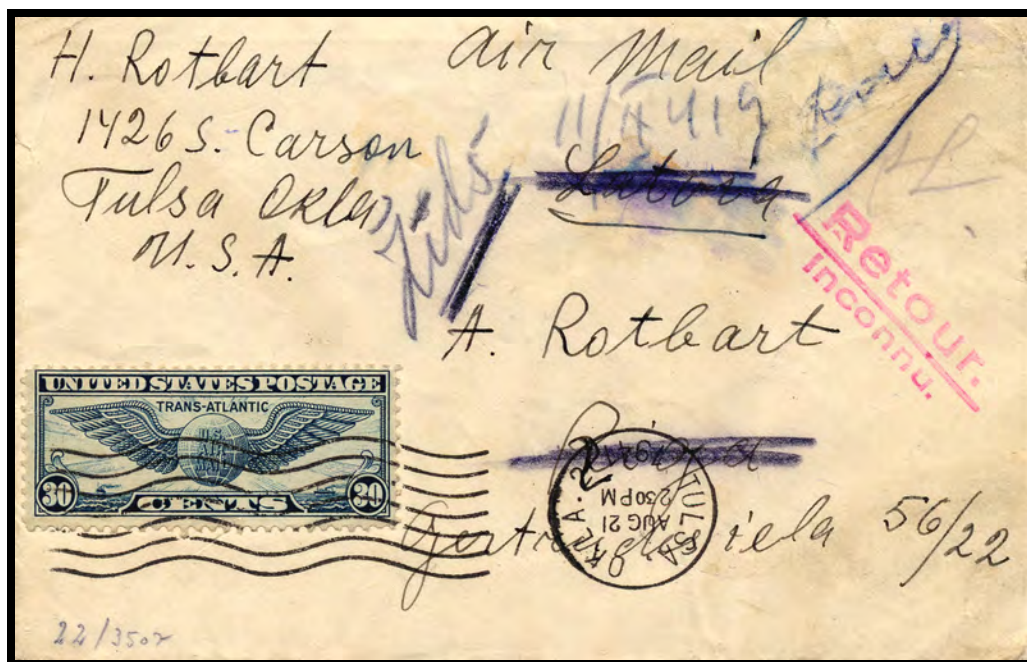


Figure 17

Figure 18, a cover to Turkey via the emergency route, presents two mysteries. First, it was not rated at 70¢, but at 30¢. Granted, this could represent the legacy rate, but that still leaves a second problem: neither the 70¢ Trans-Pacific rate nor the 30¢ Trans-Atlantic rate to Turkey is mentioned in any official postal rate chart or schedule known to this writer. I have recorded only one example of the 70¢ rate to Turkey via the emergency routing, and six 30¢ covers during this period.

Figure 18 was flown via Singapore where it was opened by the Singapore censorship, resealed with resealing tape, and hand stamped with the "PASSED BY/CENSOR 227" Singapore censor handstamp.

[Figure 18 appears on next page]

Reflections On the Marking "CPNY"

by

A.J. Savakis

I read with great interest the three recent articles and/or letters concerning the machine marking CPNY. I



Figure 18

[Savakis - continued from previous page]

wrote a few articles on this subject over the years in the Machine Cancel Forum.^o I cannot say I agree with the most recent note on this subject, the one by Dann Mayo published in Newsletter No. 33.¹ I own examples that are outside the dates given by Mr. Mayo. The CPNY marking was not used for just a few weeks. It was used for more than one year.

I cannot find a contemporary document that defines the initials “CP”. I have found contemporary documents that refer to CPNY and CP [other ports – such as San Francisco], although I have not seen such other port markings on any covers. Some of the ideas put forth over the years to explain the meaning of “CP” are (i) closed pouch, (ii) captain of the port, (iii) check point or censor point, or (iv) Care Postmaster [New York],² but I have not seen any official document verifying these interpretations. I originally thought (and indicated in my Machine Cancel Forum articles) that “CP” referred to a closed pouch system of transferring the mail from the civilian postal system to the military system, but now I don’t believe this is correct. I have since seen documentary evidence that convinces me that the initials “CP” refer to a place or a department, not to mail transfer.

I have concluded, however, that the marking [CPNY] is not rare or even scarce. It was used from mid-1943 until mid-1945.

I have some other questions and observations:

- A. Why did New York use the marking, but no other port did although there are references in contemporaneous documents that refer to CPNY and CP other ports. As I said above, I have yet to see a cover from “CP(some other port)”.
- B. There are lots of theories as to what the initials “CP” mean. I thought I had it when I picked up RPO book MAIL BY RAIL by Bryant A. Long and William J. Dennis, and in the index it reads CLOSED POUCH (CP). A light bulb went off. The term CLOSED POUCH describes perfectly how the mail went from the RPO system direct to the Armed Guard System. But reviewing the documents that do refer to CPNY, it is obvious they are not referring to the process

¹ “Thoughts on the Machine Marking CPNY”, Dann Mayo, Prexie Era Newsletter, No. 33, p.5.

² LINN’S STAMP NEWS [Collector’s Corner, September 22, 2003, page 40] had a note about the MS GRIPSHOLM. It illustrated a piece of mail addressed to Care Postmaster, New York. The cover had the CPNY marking on the back.

by which the mail is delivered, but to a person or place. The Helbock study has an appendix of original documents that refers to the Chief Postal Censor as CPC, and then to the local as CPNY CPSF SPNO etc. So if the initials carry forward, then CPNY means Chief Postal [Censor for] New York. But these are guesses.

C. Ever wonder why it is referred to as an International machine marking? Well, some examples show the dial, and there is the small tick mark -- horizontal to CPNY and just above CPNY-- that appears. Most International markings have this tick mark. So since it has this characteristic, it is identified as an International.

D. I wrote to the APRL for research on CPNY. The kind librarian found the earliest reference to CPNY in a book called UNITED STATES RF OVERPRINTS ON AIR MAIL STAMPS AND STATIONERY (1944-1945).³ At page 34 Goodkind refers to CPNY as meaning CENSORED POST NEW YORK -- but gives no reference. So besides armed guard mail and refuge mail, CPNY is also applied to Free French mail posted at the port. But note this: the armed guard mail gets the CPNY marking as it leaves the civilian mail and goes into the military. The refuge mail and RF mail gets it when it enters the civilian system. (Still showing an interface!)

So, my thought is that before we add more fuel to the fire, make the January 2002 Machine Cancel Forum article available to the Prexie Era Study Group (please remember the copyright to the Machine Cancel Society). Let's get a response, and see where it all winds up. [Editor's Note: Alex has made the Forum article available to me in digital format. If anyone wants it, contact me with your e-mail address. I'll attach it to your e-mail and return it to you.]

Local Rates at the War Relocation Authority Relocation Centers

by

Louis Fiset

The illustrations below show two examples of first class, local letter surface rates in use during the World War II era. In the first, 1-cent pays the half-ounce rate at a non-carrier post office. The second example [see page 8] shows a 2-cent rate paid at a carrier post office. Together the pair reveals a problem.

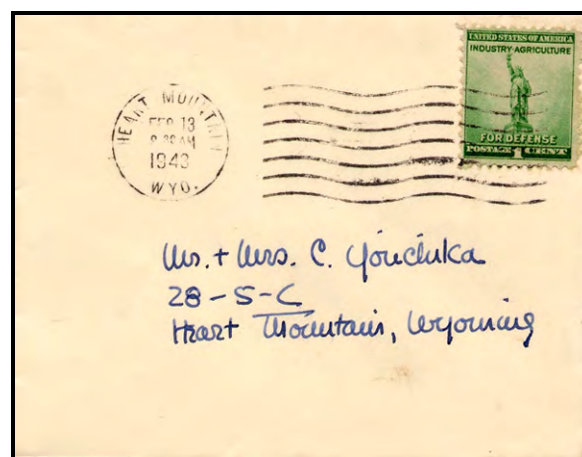


Figure 1: 1-cent local non-carrier post office rate paid at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center.

A close observer will note that each cover was sent and received by Japanese Americans incarcerated at War Relocation Authority relocation centers. Heart Mountain (Heart Mountain Relocation Center) was

³ Collector's Club Handbook No. 5 by Henry Goodkind 91958).

an independent branch of the parent Cody, Wyoming post office, whereas Hunt (Minidoka Relocation Center) was an independent branch of the Twin Falls, Idaho post office. The two rates appear to reflect the availability/non-availability of letter carrier service. The problem is that both branch post offices (and apparently all ten relocation centers) provided home delivery of the mail. Well, sort of.

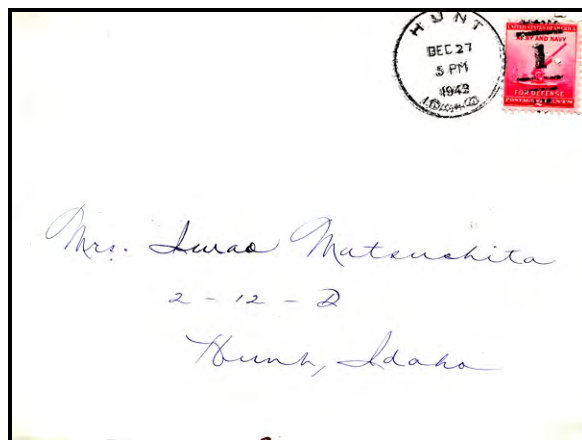


Figure 2: 2-cent local carrier post office rate paid at the Minidoka Relocation Center

Bonded, civil service employees were dispatched to each of the center branch post offices to sell postal supplies, issue and pay money orders, and to register letters and parcels. However, letter carrier service was not included as a service to be provided and paid for by the Post Office Department to the residents. General delivery postal service at the centers, averaging 8,000 patrons, soon proved unworkable, as did schemes for distribution to sub-stations or other large units where individuals would call for the mail in person. Residential delivery service was eventually initiated. The mail sorters and letter carriers were the inmates, themselves, who, although overseen by the branch postmasters, were paid by the War Relocation Authority. Post Office Department salaries were set by law and far exceeded the \$16 per month salary paid to the Japanese American employees. Thus, it appears the center branch post offices were officially non-carrier post offices, and the 1-cent rate applied.

With the recent acquisition shown here I have now recorded three examples of the 1-cent rate paid at the Heart Mountain branch post office. However, I have yet to see an example of this rate paid at any other center. Similarly, I have recorded numerous examples of the 2-cent rate on mail at the Minidoka Relocation Center (in effect until March 26, 1944), but none at any other center.

This small sample size is insufficient to draw any conclusions. Additional research is needed to confirm that home delivery service indeed occurred or did not occur at all centers, not just delivery to larger units such as blocks or sub-stations where individuals would call for their mail. It appears the intent was for home delivery of the mail to be provided. According to post office planners for the Heart Mountain Relocation Center,

The incoming mail will be sorted out to blocks, or other units agreed upon, and will be given to selected evacuees for delivery in accordance with the addresses thereon.⁴

The “addresses thereon” were block number, barrack number, and apartment letter, such as the 28-5-C address shown in the first example.

Currently, it appears that directives from the parent post offices determining the proper local rate to assess depended upon an interpretation of the status of the letter carriers. Who can shed further light on this issue either with information from postal archives or with examples from other centers?

⁴ Lawrence Sherman, MD (ed.) *The United States Post Office In World War II*. Chicago: Chicago Collectors Club, 2002, p. 155.

It's All in How It Was Addressed

by

Bob Hohertz

The first cover that is illustrated was sent to "HONGKONG" (sic) in 1940 at double the seventy-cent per ounce airmail rate in effect from April 21, 1937 until service was suspended December 12, 1941.



The second cover was also sent to Hong Kong during that period, but the postage applied to it for double weight was \$1.60. Since lower denomination Prexies were part of the franking, it was deliberately overpaid. This seems strange until one reads the address: "Hongkong, China". From May 23, 1939 to June 14, 1940, the airmail rate to China was eighty cents per ounce. The charge was correct for double weight to China, but not to Hong Kong.



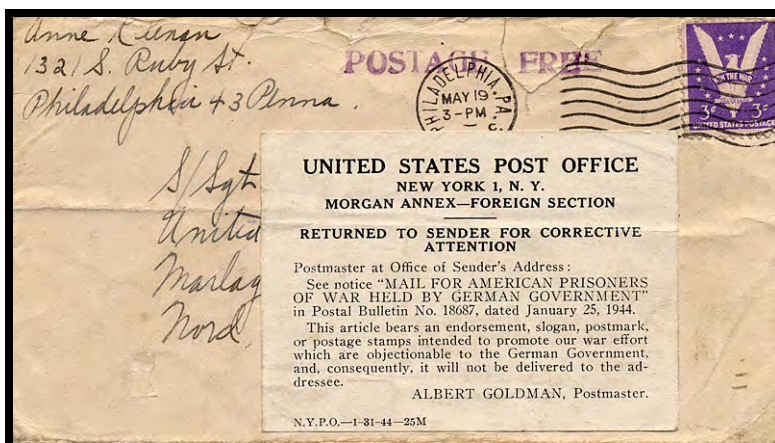
A similar cover was sold on eBay earlier this year, addressed to Hong Kong, China, with \$1.60 postage. One can imagine the postal clerk looking up the rate and saying, "To China? Oh, eighty cents an ounce."

World War II Letter Mail Labels [Continued from Issue No.28]

by

Steven M. Roth

In Prexie Era Newsletter No. 28 [pages 6-7] I showed a Post Office form used in the New York Post Office which returned letters that contained external indicia [such as the Win the War stamp] offensive to Germany. At the time I did not have an example on cover. Now I do. See the cover below.



This cover, like all of the others I've seen, was addressed to a POW held in Germany. When the occasional letter bearing an offensive stamp made it past the U.S. censors or the New York Post Office clerks, the German post office removed the offensive stamp and then sent the letter on to its destination. I showed an example of such a letter in Prexie Era Newsletter No. 28, page 7.

FAM 14 – Airmail to Japan in 1940

by

Steven M. Roth

Airmail covers to Japan in the year or so preceding its entry into World War II are very scarce. The one shown below left New York via FAM 14 on July 18, 1940. It likely flew via San Francisco → Hawaii → Guam → Manila → Macao → Hong Kong → Osaka. It arrived in Osaka on September 10, 1940. It then was handstamped to indicate that the address was insufficient. It was returned to the sender.



Winter 2006



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Study Group Chairman Requests That the Editor Remain

Prexie Era Study Group Chairman Jeffrey Shapiro has asked me to continue as Editor of the Newsletter for at least one more year beyond the publication of Issue No. 35. I have gladly agreed to do so.

Famous Americans and Prexies

by

Robert D. Hohertz

Several years ago I found that I had a number of Prexie covers that also included one or more of the Famous American stamps as part of the franking. Since then, I have collected at least one example for each of the thirty-five original Famous American stamps.

The first set of five to be released pictured authors. The one-cent stamp bears the likeness of Washington Irving taken from a Matthew Brady daguerreotype.

Figure 1. The one-cent Irving is on a beat-up cover sent by sea to Europe and air to Palestine in 1940. Total postage was five cents surface and six cents surcharge for air from Europe. The stamps to pay the surface postage are on the back of the envelope, which caused some confusion. A postage due handstamp was applied and then penciled out, with a notation “over” written under it.



Figure 1

Figure 2. The back of the envelope to Tel Aviv. Irving, born in 1783, grew up during the time that George Washington and John Adams, the presidents on these stamps, were in office.

The two-cent Famous American author stamp features James Fennimore Cooper, also from a Matthew Brady photograph.

Figure 3. Two two-cent Coopers help make up the forty-cent postage for air service to Chile. The letter left New York on March 15, 1940, and reached Santiago on March 19.

Ralph Waldo Emerson appears on the three-cent stamp in the author group. The rather unflattering image was taken from a photograph in the Library of Congress.



Figure 2



Figure 3

Figure 4. The three-cent Famous Americans are the most difficult to find on covers that also feature Prexies. Most would have been used singly as domestic postage. This cover required an additional fifteen cents, paid using a Prexie, for the minimum fee for registration.

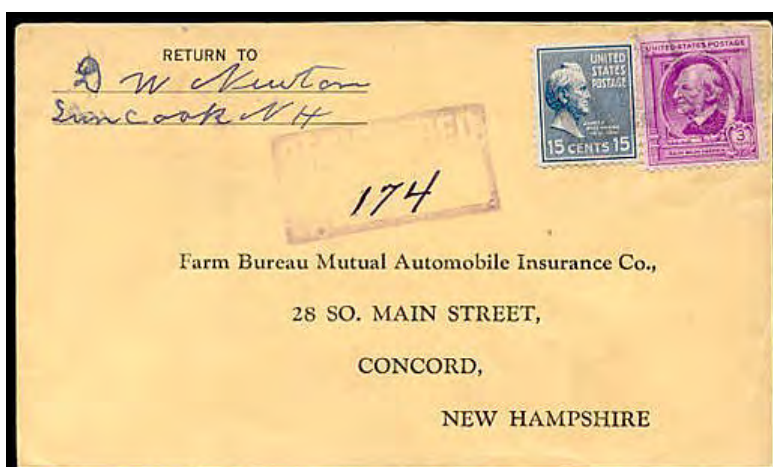


Figure 4

Figure 5. The five-cent Alcott and a three-cent Prexie make up the surface rate to South Africa, plus the three-cent surcharge for air transportation from San Francisco to New York.

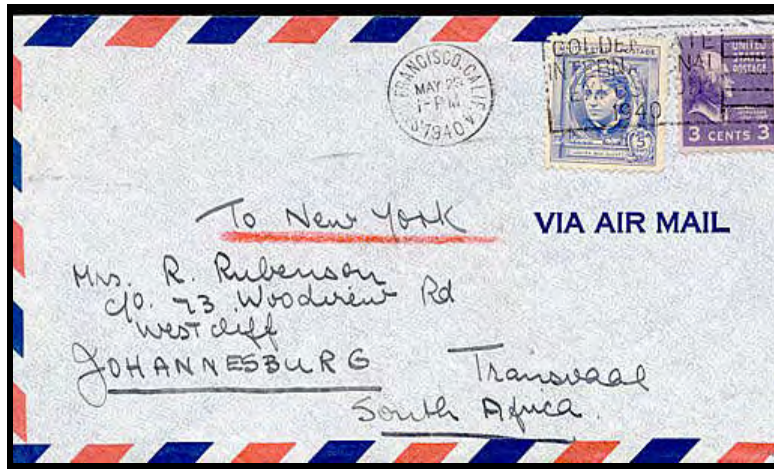


Figure 5

Figure 6. A five-cent Alcott and a twenty-cent Prexie pay part of the fifty cents in postage on this envelope to Switzerland, made up of thirty cents for transatlantic airmail, fifteen cents for registry, and five cents for a return receipt.

Figure 7 shows the final stamp in the author series — the ten-cent Samuel Clemens issue. The likeness was taken from a photograph in the Public Library in Washington, D.C. It pictures Clemens as he looked in his late 60's.



Figure 6

Next, the ten-cent Clemens and a 17 cents Prexie make up the transatlantic airmail rate on half of a paid reply postal card to Berlin in 1941.



Figure 7

Figure 8. Sixty cents in twelve-cent Prexies plus the ten-cent Clemens make up the seventy-cent Pacific route airmail rate to India through Hong Kong or Singapore that was available from April 1937 until December 1941.¹



Figure 8

The Handstamp “CPSF”

by

Robert Schlesinger

Bob wrote: “I received my Prexie Era Newsletter [No. 34] yesterday and saw the interesting article on the CPNY marking. As a result, I went through my collection and found a cover I had purchased from the collection of Rollie Rustad. In fact, the cover still is on its exhibit page with Rollie’s write-up.

¹ Information on the source of the Famous American stamp designs was taken from UNITED STATES FAMOUS AMERICAN SERIES of 1940 by George H. Hahn, APS Handbook Series.



Here is the cover with the write-up, as follows:

‘The 60 cents per ½ oz. rate, effective December 2, 1941. Routed via Miami over FAM 22. The handstamp “CPSF” means ‘Censorship Postal, San Francisco.’ “

Prexies on a Special Handling Tag



The tag shown above was offered on Ebay in November 2005 (Item Number 5639242644). Special handling usages are among the most desirable of all usages – in general. Any Special Handling use with a Prexie is a gem, indeed. This specimen has two Prexies!

Airmail to Turkey During the Second World War

by

Steven M. Roth

Foreign destination airmail during the period 1940 through late 1943 is one of the most elusive collecting and study areas of the Prexie Era because of the impact of the Second World War on routes and rates. This is because (i) the policy of the wartime United States government was to maintain secrecy with respect to routes, and (ii) routes, and often rates, frequently changed in response to the exigencies of combat and the shifting theaters of war.

Among the destinations which has escaped clear explication with respect to airmail rates is Turkey. While it seems that the correct rate (i) for covers flown over FAM 18 was 30¢ (or 36¢ if BOAC

rendered additional air service via the Middle East), and (ii) for covers flown over FAM 14 should have been 70¢, and (iii) for covers flown over FAM 22 was 70¢, in fact, only the FAM 22 70¢ rate was consistent with expectations and contemporary airmail conventions.

FAM 18

Such FAM 18 covers as are available for study generally reflect the 30¢ airmail rate from the United States to Europe via England or Lisbon, then by surface mail to Turkey. I am aware of one example of an FAM 18 36¢ rate cover to Turkey — airmail to England and then from England to Turkey. This cover appeared in the Dr. Arthur Groten Sale as Lot No. 825.² Dr. Groten, an exemplary student of mail to, through and from Palestine (He wrote the magnificent Introduction and the descriptions of the auction lots for the sale) stated as part of the description of the cover that “[the] 36¢ rate to Turkey was valid until opening of FAM 22.” This seems correct, and yet Lot 825 is the only 36¢ rate example I am aware of.



Figure 1

Figure 1 was carried to Turkey over FAM 18 in November 1940. It was a double rate letter. This letter could have traveled instead via the Reverse Horseshoe Route, but FAM 18 was much faster. It reduced the transit time from New York to Lisbon and from Lisbon to Turkey via surface mail by approximately three weeks.

After Italy entered the War against Britain and France on June 10, 1940, thereby effectively closing the Mediterranean Sea to Allied commercial air traffic, Great Britain sought other airmail routes to enable it to maintain communications with its Indian, Australian, African New Zealand, and Pacific colonies. Three routes that resulted were the two emergency Trans-Pacific Routes (FAM 14 and FAM 19) and (beginning June 19, 1940) the so-called Horseshoe Route which linked 16 countries between Durban and Sydney. The United States made use of all these alternate air routes.^{3, 4}

Trans-Pacific Route

² Nutmeg Sale No. 15, “Arthur Groten’s ‘Via Palestine’,” April 13, 1999, Lot 825.

³ Covers from the United States over the Horseshoe Route are often referred to as Reverse Horseshoe Route covers or as American Horseshoe Route covers.

⁴ In addition, the United States continued to use the established steamship route from New York (i) to Cape Town, South Africa, then (ii) by British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) air carriage to Cairo, Karachi, Calcutta, etc., including to Turkey. The transit time by ship from New York to Cape Town typically was 30 days.

The Trans-Pacific Route to destinations in Europe, Africa and the Middle East (and, specifically, to Turkey) from the United States required that the mail first be taken to San Francisco, then be carried via FAM 14 as if it were going to Asia. Ostensibly, the airmail rate to Turkey should have been 70¢ per one-half ounce just as it was for most mail to other destinations carried over this route. The problem with this reasonable assumption is that (i) the rate was not documented in any official publication that I have been able to find nor in the Pan American Airways postal rates guides, and (ii) only one cover reflecting this rate has been reported. In practice, the airmail rate to Turkey via the Trans-Pacific Route seems to have been 30¢ per one-half ounce, although (i) I have not been able to find this rate in any official publication or PAA rates guide, and (ii) the 30¢ rate does not fit the known rate convention for the route at that time. I showed an example of a 30¢ rate Trans-Pacific Route Prexie cover in the Prexie Era Newsletter No. 24, at page 6 [Fall 2002]. **Figure 2** is another rate example (without a Prexie) I recently acquired.



Figure 2

Figure 2 was routed through Singapore where it was opened, examined, passed and resealed. It was opened and examined again when it arrived in Egypt., and then examined again in Turkey.

Reverse Horseshoe Route

The route a Reverse Horseshoe Route cover traveled was (i) FAM 18 from the United States to England, then (ii) ship from England to Durban, South Africa. From Durban, the mail went overland to Mombassa, Khartoum, and on to Cairo. From Cairo, the mail traveled to its destination by local air, land and/or by sea.

Turkey-destined Reverse Horseshoe Route covers reflect the 30¢ airmail rate rather than the expected 70¢ rate. An example I recently acquired is shown below as **Figure 3**.

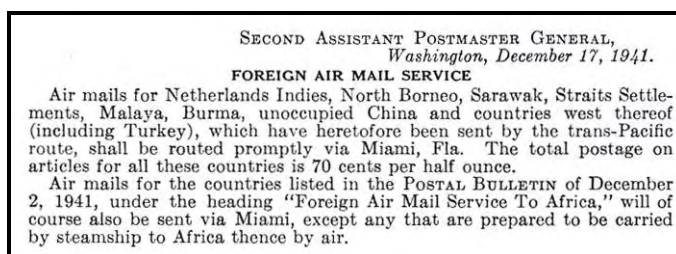


Figure 3

Note that **Figure 3** was twice marked by the sender “Air Mail via Lisbon”, the route via FAM 18. The New York City Post Office ignored the admonition and sent the letter via the Reverse Horseshoe Route. When the letter arrived in Durban, South Africa, it was opened by censorship, examined, resealed and passed. The letter was examined again by censorship in Turkey. The “VIA AIR MAIL” handstamp was crossed-out in Durban indicating surface carriage from there.

FAM 22 Route Covers

With the advent of the southern Atlantic route via Miami and Africa (FAM 22) in 1941 (officially as of December 6, but as a practical matter for non-military mail sometime late in May 1942) we find the first published reference to airmail to Turkey, as well as the first officially published rate — 70¢. This appeared in **Postal Bulletin No. 18348** (December 18, 1941).



Figures 4 and 5 are examples of typical 70¢ covers to Turkey flown over FAM 22. I note that notwithstanding the sender's admonition, the **Figure 4** cover do not travel via South Africa.



Figure 4

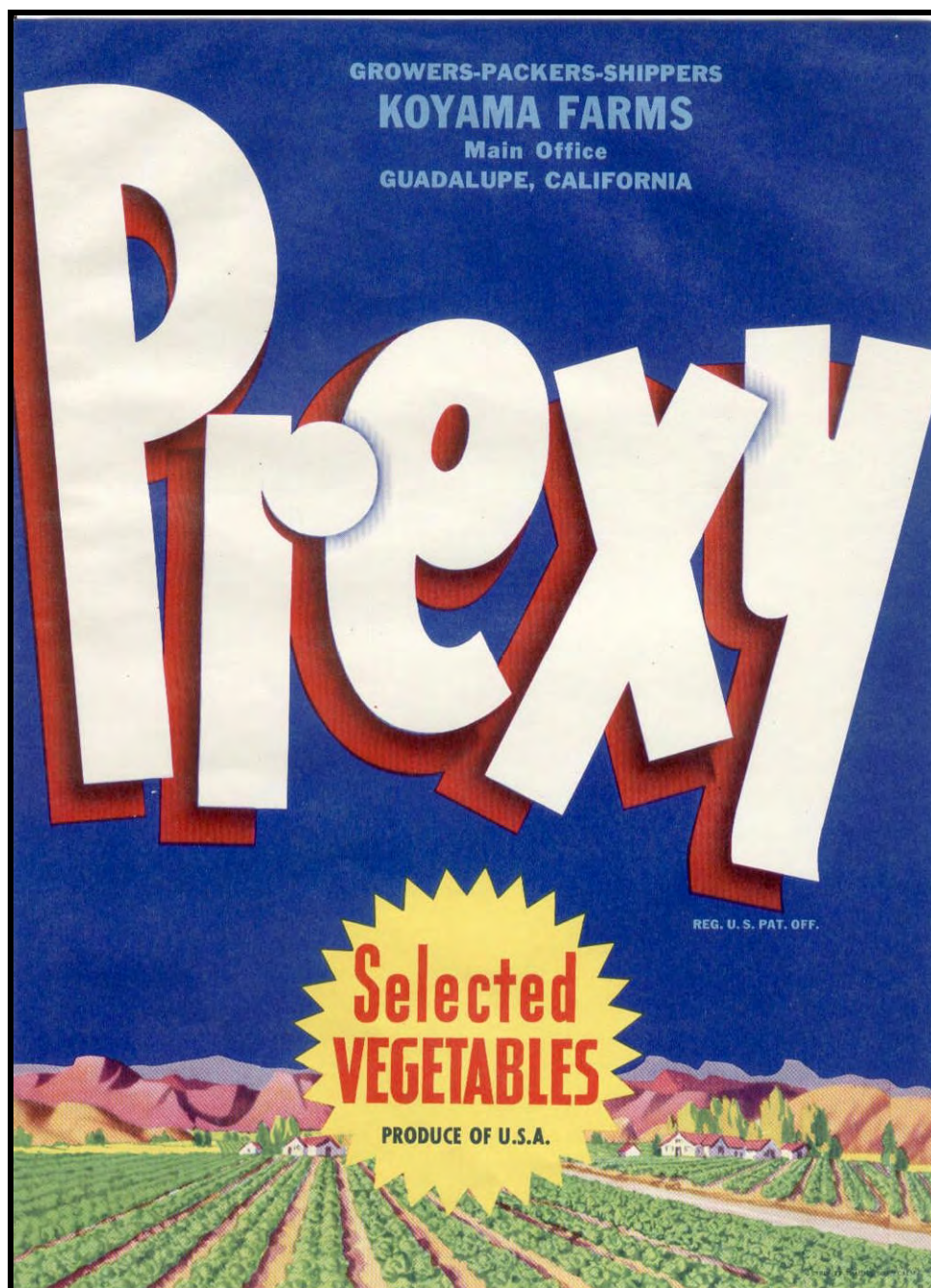


Figure 5

If any reader has access to a published airmail rate to Turkey before the advent of FAM 22, please make that information available for publication in the Newsletter.

Where in the World Does Jeff Shapiro Find These?

Every once in a while Jeff Shapiro surprises Newsletter readers by presenting an unusual Prexie Era item. Here is one Jeff sprang on me not too long ago.



Now, that's a beautiful multi-colored artifact for a serious Prexie collector!!!



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The Postman as Historian

by

Louis Fiset

My fascination with postal history relating to war resides in its impact on the delivery of the mail – from delays due to censorship or alternate mail routes, to the suspension of mail service, altogether. Sometimes the postman, himself, provides helpful information on why an individual piece of correspondence got delayed or was never delivered. The two postal cards shown here from World War II illustrate the point.



The first card, a piece of business correspondence addressed to London, was postmarked May 23, 1940 long before the U.S. entered the war. The card reached London, but was returned to the sender sometime after July 8th. A rubber stamp on the message side indicates the official reason for the return: RETURN TO SENDER/House Empty. It is the postman's single word addition penciled on the face of the card, however, that causes us to catch our breath: "Demolished." The building likely fell victim to the aerial bombing by the Luftwaffe, which was intensifying at this time to become known as the Battle of Britain.



The time period of the second card is immediately apparent from the two-cent commemorative in tribute to President Roosevelt, who died at Warm Springs, Georgia on April 12, 1945. The April 1, 1946 postmark is an important date, for on this day post-war postal relations with Germany resumed. Initially, non-illustrated postal cards and letters weighing up to one ounce sent by surface routes were permitted. The message, in German, reveals the writer was attempting to reestablish contact with relatives in Hamburg. But as in the first example, the postal card was returned to the sender. And once again the penciled notation by the postman tells us why: *Haus zerstört/Empfänger/verzogen wohin/unbekannt*. The story brief but clear: “House destroyed/Addressee/gone away whereabouts/unknown.” The large port city of Hamburg was bombed repeatedly and heavily by British and U.S. air forces from 1943 to 1945.

The two postal card shown, written at both ends of the war, reveal the misery inflicted upon civilians during times of major conflict. The magnitude of the Second World War is too vast for most individuals to grasp in terms of the number of lives lost and property destroyed. Sometimes a few scribbled words on an undelivered postal card help put a human face on it.

\$2.00 and \$5.00 Prexies Covers Census to be Undertaken by Study Group

The Presidential Issue Study Group, chaired by Jeffrey Shapiro, convened at Washington 2006. Among the topics discussed, the Study Group decided to maintain a census of the \$2.00 and the \$5.00 Prexie stamps used on covers or on wrappers (but NOT used on tags). The use does not have to be a solo use, but it should not be a philatelic use, if possible.

Subscribers are urged to send information about uses of the \$2.00 and uses of the \$5.00 stamps to Jeff Shapiro (PO Box 3211, Fayville, MA 01745-3211) with the following information:

- Cover date [month, day, year]
- Post office of origin
- Addressee and full address
- Scott # for all stamps [not only the \$2.00 or the \$5.00]
- An image [preferably a color scan at 400 dpi saved as a TIFF file] or a color photocopy [ratio 1:1]. The image should show both sides of the cover or wrapper if the reverse has any information on it

We will publish the results of the census in the Newsletter.

Subscriber's Inquiry: Airmail to Greenland

Subscriber Tony Wawrukiewicz recently contacted several Newsletter subscribers to ask if any of them knew the non-military, non-concession airmail rate for mail from the United States to Greenland during World War II. He asked if anyone has an example of a cover to show him? No one did. He also asked if such covers were routed through Denmark. Finally, he wanted to know if such covers indicated censoring by the military or civilian Censorship Office.

None of the five subscribers contacted by Tony could answer the questions or had a non-military cover in his possession to show as an example.

Can any Subscriber show an example? If so, you can contact Tony directly via e-mail [tonywaw@spiritone.com]. If you will also send your information and an image to the Editor, I will publish it in the Newsletter for the benefit of all Subscribers.

36¢ Reverse Horseshoe Route Cover to Syria

By

Steven M. Roth

The cover shown below is an example of the scarce 36¢ rate used on FAM 18 for covers going to the Middle East via England prior to July 10, 1940 (when Italy entered World War II and closed the Mediterranean Sea to Allied air traffic).

This cover, addressed to Lebanon/Syria, was sent via the reverse Horseshoe Route described in the Newsletter in Issues Nos. 26 [pp. 9-10], 27 [p.10], and 33 [p.5].



The cover was postmarked in the United States on January 8, 1941. It appears that the writer expected the letter to be flown via FAM 18 at the former airmail rate (30¢ from the U.S. to England via Pan American

Airways, plus 6¢ from England to destination by BOAC). Instead, the letter traveled the slow reverse Horseshoe Route to Durban, South Africa, where the letter was opened, examined and then resealed with the South African censorship tape before being sent on to its destination in the Middle East. Does anyone else have a 36¢ rate reverse Horseshoe Route cover I can see?

Some Observations on U.S. Internment Camp Mail in WW II

by

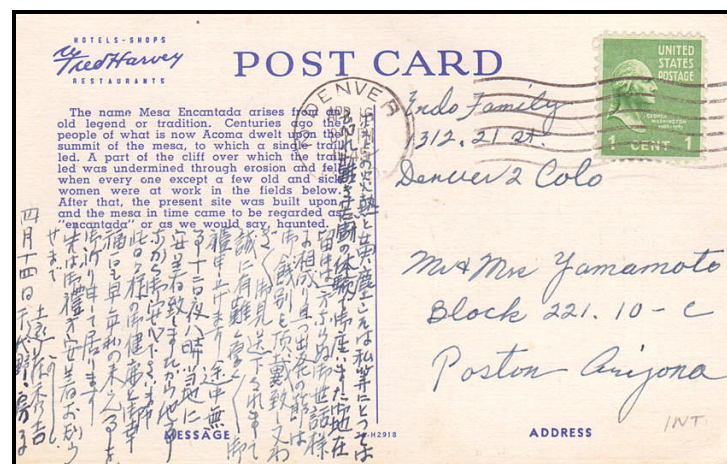
Jeffrey Shapiro

With the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, hundreds of thousands of Japanese Americans became known by the racial slur “Japs”, and suddenly became seen as potential Japanese spies and agents.

Reflecting the paranoia of the day, Lieutenant General John DeWitt wrote President Roosevelt in January, 1942, “A Jap is a Jap ... It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen or not ... The Japanese are an enemy race.”

A few weeks later the President signed Executive Order 9066 which called for the evacuation of all Japanese descendents from California, Oregon and Washington as a war-time precaution. Construction began immediately on ten internment camps in desolate areas of California, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho and Arkansas.

The affected Japanese (two-third of whom were American citizens) were given only a few days notice to evacuate and were told to report only with what they could carry. From 1942 thru 1946, an estimated 110,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry occupied those ten camps.



The cover pictured above shows an example of mail into one of these internment camps established in Arizona, ironically located on reservation land leased from American Indian tribes.

This April, 1945 post card, franked with a one cent Prexie stamp paying the prevailing domestic post card rate, was mailed to the Colorado River Relocation Center located at Poston in LaPaz County. At its peak this camp housed 18,000 internees, larger than most communities in Arizona. (Note: Mail *into* internment camps is more difficult to find than is outgoing mail from the camps.)

Jewish Internment Camps in Mauritius

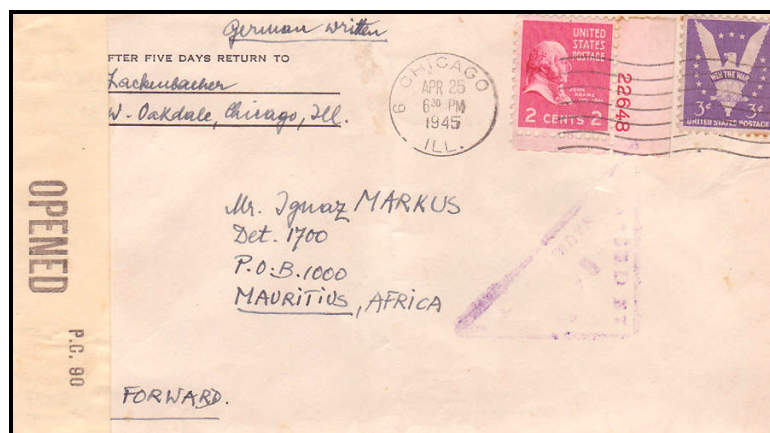
by

Jeffrey Shapiro

By the late 1930's, many European Jews realized that their lives were in extreme jeopardy by the policies of the Nazis. Desperate to flee, but sensing a growing resentment from the Allies to provide shelter, Palestine seemed the only alternative.

The British, in control of Palestine by a League of Nations Mandate, and aware of growing Arab resentment over Jewish immigration, blocked further attempts by these European refugees to settle there.

In the fall of 1940, 3600 refugees from Germany and occupied Austria, Poland and Czechoslovakia were impounded on the ocean liner Patria, berthed in Haifa harbor. On November 25, 1940, saboteurs blew up the ship, resulting in 267 deaths. After weeks of negotiation, some of the survivors were allowed to land in Palestine, but 1584 were deported to the remote Indian Ocean island colony of Mauritius.



Unlimited mail to and from the detainees was allowed, but all had to use the same incoming address: P.O. Box 1000. This one address facilitated censoring operations.

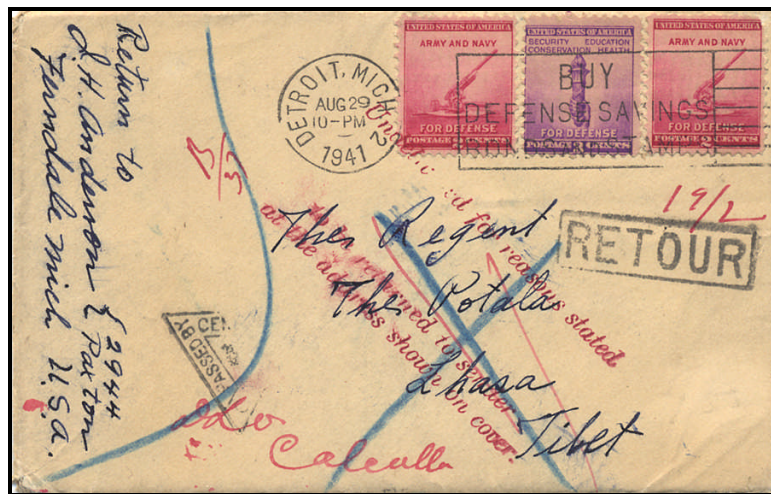
In the illustrated example, a 2 cent plate number single was added to a 3 cent “Win the War” stamp to pay the 5 cents per ounce international surface rate on this 1945 multi-censored cover to an internee at the Camp.

Returned From Tibet: Another Example

by

David Wessely

I recently acquired for my stock [as a postal history dealer] the cover shown below which travel by ocean mail to the border between Tibet and India before it was refused in Tibet and returned.



The explanation for the various manuscript and hand stamp markings on this cover are found in Steve Roth's article, with respect to a similar cover, **Returned From Tibet: No Postal Exchange Convention or Available Agent**, The Prexie Era Newsletter, Summer 2003 [Issue No.23], pp. 2-4. This is the third such cover I have recorded. The other was described in **Cover From United States Fails to Reach Tibet**, Chambers Stamp Journal, June 30, 1941, p.1.

Free Franking in World War II: Pertinent Dates

Compiled by
Steven M. Roth

A Subscriber recently asked me if could point him toward the relevant dates for free franking of civilian mail during WW II. I did, and I thought the dates might be useful to others so here they are:

1. March 27, 1942 [Public Law 507, 77th Congress]. Congress passes law granting free franking to “any domestic letter matter admissible to the mails as ordinary mail matter” for all active duty members of armed forces wherever they are located.”
2. April 1, 1942 [Postal Bulletin 18418, April 1, 1942]. Free franking regulations addressed in the Postal Bulletin. Privilege extended to cover postal cards.
3. July 10, 1942. Regulations issued to clarify previous Regulation. Special delivery qualified if the special delivery fee paid. Registered mail, COD mail and insured mail could not be free franked. Philatelic mail [e.g., FDCs] could not be free franked.
4. July 1, 1943. [Postal Bulletin 18635, August 18, 1943] Privilege extended to WACs.
5. April 1, 1944. Free dispatch by airmail of absentee ballots.
6. December 31, 1945. Original date set for expiration of free franking privilege. Privilege extended.
7. December 31, 1947. Privilege ends.

PAN AM's Private Label Explaining Delay

From time-to-time I have shown WW II Post Office and Office of Censorship labels in this Newsletter when I thought the labels would interest our Subscribers. Now, I have a private label that caught my attention. Pan American Airways issued this label to explain the delay in processing and returning First Flight covers relating to War delays over New Zealand.

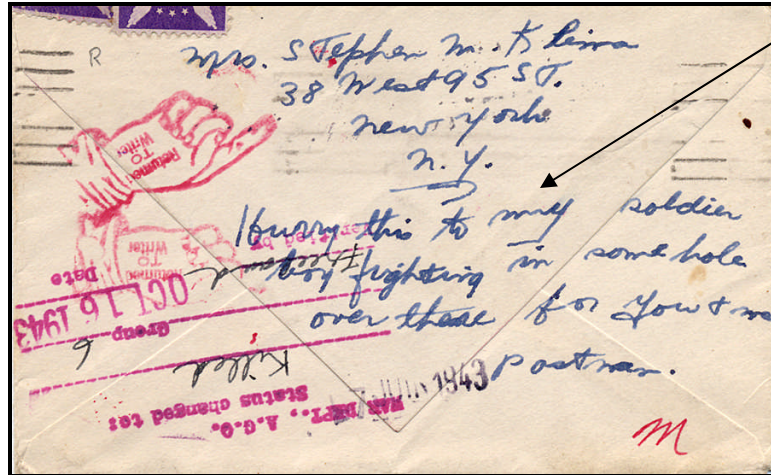


A Pair of Heart-Breaking Covers

by

Steven M. Roth

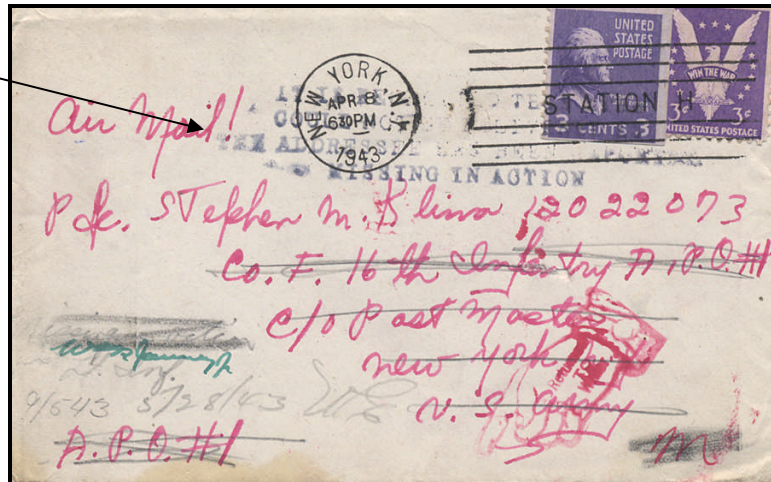
In February 1943, Mrs. Stephen M. Klima wrote to Pfc. Stephen M. Klima who was off somewhere fighting in WW II. Mrs. Klima scribbled the following note on the back of the cover: “Hurry this to my soldier boy fighting in some hole over there for you & me, Postman.”



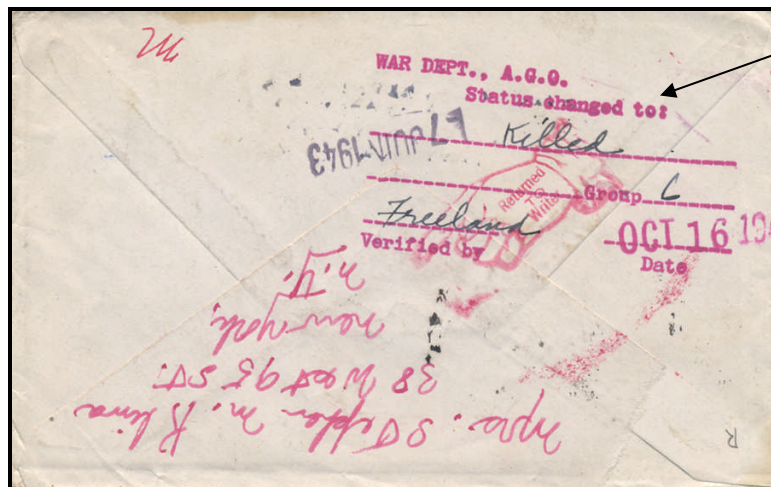
The letter was held and was marked with the notation on it that it could not be delivered to the soldier because he was missing in action.



In the meantime, not yet having received back this letter, Mrs. Klima wrote to the soldier again in April 1943. This letter, too, was marked that the soldier was missing in action.



Then, in October 1943, the reasons for non-delivery were revised and entered onto both letters. The letters were returned to Mrs. Klima. Her soldier boy had been killed in action.



This Issue Late and Content is Sparse

This Issue of the Newsletter is late being published. This is the first time since I became Editor with Issue No. 20. This Issue also is very heavy on pieces relating to WW II. In both cases, this is because I did not have enough material from Subscribers to fill a full Issue.

The same generous people keep writing for the Newsletter, over and over again. A few other people contribute occasionally. That lack of participation from other Subscribers won't do if we are to keep this Newsletter going.

I need articles, notices, etc., for the next Issue. I cannot publish until I have enough material to fill it with. Please help us out. Thanks.

Winter 2007



Whole No.37

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer

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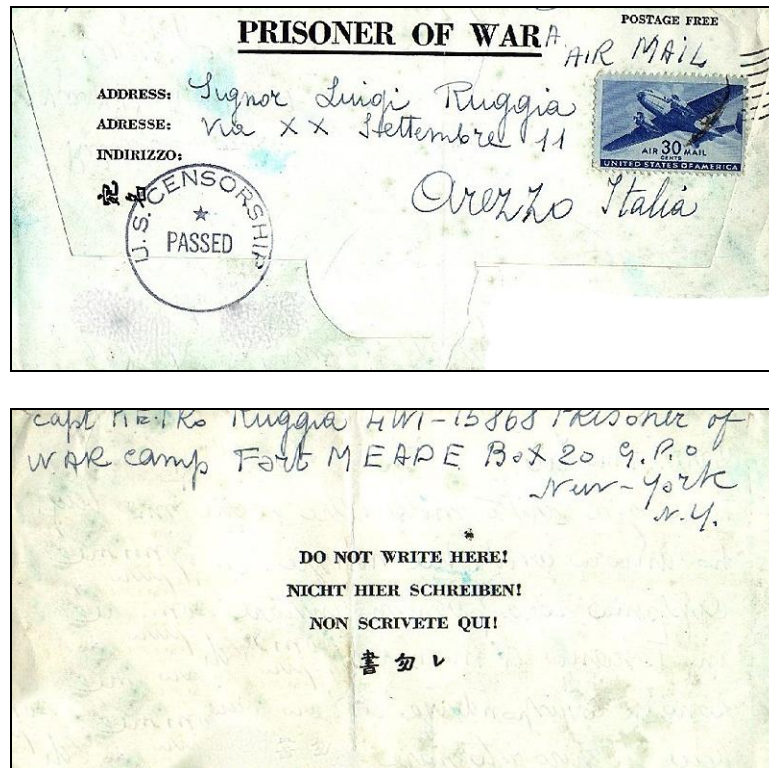
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POW Mail from the United States

by

Steve B. Davis

During World War II the United States housed over 400,000 Axis prisoners of war. This cover from my collection is an example of a “Prisoner of War” (POW) envelope as mandated by the “Geneva Convention” (Convention).



It is mail from an Italian POW Captain Ruggia addressed to Luigia Ruggia, presumably a relative, in Orezzo, Italy. Orezzo is a town located just northeast of Milan close to the Italian Alps. Unfortunately, I have not had the message translated yet, but it should make interesting reading. It is handwritten and difficult to decipher, and of course, written in Italian.

Mail from prisoners was and still is considered essential under the requirements of the Convention. The country holding the prisoners is required to allow mailing privileges and must use the envelope provided. Mail is to be transported “Free”. This can be seen from the marking on the cover just above the stamp. In this case, the envelope has had the valid airmail rate of 30c per ½ oz. to Europe affixed to provide for airmail service, otherwise the mail would have been transported free via surface mail taking much longer to be delivered. Similar to the use of an aerogram, the sender wrote the message inside and then folded the form to create the envelope for mailing. The reverse of the cover shows that the prisoner was being held at Fort Meade, Maryland and that return mail was to be directed to a post office box number in New York.

Fort Meade housed a number of German and Italian prisoners of war starting in September 1943, and until 1946 when all of them were repatriated back to their home countries. A large number of the prisoners did not want to return to their home countries, but were returned because the Convention required it.

Some prisoners died in captivity, primarily of natural causes; however, one German prisoner, Werner Henke, was shot while trying to escape from nearby Fort Hunt, Virginia, on June 15, 1944. Henke was one of the greatest German U-boat commanders. He is buried in the cemetery at Fort Meade. Captain Ruggia is not listed as being buried at Fort Meade, so it is likely he returned to Italy after the war.

Selected References

“Geneva Conventions: Section V. Relations of Prisoners of War With the Exterior”. Society of Professional Journalists webpage <www.globalissuesgroup.com/geneva/convention3.html>

Fort Meade Museum website: <www.ftmeade.army.mil/Museum>

Top U-boat Aces: <http://uboat.net/men/henke.htm>

MapQuest: www.mapquest.com

Author's Note:

This article was originally published in the American Air Mail Society's *Airpost Journal*, March 2006 Issue, Vol.77, No.3.

A Prexie Crash Cover

by

Louis Fiset

Illustrated here is a Prexie airmail cover postmarked February 17, 1943 at Hingham, Massachusetts, addressed to England, and censored at New York (6657). It appears to have survived a near drowning as noted by the purple indicator located beneath the stamps, “DAMAGED BY SEA WATER.”



Notes taken from Peter Flynn's new book on trans-Atlantic mail censored at Bermuda¹ provide the following story: On February 21, 1943, the Pan American World Airways flying boat *Yankee Clipper* departed New York for Lisbon, via Bermuda. This Boeing-314 clipper crash-landed in the Tagus River, at Lisbon, on February 22nd with 93 bags of mail salvaged in water soaked condition. Bermuda Customs made the following log entry: "Lost at Lisbon Feb 22, 43."

A manuscript notation on the cover indicates the letter was received March 10, 1943. One might expect to find a Bermuda censor tape affixed. However, by this time Bermuda censors ignored U.S.-censored

¹ Peter A. Flynn, *Intercepted in Bermuda: The Censorship of Transatlantic Mail during the Second World War* (Collectors Club of Chicago, 2006).

mail destined for England, thereby lessening the work burden at the horse latitudes island. Of further note, this piece of mail, having made the February 21st flight, demonstrates only a brief delay occurred at the New York censor station.

In an appendix Flynn documents nearly 5,000 eastbound and westbound flights calling at Darrell's Island, Bermuda from May 1939 through December 1945. The *Yankee Clipper*, one of twelve B-314/314A flying boats operating through Bermuda, represents the only loss during the war. As a result opportunities to collect crash covers on these trans-Atlantic routes remains small. Even so, with a 100 percent survival rate of the mail on board the *Yankee Clipper* with some diligent searching other examples of war era trans-Atlantic crash covers should be available.

A Redirected Civilian Conservation Corps Cover to Gibraltar

by

Richard W. Helbock

President Roosevelt's highly successful Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) put hundreds of thousands of unemployed young men to work reclaiming forests and improving environmental infrastructure beginning in 1933. The program reached its peak in 1936 when there were some 600,000 men enrolled and stationed at over 2,600 camps scattered across the country. Enrollments began to decline by 1939 as the economy kicked into higher gear due to production increases associated with pre-war military spending. Since the Presidential issue debuted in 1938, their use on CCC mail is less common than that of 4th Bureau denominations. Never-the-less, examples can be found, and the 5¢ Monroe depicted here paying the 1st class surface rate to Gibraltar represents an interesting case in point.



The sender was a young man serving in Company 4726 at the Chamberlain, South Dakota, CCC Camp.

He was writing to a Mr. Madden, who had authored an article that the sender had recently read, with a request to exchange stamps. The letter is still with the cover and is an interesting brief introduction to the writer and his collecting interests. He says regarding the Prexies: “Our new “Presidential Series” is becoming pretty well circulated and I should be able to have some good copies for you by the time I can expect a letter from you. The set is from ½ cent to 5 dollars. Of course the \$5.00 stamps, like your 1 Pound stamps, are pretty hard to obtain in used condition.”

Unfortunately, the address proved insufficient to carry the letter to its intended recipient, and after a long sea voyage, it received a Gibraltar receiving mark of September 15th before being redirected to the Army Post Office. Censorship is evidenced by a paper Gibraltar Postal Censor tape along the right edge. A Field Post Office handstamp—with only partially distinguishable number—dated September 30th appears on the reverse and several purple auxiliary marks argue that delivery was attempted before it was marked “Return to Sender” and dispatched from Gibraltar. A New York machine cancel dated November 2nd documents the cover’s return to the U.S.

Heavy Package, Heavy Postage

by

Leonard Piszkiwicz

This wrapper is from a package sent by airmail from the Chicago Tribune to San Francisco. It is postmarked July 12, 1945. The postage was paid by the application of 28 copies of the 50¢ Prexie issue stamp plus one 8¢ stamp. Total postage for the package was \$14.08. This paid for 176 airmail rates of 8¢/oz for exactly 83 lbs. All stamps show the “CT” perfin.



The AIR MAIL four-bar is the latest reported use of this type of four-bar postmark recorded thus far from Chicago².



² Editor's Note: see Piszkiwicz, *Chicago Postal Markings and Postal History* (Cary, IL 2006) p.207.

Status of Study Group's Survey of \$2.00 & \$5.00 Prexie Covers

by

Steven M. Roth

The database I have created currently holds 40 records contributed by 11 subscribers. Of these records, 27 indicate covers with the \$2.00 Prexie, 10 covers with the \$5.00 Prexie, and 3 additional covers (not included in the numbers just given) reflect covers having at least one \$2.00 and at least one \$5.00 Prexie on the same cover.

We will distribute copies of the database once we are satisfied we have captured the known \$2.00 and \$5.00 covers. If you have not yet contributed covers in your holdings, please do so. For instructions on how to submit your information, see Prexie Era Newsletter, Whole No. 36, p.3.

The Various "Routes" of the Horseshoe Route

By

Steven M. Roth

In several short articles or notes that have appeared in the Prexie Era Newsletter in the past, I have referred to the Reverse Horseshoe Route sometimes used by people in the United States after Italy entered the Second World War on June 10, 1940, to send mail to Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East in lieu of using the more costly, but quicker, trans-Pacific Route.³

When I examine a cover going abroad from the United States during the relevant period, I have found it useful to determine if any routing markings on the cover suggest that the letter traveled via the Reverse Horseshoe Route. To aid me in making this determination, I have cobbled together a flow chart showing the changing ports of which the Horseshoe Route consisted from time-to-time to reflect the vicissitudes of the War.

I present the flow chart I use below. It is a work-in-progress, so I would appreciate knowing any corrections or additions that should be made to it. I will publish all changes in the Prexie Era Newsletter.

Phase I [June 19, 1940 → June 27, 1940]

England to Durban, South Africa by sea → Durban → Portuguese East Africa → Tanganyika, Kenya → Mombasa, Uganda → Khartoum, Sudan → Cairo, Egypt → Palestine → Syria → Baghdad, Iraq → Basra, Iraq → Persian Gulf to India → Burma → Siam (Thailand) → Penang → Singapore → Netherlands East Indies → Darwin, Australia → Sydney, Australia.

Phase II [June 28, 1940 → October 1940]

With the Fall of France on June 22, 1940, GB no longer could fly over French territory in Africa. As of June 28, this eliminated much of the Sahara Desert between Palestine and Syria. It also eliminated Syria.

England to Durban, South Africa by sea → Durban → Portuguese East Africa → Tanganyika, Kenya → Mombasa, Uganda → west now to Leopoldville → Lagos → east to Khartoum → Cairo, Egypt → Tiberius → Basra → Karachi, India → Burma → Siam (Thailand) → Penang → Singapore → Netherlands East Indies → Darwin, Australia → Sydney, Australia.

Phase III [October 1940 → February 1942]

³ See, Prexie Era Newsletter Whole Nos. 26, 27, 33, 35, and 36

England → Lagos by air → Belgian Congo → Cairo → Tiberius → Basra → Karachi, India → Burma → Siam (Thailand) → Penang → Singapore → Netherlands East Indies → Darwin, Australia → Sydney, Australia.

Route interrupted in May 1941 when rebellion erupted in Iraq.

Japan enters war on December 7, 1941.

February – March 1942: Flights stopped along route except for Durban → Calcutta.

Phase IV [March 3, 1942 → April, 1942]

January 1942: Link broken to Dutch East Indies in both directions. This meant that the route from India to DEI was no longer flown (i.e., DEI → Singapore → Penang → Siam → India; also, true in opposite direction)

West Link of Route: England to Durban, South Africa by sea → Durban → Portuguese East Africa → Tanganyika, Kenya → Mombasa, Uganda → west now to Leopoldville → Lagos → east to Khartoum → Cairo, Egypt → Tiberius → Basra → Karachi, India → Calcutta, India

East Link of Route: Not operating from Australia.

To replace this lost link, Britain created another route 中国 the “HUMP”: England → Lagos by air → Belgian Congo → Cairo → Tiberius → Basra → Karachi, India → over the “HUMP” → Unoccupied China

Phase V [June 18, 1943 - end of War]

Broken link re-established from Perth, Australia → Ceylon → Karachi, India.

3¢ Prexies Paying an Australian Air-Sea Postage Rate

by

Richard W. Helbock

Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor, the Philippines and Southeast Asia brought Pan-American Airways trans-Pacific Clipper service to an abrupt end, and thus cut the last airmail link connecting Australia to Europe and North America. Australia Post introduced a combine sea-air postage rate of one shilling six pence (1/6) that provided sea transport to the U.S. and air service beyond the port of entry to its destination for a letter up to one-half ounce.

The 208th Coast Artillery Regiment—a Connecticut National Guard outfit—arrived in Brisbane March 9, 1942, on board USAT *Matsonia*. These men, along with their sister regiment—the 197th Coast Artillery Regiment (New Hampshire National Guard)—were among the first major U.S. Army units to arrive in Australia. The 208th was quickly loaded on a train and transported some 1,200 miles north to Townsville. They arrived in Townsville March 18th and became the first major American Army unit to be stationed in the city. Townsville was the largest urban center in northern Queensland and eventually became home to an important air installation guarding the northern approaches to Australia.

The cover shown below is believed to have been mailed by a member of the 208th Coast Artillery, and possibly written on the long train trip from Brisbane to Townsville. There is no return address to identify the sender or his unit.

The postmark is dated March 17, 1942, and reads “A.P.O. 923.” This APO was established March 16th in Brisbane according to the records. The oval handstamp censor is known only on mail from the Brisbane area in March and April 1942.

Most interesting from a Prexie collector's perspective, however, is the use of a booklet pane of six 3¢ Jeffersons with a pair of 3¢ Defense to makeup twenty-four cents postage. Now 24-cents represents four times the concession air rate of 6¢ per half ounce, and thus pays air postage for a piece weighing between 1½ and 2 ounces. Judging by the size and condition of the envelope, it seems rather unlikely that it ever contained that much weight.



In March 1942 there was literally no way of sending an airmail letter from Australia to the United States. It would be another six months before the Naval Air Transport Service (NATS) began federalized service of the Pan-Am Clippers to Brisbane via Honolulu and the islands of the South Pacific. The best that could be hoped for in the way of expeditious service was transport by ship from one of the Australia ports and air onward from Los Angeles or San Francisco. That's where the Australian rate of 1/6 per half ounce applied, and it is this writer's opinion that the 24 cents applied to this cover was an effort to pay that 1/6 rate in U. S. postage stamps.

I can almost hear the skeptics saying, Where is your evidence? What was the prevailing exchange rate?

According to the Economic History Services website [<http://eh.net/hmit/exchangerates/exchange.answer.php>]

“in the year 1942, it took 0.31 Australian pound to buy one U.S. dollar.” In other words, 24 US cents would be almost exactly equivalent to 18 Australian pence, or one shilling six pence. The 24 cents used by the sender was equivalent to the required Australian postage rate, but was that his intent?



Immediately above is a second cover from the same sender to the same addressee. In this case the sender has used a 1/6 Australian air mail stamp to frank his “By sea & air to the U.S.A.” cover to Chicago. The same stationery has been used and, once again, the cover shows no evidence of being stuffed with a multiple page letter. The postmark is dated March 23, 1942, and identifies the APO as number 922. APO 922 opened in Townsville March 18th according to official records.

One last piece of evidence connects both of these covers with the 208th Coast Artillery. On the reverse of this cover is a boxed oval censor handstamp impression with number 16007. The author has another cover in his collection bearing the same censor number. It is postmarked April 13, 1942, and has a return address of a captain assigned to 2nd Battalion Headquarters, 208th C. A. (AA) Regiment.

The author has no knowledge of either U.S. Army or Australian Post Office regulations that would have authorized American troops to use U. S. postage to pay Australian postal rates. As in the United Kingdom, U.S. forces were apparently authorized to use Australian postage to frank their mail sent through APOs to the United States for a few months in early 1942, but this is the only example seen by this writer of an effort to use US postage of equivalent value to pay an Australian postage rate.

The writer would be delighted to hear from other Prexie buffs concerning his theory. Contact helbock@la-posta.com.

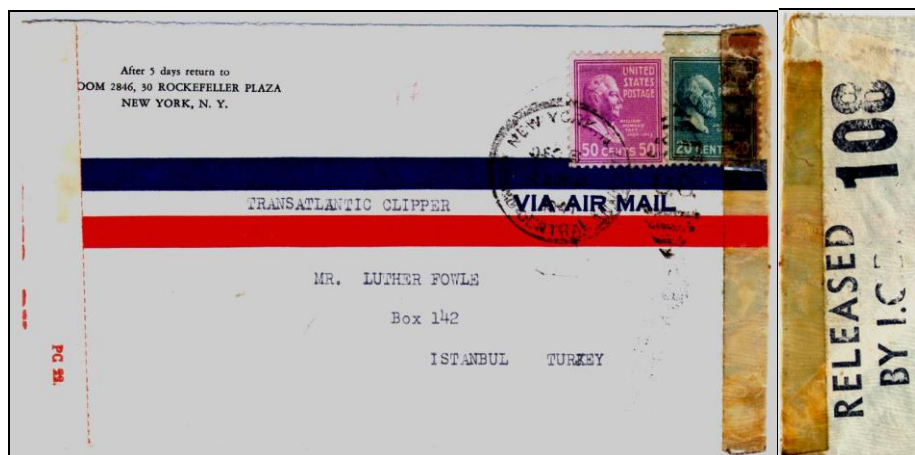
Trans-Atlantic Route via Hawaii

by

Louis Fiset

The cover illustrated in this article comes from the extensive Luther Fowle correspondence recently appearing on Ebay. A careful study of this correspondence will ultimately shed new light on how mail from the United States reached Turkey in the weeks surrounding entry of the United States into World War II.

This cover appears to be a “Wrong way Corrigan.” Postmarked at New York, December 3, 1941, the directive indicates routing via trans-Atlantic clipper, likely FAM 18 (FAM 22 service had not yet begun). Yet the backside of the cover clearly indicates a Honolulu censor marking suggesting an intended FAM 14/19 routing. The misrouting of this cover makes for an interesting piece of postal history, for the following reason.



With the December 3rd postmark and no United States censorship to delay its transmission, the letter likely reached the west coast in time for the departure of the *Anzac Clipper* from San Francisco on December 5th or 6th.

The air boat took off for Honolulu on the 5th, but developed engine trouble and had to turn back. Departing again on the 6th, she was on the approach to Honolulu when Japanese naval forces attacked Pearl Harbor. The clipper diverted to a river landing at Hilo, there off-loading the mail and her 32 passengers.

Mail from the *Anzac Clipper* was taken to Honolulu where it remained in bags until censorship began sometime after December 12th. The first mail leaving the islands flew out on December 19th.

Unfortunately, no back stamps exist to document how the letter ultimately reached Turkey, leaving us to speculate on its ultimate routing. Did the letter travel from Honolulu via ship to Australia and follow the Reverse Horseshoe air route? Or was the letter returned to the mainland for dispatch from the east coast where it originated? If the latter, did it go on a FAM 18 flight to Lisbon? FAM 22 remains another possibility since that route, having started upon the United States entry into the war, likely carried civilian mail on its first six eastbound flights, through February 14, 1942.

Because this letter was found among the vast correspondence of the addressee, we know of its ultimate delivery via Palestine where it received British censorship. But can anyone offer with any certainty the routing between Honolulu and Istanbul?

Mystery Cover

by

Robert Hohertz



This cover was mailed September 12, 1941. The address was removed – presumably for military security. As a guess, Alexandria, Egypt. Handstamps on front include “Received from H.M. Ships,” “Via Air Mail” and “G... (Foreign Se... New York N.Y.)”

Stamp missing? (Proper rate through Singapore would have been seventy cents.) But where was it? Various cancels and handstamps overlap most of the logical places. Probably upper right, but before the “Received From H.M. Ships” marking.

Reverse has a postmark in Arabic and English, the English name ending in “andria.” (Alexandria?) Also, reverse images of an Egyptian (?) censor marking. Front has part of a cancel reading “consta...” (Constantinople?) January 23, 1942 Navy cancel on back.

Is there any way to tell where and how this traveled?

Spring/Summer 2007



Whole No.38

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer

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Steve Roth Steps Down as Editor/Publisher

After five years as editor/publisher of *The Prexie Era Newsletter* Steve Roth is stepping down because of recent and ongoing illnesses among members of his family. Steve regrets this move having enjoyed both the task of editing the newsletter and the camaraderie with contributors, subscribers, and fellow collectors interested in an exciting period of U.S. postal history.

Your acting editor first became aware of Roth with publication of his 1991 La Posta monograph, *The Censorship of International Civilian Mail During World War II*. Over the years he demonstrated meticulous attention to evidence presented on covers and the conclusions to be drawn from his empirical studies. He has shown these skills in recent issues of the newsletter with his series on emergency airmail routes during World War II.

I will miss Steve's presence as editor and contributor, a sentiment most of us share. He promises to continue as a subscriber. Hopefully, as his personal life levels off, he will return as a contributor and consultant.

Prexie Era Newsletter Seeks New Editor

With Steve Roth's departure Jeff Shapiro, president of the 1938 Presidential Era Study Group, has begun the search for a new editor or co-editors to carry on publication of the Newsletter. Individuals considering applying for the position should possess a general knowledge of U.S. postal history from 1938-1954, enjoy the writing process, and be outgoing in soliciting contributions from subscribers. He or she should be computer literate, including e-mail, and comfortable using Microsoft Word or compatible software.

The new editor(s) must be willing to make a two-year commitment beginning with the Winter 2008 issue (Whole No. 40). For more information please contact Shapiro at:

coverlover@gmail.com

Jeff Shapiro
P.O. Box 3211
Fayville, MA 01745

A Note from Your Acting Editor

At Jeff Shapiro's request I have agreed to edit/publish the next two issues of the Newsletter. The next issue is scheduled to appear in November, enabling us to publish three times in 2007. Pending an adequate number of submissions, the Newsletter should appear four times a year for the foreseeable future, in February, May, August, and November. Contributors have responded quickly to my solicitation for articles, which has already produced material to begin the Fall issue.

With this issue we begin a series dedicated to showing covers with Prexie multiple frankings – that is, bearing multiple stamps of the same value to make up the correct rate. Please send scans or color photocopies showing usages with interesting rates, routes, destinations, and auxiliary markings. We will publish one in each issue. Also appearing here is the first of an ongoing series of articles on Prexie EFOs, authored by Francis Ferguson. Your response is welcome.

The Prexie era extends from 1938 to 1954 and beyond. This period encompasses stamp issues besides the Prexies, including the Famous Americans, Defense Issue, Victory stamp, Flags of the Overrun Countries, the Transport Airmail Issue, and the Skymasters. I encourage subscribers to submit articles illustrating covers franked with any of these issues. For subscribers articulate when talking philately, but head for the exits when asked to write about it, send illustrations accompanied by several talking points on why your cover deserves to be seen in print. I'll help create the story.

Contributors should submit articles in Word compatible format and illustrations as tif files (jpg, if you must) at 300 dpi resolution. High quality color photocopies provide a reasonable alternative.

Finally, I encourage subscribers currently receiving the Newsletter by mail to switch over to the electronic format. Starting with the first issue in 2008 the mail version will be in black and white. The electronic version will remain in full color and reach you sooner than the snail mail version. It also eliminates the cost of postage. Please provide Jeff Shapiro with your email address.

--- Louis Fiset

Collecting Prexie Multiple Franking Covers



The multiple franking cover illustrated above shows five 6-cent sheet stamps paying the correct 30-cent, one-ounce airmail rate from the U.S. mainland to Canton Island, whose main residents were employees of Pan American World Airways. PanAm arrived in May 1939 to build facilities for a planned New Zealand flying boat service that began on July 12, 1940. Planes on the FAM-14 and FAM-19 routes refueled in the island's lagoon. A 6,000 foot landing strip built during World War II enabled Canton Island to become a stopover point for Navy Air Transport Service flights to Australia and New Zealand. It also served as a staging point for attacks on the Japanese-held Gilbert Islands.

A Brazilian Flyer

by

Jeff Shapiro

German U Boats sank 32 Brazilian merchant ships between 1940 and mid-1942, leading Brazil to declare war against Germany and Italy in August 1942. The only Latin American country to send troops to Europe (25,000 soldiers), Brazil also sent its First Flyer Group to fight Axis forces in Italy.

Early in the war when the northeastern coast of Brazil became vulnerable to invasion by the Axis, the U.S. agreed to train Brazilian pilots to help defend the country. The censored cover illustrated here, dated January 4, 1945, was posted by a Brazilian pilot in training with the 2666th Unit of the US Army Air Force's Training Detachment at Garner Field, in Uvalde, Texas.



Named in honor of John Nance Garner, a former resident of Uvalde county and two-term Vice President in the Franklin Roosevelt administration, the facility employed 120 instructors and a supporting staff exceeding 200. Pilots representing Allied countries from all over the world, including Mexico, Argentina, China and the Netherlands, trained there.

The writer used two 20-cent Prexies to pay the 40-cent per half-ounce airmail rate to his family in São Paulo, Brazil. This rate was in effect from December 1937 through March 1945, at which time the rate dropped to 20 cents. The letter received civil censorship at the San Antonio field station. The cover's reverse side bears a January 17, 1945 São Paulo receiving mark.

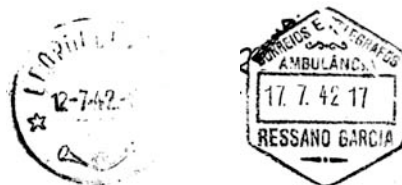
Such mail is scarce, this being the only cover to have surfaced after several years of searching.

MV *Gripsholm* Diplomatic Exchange Mail Goes Via FAM-22

by

Louis Fiset

The date FAM-22 route planes began routinely carrying civilian mail following its inauguration on December 6, 1941 remains unresolved. However, by July 1, 1942, when the cover illustrated below was postmarked, FAM-22 had been carrying such mail for some time.



The cover contained a letter intended for a missionary couple from China repatriating to the U.S. on the first diplomatic exchange between Japan and the U.S. during World War II. Through negotiations between the State Department and the Japanese Foreign Ministry, agreement had been reached for the two countries to exchange their diplomatic corps and as many non-officials as could be carried to the exchange site. The *Gripsholm* transported 1,500 repatriating Japanese nationals and their families to Lourenço Marques, Moçambique and returned with 1,500 westerners formerly held in Japanese controlled territory.

The exchange took place during July 22-26, 1942. Because of earlier publicity correspondents could write letters that would be waiting for the repatriates' arrival. The illustrated cover is a nice example of this type of mail. The transmit markings and censor resealing tape help tell the routing.

The letter, postmarked July 1, 1942 and properly franked with 70 cents postage paying the half-ounce airmail rate to Moçambique, was censored at the Miami censor station (#1913) soon thereafter. The letter reached Leopoldville, in the Belgian Congo, on July 12th. From there it was flown by Belgium's SABENA airline to Johannesburg where it was off loaded and transferred

onto an east bound train. It reached Ressano Garcia, a border crossing on the Moçambique side, where a railway post office (*Ambulancia*) receiving mark was applied on July 17th. The letter then continued its last 50 miles by rail to Lourenço Marques, arriving in plenty of time to meet the Japanese exchange ship, SS *Conte Verde*, that docked on July 22nd after transporting the missionaries from Shanghai.

Receiving letters such as this from home upon their arrival must have provided great emotional nourishment for the repatriates, many having had no communication from the time of their internment after December 7, 1941. Yet three weeks was not sufficient for some mail to reach Lourenço Marques before *Gripsholm's* departure on July 28th.



The second cover shown here, from Steve Roth's collection, illustrates a letter postmarked two days earlier, on June 29, 1942. It is addressed to the repatriating general manager of the Standard Oil Company of New York in China, a travel companion of the missionary couple arriving on the *Conte Verde* from Shanghai. It, however, failed to arrive on time and was returned to the writer the following December, months after the addressee had returned to the U.S. In this case the letter was censored at Port-of Spain, Trinidad and had to be loaded onto another FAM-22 flight, which did not receive a Leopoldville back stamp until September 2nd. The letter was returned to the U.S. via Capetown by land and sea routes where the cover received a transit marking dated September 23rd.

A missed flight, an extra day on the censor's table, a late arriving rail connection, all potential delays, point to the fragility of timely international mail connections during World War II.

Tales from the Other Side: Prexie EFOs - Part 1

by

Francis Ferguson



Not everyone looks for postal history. My interest in Prexie material is any stamp revealing an error, freak or oddity (EFO). If it happens to be on cover, that is okay with me. The wide variety of mostly affordable EFOs that abound in the vast quantity of 260.1 billion Prexie stamps produced yields a fertile collecting field. With the exception of a few items costing in the \$1,000 to \$4,000 range, large sums of money are not needed to acquire most of these EFOs.

Sooner or later everything and anything can be found. If one has interest in finishing and production errors, cutting and related folding/cutting errors abound. Cutting problems yield plate number in places they should not appear on coils and booklet panes. I thrill at matching two coils to create a full plate number. Perforation errors run the gamete in both horizontal and vertical directions, yielding some truly odd looking creations. While few truly imperforate varieties exist with the Series, the wide variety of war-perf creations make for entertaining hunting. Gutter pairs, like the one illustrated above, and gutter snipes are visually striking and sit high on my list of favorite EFOs. Adding another element to the potential collecting realm, forgeries do exist of the 3-cent value. The wrong paper used in the production process of the \$1 issue produced the USIR watermark variety.

My personal favorites are inking issues; mis-registered inks from the three multi-color subjects in the series, and the bizarre and strange under/over inked varieties on the other 29 face different subjects, such as the one in the illustration. Double/single paper varieties with or without splicing tape, slime paper production, uneven paper shrinkage, inverted plate numbers, rejection marks, and much more can be found in the Prexie EFO Hall of Fame.

I will be showing and discussing Prexie EFO material in the Newsletter on a regular basis. Any comments, illustrations, or suggestions along the way will be greatly appreciated. I can be reached by email at ferg@FloridaStampShows.com

Mixed Foreign Franked Usages Of The Transport Airmail Series - Part 1

by

Joseph Bock

The Transport Airmail Series, issued during the early period of the Presidential (Prexie) Series, replaced several older U.S. airmail stamps from the 1930's, including the Clippers, the 6-cent Eagle, and the 30-cent Winged Globe. The Transport covers illustrated here, with mixed foreign franking, appear in the order of their issue date, which for the first six stamps was June 26, 1941 through October 29, 1941. A 6-cent booklet pane appeared in 1943, with an 8-cent value following in 1944 when the domestic airmail rate increased to 8 cents per ounce.

Double 6 cents per half-ounce -- special military rate



U.S. Military Postal Service airmail was made available to U. S. Allies on a space available basis. Sent by a Canadian attached to British Forces. Posted from U.S. APO 655, London, England to Canada, July 1944. Double military rate airmail. Great Britain required British postage on APO mail sent locally to a United Kingdom address. Lt. Seltzer apparently thought this same rule also applied to Canada. Thus the letter was returned to sender for U.S. postage for trans-Atlantic airmail.

From Iceland, redirected to Mexico, September 1943



Cover sent by diplomatic pouch from the U.S. embassy in Reykjavik. Local (Icelandic) postage paying the international letter rate was required by UPU regulations for pouch mail. Put into the U.S. mail at Washington D. C. by ordinary mail to Plainfield, New Jersey, then forwarded to Mexico. A Transport stamp was added to pay the correct 10-cent per half-ounce airmail rate to Mexico. Censored at New York en route to Mexico.

Paquebot usage from the Canal Zone



Business correspondence posted at sea franked with 23 cents U.S. postage. Two possibilities may explain the mixed franking on this June 20, 1946 cover. First, the Balboa post office may have discovered the letter short paid, and 7 cents Canal Zone postage was added to correctly pay triple the 10 cents per half-ounce airmail rate. Second, per Dickson Preston, mixed foreign franking paquebot mail was permitted in the Canal Zone on ships flying the U.S. flag. The writer may have used stamps on hand from the two postal jurisdictions to make up the triple weight rate.

Hawaii to Chile, forwarded to the U.S.



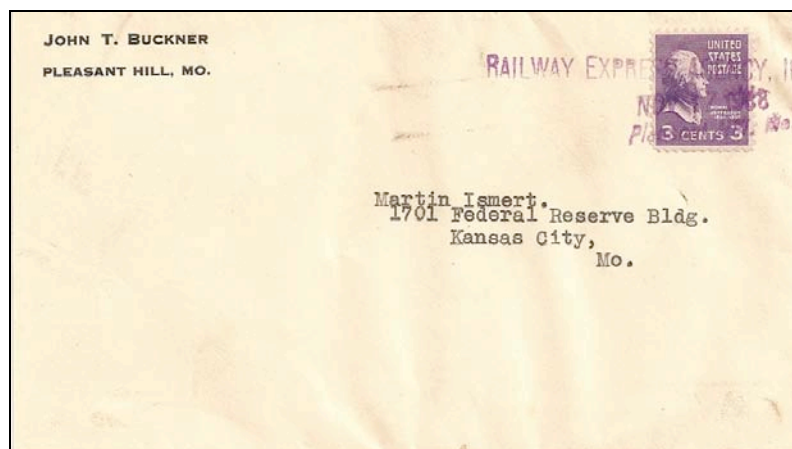
Combination rate of 20 cents per half-ounce airmail rate from Honolulu to the U.S., plus 40 cents per half-ounce from the U.S. to Santiago, January 1943. Forwarded by airmail to California with Chilean airmail stamps added. Censored outbound at Honolulu and inbound at Miami.

Outside of the Mail Prexie Era Usages

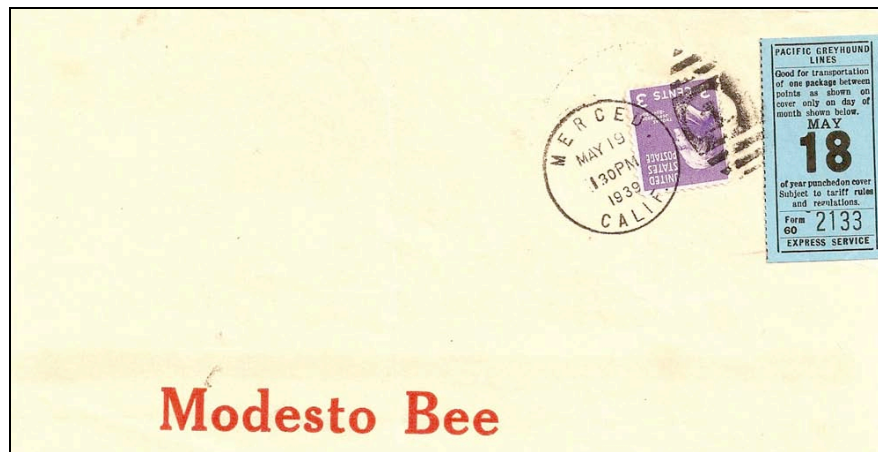
by

Robert Schlesinger

Interesting usages of Prexie Era postage stamps occur outside of the mail, two of which are shown here. The first is a cover affixed to a package containing postal history covers sent by a Bureau Issues Association member via the Railway Express Agency on November 17, 1938. The Postal Bulletin of August 24, 1938 (PB #17510) noted that first class mail sent via other means, such as Railway Express, had to be prepaid by postage and cancelled in ink, as was done in this case. The 3 cents may have paid the first class one-ounce letter rate, while the package itself may have been assessed a freight charge by weight, with a coupon, manuscript, or other indication on the wrapper, now lost.



The second cover shows a letter sent from Merced, California to Modesto, via Pacific Greyhound Lines service, covering a distance of approximately 30 miles. A Greyhound express label was applied on May 18, 1939, and the letter postmarked May 19th. Likely, the letter reached the bus depot after the scheduled departure, thus wasting the value of the MAY 18 Pacific Greyhound Lines coupon. The sender then dropped his correspondence in the mail or went to the post office: hence the May 19th date and the duplex cancel.



Fall 2007



Whole No.39

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer

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2008 Subscriptions Payable Now

With this issue your subscription to *The Prexie Era* has expired. (Subscribers who mailed dues earlier in the year can disregard this notice.) Please renew your subscription for 2008 with a check made out to Jeff Shapiro, the Prexie-Era Study Group Coordinator. Send \$5 if you want an electronic copy of the Newsletter or \$10 for delivery by "snail-mail". Address any questions to Jeff directly:

Jeff Shapiro
P.O. Box 3211
Fayville, MA 01745-0211
dirtyoldcovers@aol.com

If your subscription is not current by the time the next issue comes out this will be the last one you will receive.

Two volunteers have stepped forward to carry on as editor/publisher of the Newsletter. Jeff will be making his selection soon. Both have expressed their willingness to make a minimum two-year commitment, beginning with No. 40, scheduled to appear in February 2008. In the meantime, please continue to send submissions to your acting editor. I am in need of material.

* * * *

Mixed Foreign Franked Usages Of The Transport Airmail Series - Part II

by

Joseph Bock

The 30-cent and 50-cent values represent the last two Transport stamps in the original 1941 series and were issued on September 25 and October 29, 1941, respectively. Copying the original design, two additional Transports appeared later. The six-cent booklet pane was released in May 1943 for the convenience of military personnel eligible for the special military airmail rate. The eight-cent value appeared in March 1944 when the domestic airmail rate went from six cents per ounce to eight cents.

30-cent per half-ounce trans-Atlantic rate



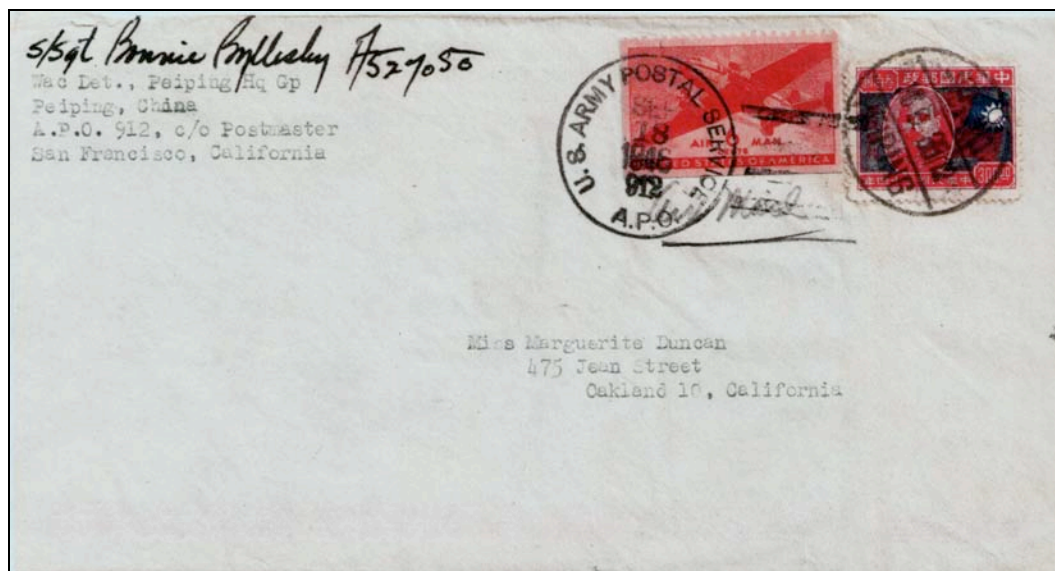
Originally sent to a French Military Chaplain in London. One shilling three pence British stamps were added for forwarding by airmail to Brazzaville, French Congo, thence forwarded within French West Africa to Duala, French Cameroun. Censored at New York and Bermuda.

50-cent usage to China assessed postage due



“Poste restante” (General Delivery) to China, December 1945. The correct 70-cents per half-ounce rate to Asia was correctly paid. However, General Delivery was assessed an 8-cent penalty, paid with a surcharged 8c value Chinese definitive stamp, as postage due stamps did not appear until 1947.

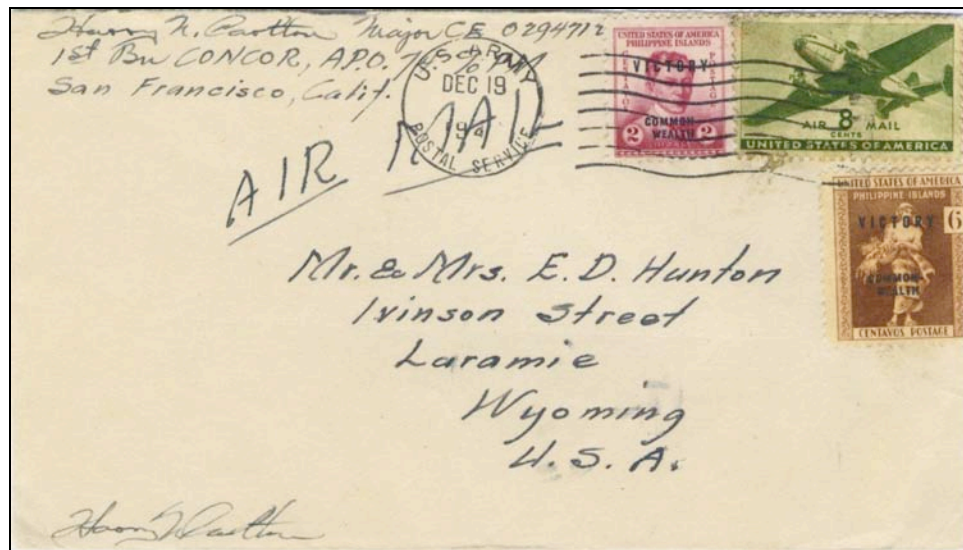
Booklet stamp paying the 6-cents per half-ounce special military airmail rate



From a WAC (Women’s Army Corps) in Peiping (Beijing) China, September 1946. Originally posted PEiping September 12, 1946 with a \$300 value Chinese stamp and postmarked as local

Chinese mail. Peiping is a large city and it may have originated through a civilian post office. Six days later, on September 18th, it received an APO 912 cancel in Peiping. It appears the Transport stamp was added later. The special military airmail rate was still in effect, and likely APO mail provided more efficient and safe service than through the Chinese postal service.

8-cent military airmail from the Philippine Islands



Double the 6-cent per half-ounce special military airmail rate from the Philippines in December 1945. Posted at APO 74 (Clark Field). Eight cents in Philippine postage was affixed, equivalent to 4 cents in U.S. postage. Thus, 12 cents paid in total paying the military airmail rate for a letter weighing between one-half and one ounce.

* * * *

APO Airmail to Foreign Destinations: 5c DC-4 Skymaster, Japan to England

by

Steve B. Davis

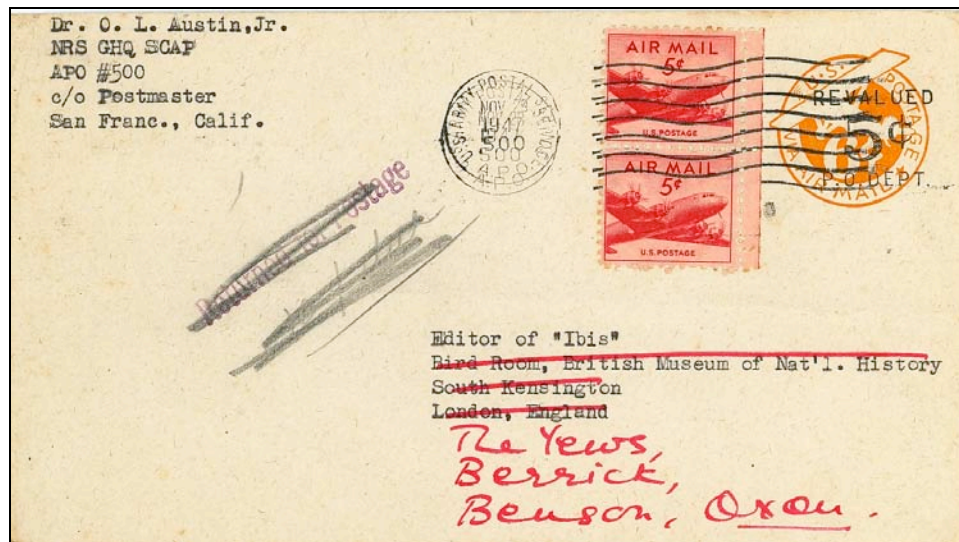
The six cents per half-ounce concession rate for service personnel expired September 30, 1946. Effective the next day the new 5-cent domestic airmail rate was extended to personnel serving overseas provided an APO (Army Post Office) or FPO (Fleet Post Office) was used. The sender paid the same rate that a correspondent living in the United States mainland was assessed.

The cover illustrated, mailed in November 1947 from APO #500 (Tokyo, Japan), was addressed to London. The uniform airmail rate from the United States to Europe became 15 cents per half-ounce on November 1, 1946. In this case the cover traveled across two oceans, from Japan to England, for the European rate.

It appears the sender thought the 5-cent concession rate applied to APO mail to foreign destinations. This was not the case, as uniform airmail rates applied as if the mail originated from the United States proper. As seen, cover was "Returned for Postage". Below this marking in pencil was "10/Due". The additional postage was applied in the form of two 5-cent Skymaster

small format stamps (Scott C33). The correct postage having been affixed, the letter was sent on to England where it was redirected to another British address.

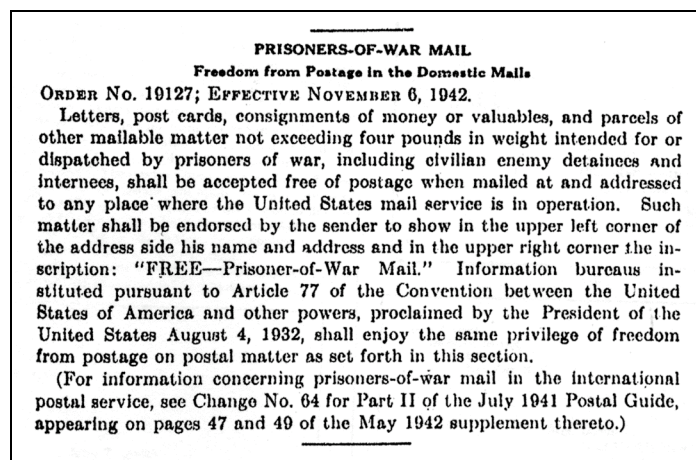
The cover itself is a 6-cent postal stationary envelope revalued to accommodate the new 5-cent domestic rate (Scott UC10). The 5-cent per ounce domestic rate replaced the 8c per ounce rate that had been in place since March 1944. The lower rate remained in effect until January 1, 1949 when it increased to 6 cents per ounce.



As a point of interest "Ibis" is a scientific journal devoted to the study of birds. The official name is *Ibis: The International Journal of Avian Sciences*. The journal has been in continuous publication since 1859. The correspondent, Dr. Oliver L. Austin, Jr., (1903–1987) one of the eminent ornithologists ("bird scientists") of the 20th century, was co-founder with his father of the Austin Ornithological Research Station on Cape Cod (now the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary), as well as a long-time editor of *The Auk*, author of a definitive study, "Birds of the World," and curator of birds at the Florida State Museum.

The mystery here is why Dr. Austin was using the military mails. He must have been performing contract work for them. Perhaps studying birds around air bases? But then that's what makes research into these covers so interesting. There is always a story to be discovered, both philatelic and otherwise.

* * * *



An Early FAM-22 Non-Military Cover

by

Louis Fiset

FAM-22, the southern Atlantic route via Miami to Leopoldville, in west Africa's Belgian Congo, officially began operations on December 6, 1941. Four days earlier, in anticipation of the new route, the airmail postal rate to the Union of South Africa went from \$1.10 per half ounce to 60 cents. Students of FAM-22 aerophilately suggest planes did not carry non-military mail on a regular basis until May 1942. The cover shown here, however, appears to represent an early example of the new routing.



The letter, postmarked December 10, 1941 and destined for Johannesburg with 60 cents airmail franking, was returned to the writer for additional postage intended to pay the \$1.10 trans-Pacific rate. The postage due marking was penciled out, no additional postage paid, and the letter reposted December 11th. An "F.A.M. 22" manuscript marking appears at the bottom left directing the letter be carried on the new foreign airmail route.

The letter was carried on the third flight of FAM-22, which departed Miami January 3, 1942. The Leopoldville backstamp, dated January 14, 1942, verifies the route. This southern trans-Atlantic route went Miami → San Juan → Port of Spain → Belem → Natal → Bathurst → Lagos → Leopoldville, a multi-stop flight taking approximately six days, barring bad weather, censorship, or other unforeseen delays. From Leopoldville the letter went by air to Windhoek, South West Africa, for censorship,¹ then by air on South African Airways to Johannesburg.

Civilian mail carried on the early FAM-22 flights is scarce and keenly sought after. Prexie and Transport Issue collectors should be on the lookout for this elusive mail.

¹ John Little, *British Empire Civil Censorship Devices World War II: Colonies and Occupied Territories in Africa* (Civil Censorship Study Group, 2000), Type 1C1, earliest recorded date, August 8, 1941.

Tales from the Other Side – Part II: “War Perfs”

by

Francis Ferguson
ferg@FloridaStampShows.com



This column focuses on the wartime part perforations or, “war perfs,” to be found on most values of the Prexie Series, as well as the Defense Issue stamps. War perfs resulted from the government’s ration of metal parts for non-military production during World War II. Many machines had to make due with aging delicate metal parts that during peacetime would be replaced on a regular basis.

In stamp production, rationing resulted in worn or broken pins on the perforating bars producing the horizontal holes and caused recurring patterns of holes not to be punched at all. The varieties of missed punch holes have been categorized into seven distinct patterns. Types I, II, & III are the most common and may be found on most stamps in the series. This contrasts with Type VII found only on the 1.5-cent stamp.

In the examples shown above, the 1.5-cent and 22-cent stamps are Type I, while the half-cent, 8-cent, and 16-cent stamps show the Type II variety.

It should be noted that war perfs can also be found on the vertical axis. However, the patterns of missing holes do not repeat with consistency because the vertical perforating wheels did not reset to a predetermined position from sheet to sheet.

War perfs differ from “blind perfs”. While the former result from a lack of a pin creating a hole in the paper of the stamp, blind perfs are normally incompletely punched holes with the paper still attached to some degree giving the general visual impression of the holes not being there. However, under closer examination the punch holes can be seen thus being called a “blind perf”.

Most stamps with war perfs are readily available, especially Types I and II. The higher values with histories of lower production numbers, such as the 22- and 24-cent stamps, will cost more. Since blind perf stamps can mimic war perf varieties, collectors should inspect the stamps carefully before buying.

More information on production anomalies may be found in Roland E. Rustad’s book, *The Prexies*.

A Pricey Prexie Postage Due

by

Richard W. Helbock

It's not unusual to find Prexies paying postage due on short paid mail during their period of use, but the 1951 cover illustrated here required 76 cents in due postage—equivalent to \$6.15 in 2006 dollars! I don't know about you, but if I have to pay over \$6 to read someone's letter, it had better contain a pretty darned worthwhile message.



This cover has been resting comfortably (I hope) in my Prexie Collection for 15 or 20 years. I've admired it several times for its aesthetic multicultural intermingling of Indian and American themes, images and colors; but never really stopped to ask the relevant questions about it. Thanks to my friend—and our acting editor—Louis Fiset who recently asked for a bit of copy, I decided to look into the nature of this piece and its pricey payment of postage due.

Fortunately, another friend of yours and mine—Henry Berthelot—recently wrote an article for *La Posta* that laid out the details of assessing international postage due. According to Hank:

Beginning 1 October 1907, a new procedure was commenced regarding the rating and marking of insufficiently paid items in the International Mail. Foreign Office clerks in the country of origin continued to denote an insufficiently paid item with a T-marking, but now they were also responsible for doubling the deficiency and denoting on the item the total amount insufficiently paid, expressed in francs/centimes. After the item was marked deficient, it was routed to the destination country.

At a Foreign Office in the country of destination, a clerk only had to convert the deficiency noted on the item into that country's currency and indicate with a domestic marking the postage due amount to be collected from the addressee. The item was then forwarded to the post office of delivery. There, if the destination country issued postage dues, one or more dues were sometimes affixed to account for the amount collected.¹

This procedure remained in effect until January 1966 so the postage due assessment applied to this 1951 cover should have been governed by these regulations. The cover was franked with a strip of four 4-annas blue Bhuvanesvara, a pair of 9-pies green Trimurti and a single 2-annas red Nataraja. In 1951 there were 12 pies in one anna, and 16 annas in one rupee. The postage applied to this cover totalled $19\frac{1}{2}$ annas, or R1, 3a, 6p. Interestingly, this was equivalent to 25.3 US cents at that time. Was the sender thinking that, since the US postage airmail rate to India was 25 cents, perhaps the rate from India to the US should be the equivalent in Indian currency? If so, they were mistaken on both counts. The airmail rate from the US to India was 25 cents per *half-ounce*, and the Indian airmail rate to the US was not quite equivalent.

The Indian Foreign Office mail clerk took one look at this cover and probably said something in Hindi like, “Whoa, this weighs way too much to meet the basic rate.” He or she probably spoke in Hindi, but English is a distinct possibility since this was only four years after Indian independence and the bureaucracy of the Raj conducted business in His Majesty’s English. At any rate, the clerk determined the sender had underpaid postage required to send this cover via air by some 23 annas. In other words, the correct postage for a cover of this weight and destination should have been R2, 10a, 6p. I realize that sounds like a very odd rate, but since I do not have access to a table of air post rates applicable to 1951, I must assume that the clerk knew his stuff.

Having determined the deficiency, the clerk doubled the amount and converted the 46 annas to Postal union centimes at a rate of 4.9 centimes per anna. He then hand stamped the cover with a large T-in-circle struck in black ink and wrote “226” in blue ink.

The cover was postmarked 19 November and arrived in New York about a week later confirming it traveled by air. Once the letter reached the Foreign Department of New York City’s General Post Office, the American clerk noted the 226 centimes due and divided by three since one US cent was then equivalent to 3 Union centimes. The amount calculated at 75.3 cents and that was rounded up to 76. He hand stamped the cover “Postage Due Cents” and wrote “76” in the gap. The cover was then sent on to Lima, New York for delivery and collection of the postage due. Happily for us, the clerk in Lima opted to affix a 50¢, 25¢ and 1¢ Prexie to denote payment and then tied the stamps with his Lima utility dater.

The cover and its contents then reached the Reverend J. Carlton Spencer, Esq., Principal of the Elim Bible College. Presumably, he was pleased to read the missive, and he may well have been the person who wrote “Bernice” in blue ink on the cover. Ah yes, I remember Bernice. She was a diligent scholar, but not gifted in mathematics....

¹Hank Berthelot, “U.S. Foreign Offices’ Use and Handling of Fractions on Insufficiently Paid UPU Cards,” *La Posta*, Vol. 37, No. 6 (January 2007)

A Rate that Never Existed: Or Did It?

by

Bob Hohertz



This cover was sent from an APO to Australia by air in 1945 with 20 cents postage. There is no indication that a stamp is missing, or that it was not given airmail handling.

The airmail rate to Australia was seventy cents per half-ounce from July 2, 1940 until November 1, 1946. If the sender had meant for it to go by surface to Australia and then air within the country, the first ounce should have been five cents surface and five cents for air within for the first half-ounce, and then an additional five cents if it had weighed between one-half and one ounce. And does it make sense to pay for air inside Australia when the letter is to go to Sydney?

I showed this cover to Jim Forte shortly after I bought it, and he came up with a theory. APO 503 was in New Guinea from December of 1942 until sometime in August of 1945, then left for Japan at the end of that month. Let us assume that letter was mailed from the Philippines.

We are aware that the cost of an airmail letter to Australia when mailed from Hawaii at this time was reduced to 50 cents, as a holdover from the time when airmail to Hawaii from the mainland was 20 cents. The cost of an airmail letter to the Philippines was 50 cents per half-ounce, so if we subtract that from the 70-cent rate to Australia we get 20 cents, which is what was paid on this cover.

That rate did not exist – or did it? Perhaps only in the mind of a postal worker assigned to the APO?

I suppose it is more likely that the sender meant to pay the surface rate to Australia and then for air within the country for a letter weighing between one-half and one ounce, but had no idea how to do that, so overpaid by five cents. But the other theory is fun to entertain, if only for a while.

Winter 2008



Whole No.40

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer

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A Note From Your Editor/Publisher

Two volunteers came forth to edit the *The Prexie Era* for the next eight issues. Jeff Shapiro selected Acting Editor/Publisher **Louis Fiset** to serve as Editor/Publisher, while **Steve Davis** agreed to work as the webmaster for the Prexie era website, which will be coming on line in the next few months. Steve will provide details in the next issue of the newsletter.

Former editor/publisher **Steve Roth** has generously donated photocopies of the daily Post Office Department Postal Bulletins published from 1940-1945. For readers in need of copies of specific PBs during this period, contact your editor. I will periodically publish scans of relevant PB items, including the one accompanying Kurt Stauffer's article on mail of POWs held by Germany.

Germany Refuses To Pass POW Mail Bearing Propaganda Slogans

by

Kurt Stauffer

One of the most precious things a POW can receive from home is mail. During WWII, besides food, mail was always a topic of conversation among POWs. Both German and Japanese officials allowed mail to be received by prisoners they held, but imposed rules and regulations of their own.

Germany refused to allow POW mail to pass that contained Allied propaganda. This is shown on an enclosure slip used by the U.S. Post Office at Chicago stating "The article herewith bears an indorsement (sic), slogan, postmark, or postage stamps, having patriotic themes intended to promote our war effort, which are objectionadle (sic) to the German Government, and, consequently, it will not be delivered to the addressee." Interestingly, Japan was not listed on the form.

48

UNITED STATES POST OFFICE
CHICAGO 7, ILLINOIS
MAILING DIVISION - INQUIRY SECTION

Subject Enclosure for Return to Sender for Corrective Attention.

POSTMASTER AT OFFICE OF SENDER'S ADDRESS:

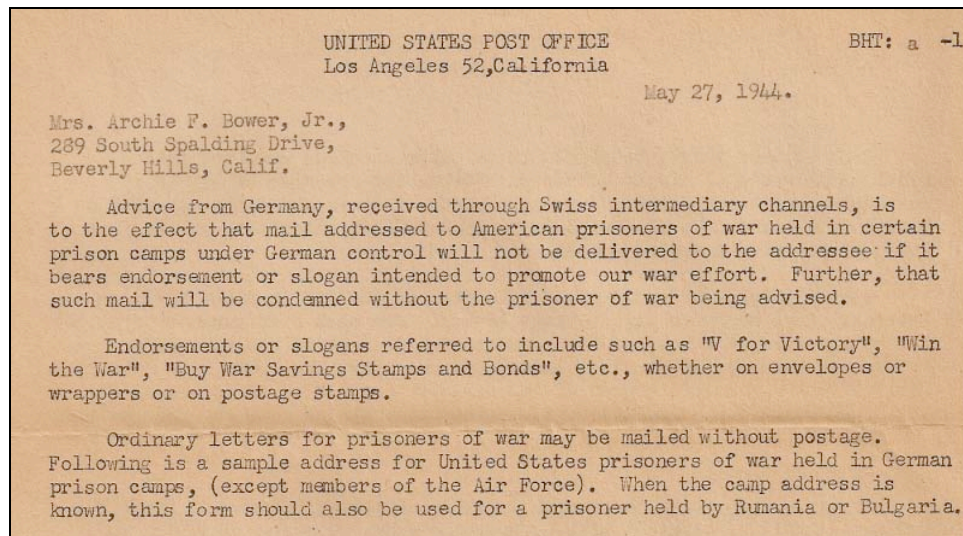
See notice "MAIL FOR AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR HELD BY GERMAN GOVERNMENT" published in the Postal Bulletin No. 18687, dated January 25, 1944.

The article herewith bears an indorsement, slogan, postmark, or postage stamps, having patriotic themes intended to promote our war effort, which are objectionadle to the German Government, and, consequently, it will not be delivered to the addressee.

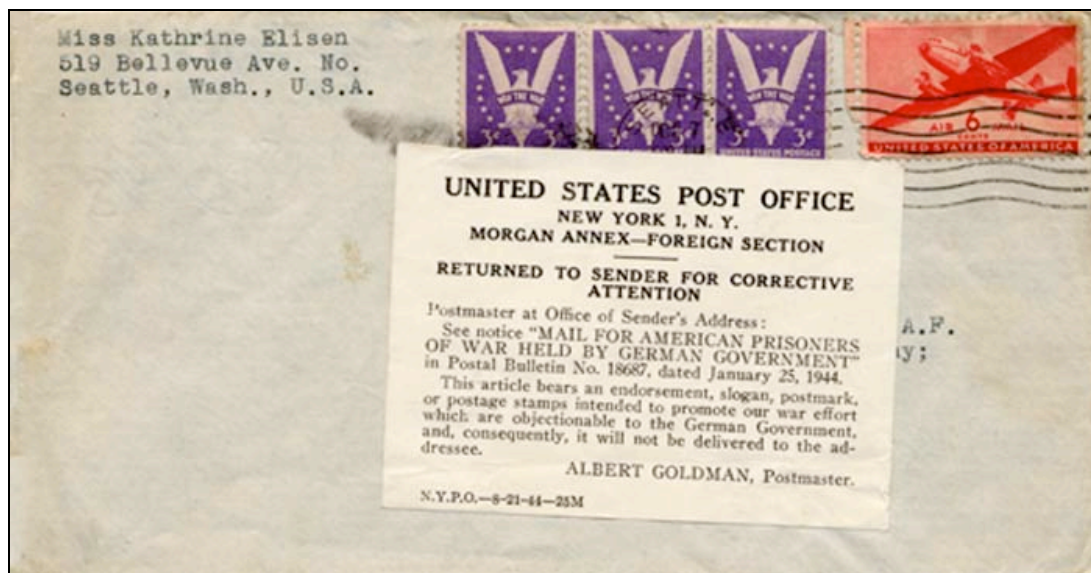
Enclosure. ERNEST J. KRUEGTEN,
Postmaster.

One of the postage stamps covered by Postal Bulletin no 18687 dated January 25, 1944 was the "Win the War" stamp, issued July 4, 1942. I have never seen this stamp successfully used on

POW mail to Germany, but have found examples that made it to Japan. That mail addressed to POWs was allowed free postage makes scarce surviving covers with stamps affixed, and those with “Win the War” stamps even scarcer. Most franked mail bore postage to pay for domestic airmail service to New York.

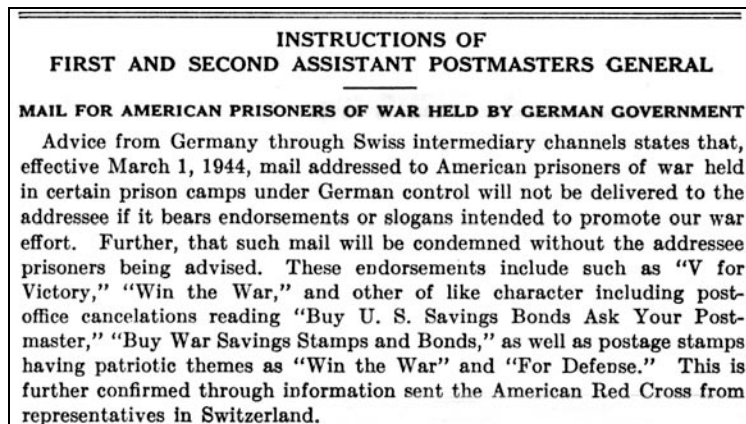


A circular sent out by the Post Office in 1944, illustrated above, lists the rules as they applied to mail destined for POWs held by Germany. I have not found comparable published regulations for mail sent to POWs in Japanese hands.



The figure above illustrates mail returned to the sender because the presence of the “Win the War” stamps violated regulations for mail sent to POWs in Europe. The letter reached New York’s Morgan Annex where a label was placed serving to obliterate the addressee and explain why the letter was being returned. This particular label was printed on August 21, 1944. The text is similar to that on the enclosure slip issued by the Chicago Post Office, but the language is more precise and correct. POW Unit censors never examined the contents.

(Ed. Note:) Relevant portions of Postal Bulletin 18687 referenced above are reproduced below. Note that German censors also refused to pass POW mail with Defense Issue stamps attached.



Tales from the Other Side – Part III: Solvents

by

Francis Ferguson
ferg@FloridaStampShows.com

The art of collecting is one that can be different things for different people. I have a particular interest in inking varieties of the Prexie series – of which a wealth of material exists. From fairly common over/under inked varieties to the more scarce solvent ink runs and shifted central vignettes on the dollar values, all can be visually interesting and challenging to pursue. This article highlights ink solvent problems that can obliterate images into a meaningless blur. All these types of errors should have been red-lined in the production process and removed by inspectors. Thankfully, some have slipped through.

During production an ink solvent is used to clean the printing plates. This process is neither difficult nor technically sophisticated, but requires a certain degree of diligence. Any trace of solvent remaining on the plate will mar the first images subsequently printed.

The three examples I illustrate in this article range from a single stamp being obliterated on the 4-cent example to nearly a full three stamps on the 2-cent sheet value. The block of six of the 10-cent example was purchased over a period of about a year as two horizontal strips of three, and rejoined for the nice dramatic block.





One should expect ink solvent errors for each of the single color stamps in the series. The toughest to locate should be the 22-cent value that had less than 50 million copies printed; the next toughest would be the 24-cent value with its 91 million copies. Even though these printing totals sound high, they are small in comparison to the overall averages for this series. My personal goal is to find an example for as many values as possible – let the hunt continue!

This is only one facet of the vibrant field of inking errors. Over-inked, under-inked and registration issues include a whole range of messed up pieces that are a visual treat. This column will explore those areas in the future.

A Rare Canton Island Prexie Usage

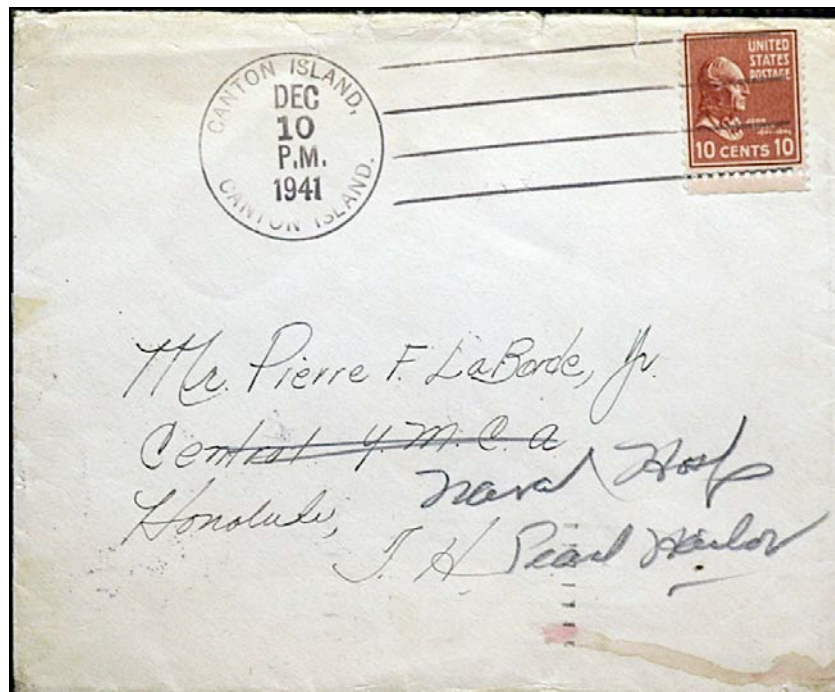
By

Albert Briggs

One of the more fascinating and challenging areas of Presidential Series Postal History is trans-Pacific airmail prior to the uniform airmail rates introduced on October 1, 1946. Specifically, the rates to and from the various Pacific islands where Pan-American Clippers provided airmail service can be difficult to locate. A listing of the half-ounce rates to pay for airmail service between the continental U.S. and possessions, and between possessions may be found in G. H. Davis's *The Transports* and Thomas Boyle's *Airmail Operations during World War II*.

In my personal experience, intra-island covers are particularly difficult to find. Here I report a recently acquired usage of the 10-cent airmail rate between Canton Island and Hawaii. In addition, the cover provides clues on the evacuation of the atoll following the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Canton Island is a small atoll located in the South Pacific roughly halfway between Hawaii and Fiji. It measures roughly 4.5 miles wide by 9 miles long. The island, discovered in 1824, was named Canton in 1854 after a whaling ship that ran aground on March 4 of that year. Interest in the island as a strategic location was expressed by both Great Britain and United States; in April 1939 London and Washington agreed to administer the island jointly as a condominium. Such agreements essentially confer joint sovereignty under international law.



In May 1938 Frank McKenzie, Pan-American Airways engineer in charge of building bases on both Wake and Midway Islands, surveyed Canton Island for the same purpose. The island's lagoon proved favorable, and the resulting decision led to construction of a seaplane base as a

Pacific flight stop over. Completed in mid-August 1939, the first aircraft arrived on August 24, 1939.

Due to outbreak of the Pacific war, seaplane service at Canton Island on the FAM-19 route was relatively short-lived. The last civilian flight prior to service disruption departed December 4, 1941 for New Caledonia. Shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, plans quickly developed to evacuate all civilians from the island, including Pan-Am staff, and to transport everyone by tugboat to Pago Pago, American Samoa.

The cover illustrated here, front and back, shows the intended 10-cent airmail rate from Canton Island to Hawaii as well as disruption of mail service and the resultant evacuation to American Samoa. Postmarked Canton Island, December 10, 1941, the letter was addressed to a Mr. Pierre LaBorde in Honolulu. By the time the letter reached Hawaii LaBorde was located at the Naval Hospital, Pearl Harbor. Little is known about him.



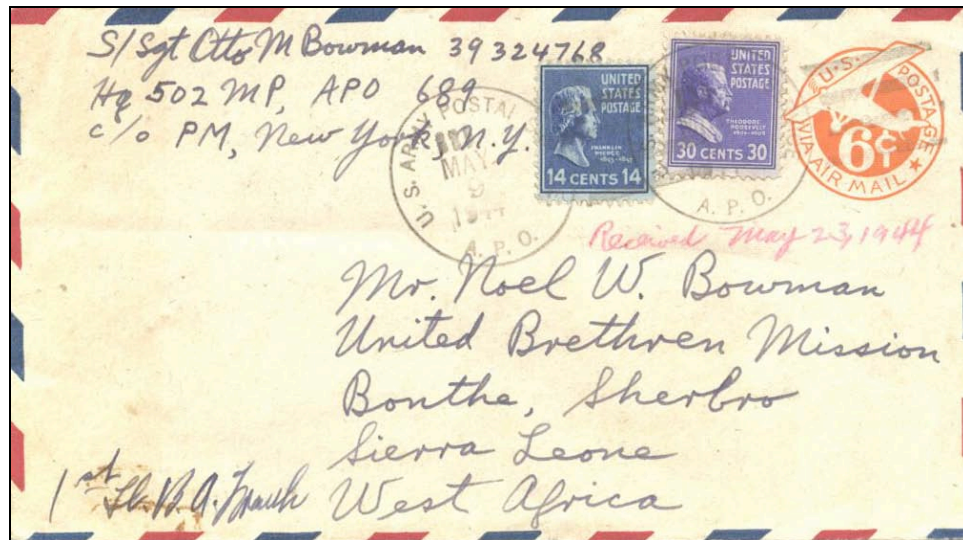
The reverse of the cover reveals the letter was posted by Pat Harrison, a contractor on Canton Island. Of particular note is the Pago Pago, Samoa transit marking dated December --, 1941, with an illegible day date. The letter reached the Honolulu post office on February 7, 1942. This letter, originally franked with postage for air service to Hawaii, undoubtedly accompanied the Canton Island evacuees traveling by sea to American Samoa. From there it was forwarded to Honolulu, likely by ship, as well. While demonstrating the rare 10-cent airmail rate, this cover also illustrates the early disruption and rerouting of mail service due to the outbreak of war.

The cover was sent to American Philatelic Society Expertizing Service where on March 16, 2006 it received certificate number 168371 stating the item as "genuine in all respects."

APO Use of a Fourteen-Cent Prexie

by

Dickson Preston



From the point of view of a simple Prexie postal history collector such as myself, the most outstanding feature of this cover is the use of a 14-cent Prexie sent from an APO. This item, however, has other intriguing features. The letter was sent by military airmail from Assam, in India, to Sierra Leone, in West Africa. APO 689, the Headquarters of the Northern Combat Area Command at Ledo, Assam, was on a major Air Transport Command (ATC) route to the beleaguered Nationalist Chinese forces in Chungking. According to Boyle, when this letter was posted on 9 May 1944, a major ATC route carried mail and supplies from Miami to China via central Africa:

A priority military route carrying high priority supplies for China, and carrying air mail between U.S. servicemen in the Middle East, India, and China, and the U.S., was still flying the South Atlantic route across Africa from Khartoum and Asmara and then around the southern end of the Arabian peninsula to Karachi and on to destination via the trans-India route. (Thomas Boyle, *Airmail Operations during World War II*, p. 117).

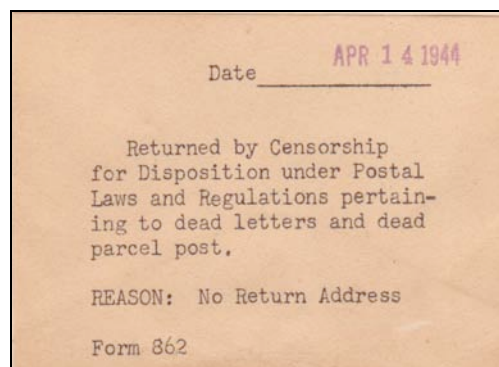
This letter would have taken part of this route in reverse on its way from Assam to Sierra Leone in what must have been an almost empty airplane.

The postage rates along this reverse route are astonishing. The rule was that airmail postage required from an APO to a foreign destination was the same as the airmail postage charged from the United States to that destination. Thus S/Sgt Bowman paid 50 cents, the airmail postage from the U.S. to Sierra Leone, to send his letter. But consider some other possibilities. If he had sent the letter to a nearby destination in India, the air postage would have been 70 cents. If he had sent it to Venezuela, where the letter would have been flown across the South Atlantic instead of being diverted to a town in West Africa, he would have paid 25 cents. If he had sent it to someone in the U.S., the postage would have been the 6-cent military concession rate. You got it: the farther his letter went, the less postage he had to pay.

FAM-22 Refugee Camp Cover To Africa

by

Jeff Shapiro



This February 17, 1944 airmail cover, addressed to a Polish Refugee Camp in India, never got past the New York censor station. It would otherwise have flown the FAM-22 route to Lagos and onward by BOAC's Horseshoe Route to its destination. The letter was returned to the writer for failure to provide a return address.

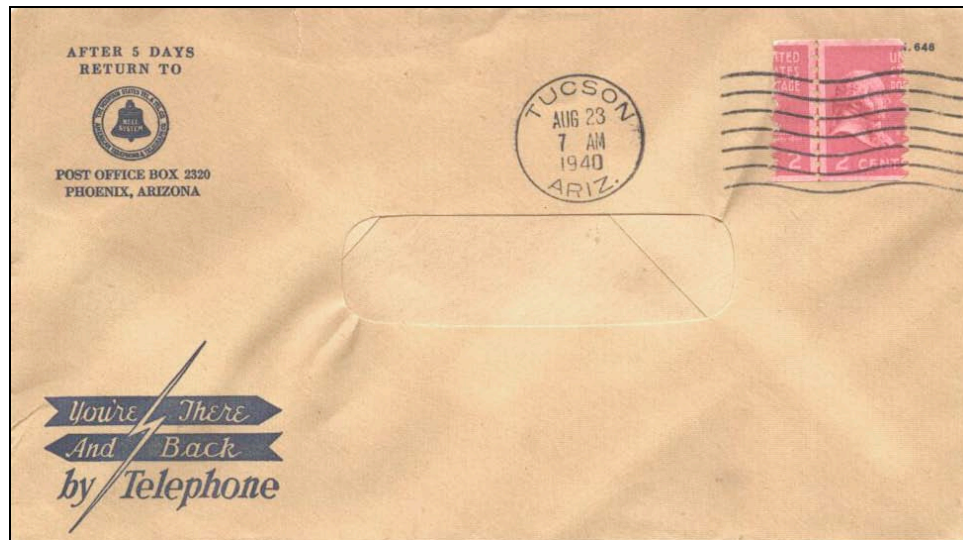
When German forces invaded Poland in September 1939 many Poles escaped to neighboring countries, including the Soviet Union. In 1942, claiming limited resources for its own people, the USSR expelled these refugees. An estimated 110,000 Poles sought asylum in Iran, Iraq, British East Africa, New Zealand, Mexico, and India. One of the largest refugee camps was established in Kalhapur City in India's Maharashtra state. It accommodated 21,000 people, including 2,500 children.

After World War II ended many of the Polish refugees refused to return to their homeland; boundaries had changed and many of their former homes were now part of the Soviet Union. Following closure of the Kalhapur Camp in 1948, most of the refugees resettled in Great Britain, Australia, and Canada.

Joint Line Pair Solo Franking

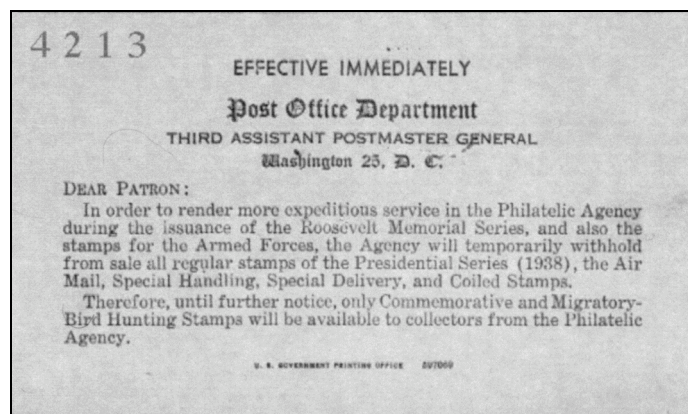
by

Dickson Preston



Solo frankings are highly prized by many cover collectors, especially so among those of us addicted to the 1938 Presidential Series. Coils are popular also, especially uses of joint line pairs, which are made where the bottom row of one plate joins the top row of its sister plate on a two-plate rotary press. For the normal mind a solo franking and a joint line pair would seem to be incompatible, but this cover shows you can have it both ways. The stamp dispensing contraption which was franking the Phoenix telephone bill envelopes on 23 August 1940 got out of alignment. The result is a line pair condensed into a single stamp: a joint line pair solo franking.

1945 Prexie Sales Temporarily Halted



Recently seen on ebay is a Post Office Department notice mailed July 7, 1945 announcing the Philatelic Agency was suspending sale of all regular and coiled stamps of the Prexie issue and other definitive issues in order to “render more expeditious service” of the Roosevelt Memorial Series.

Spring 2008



Whole No.41

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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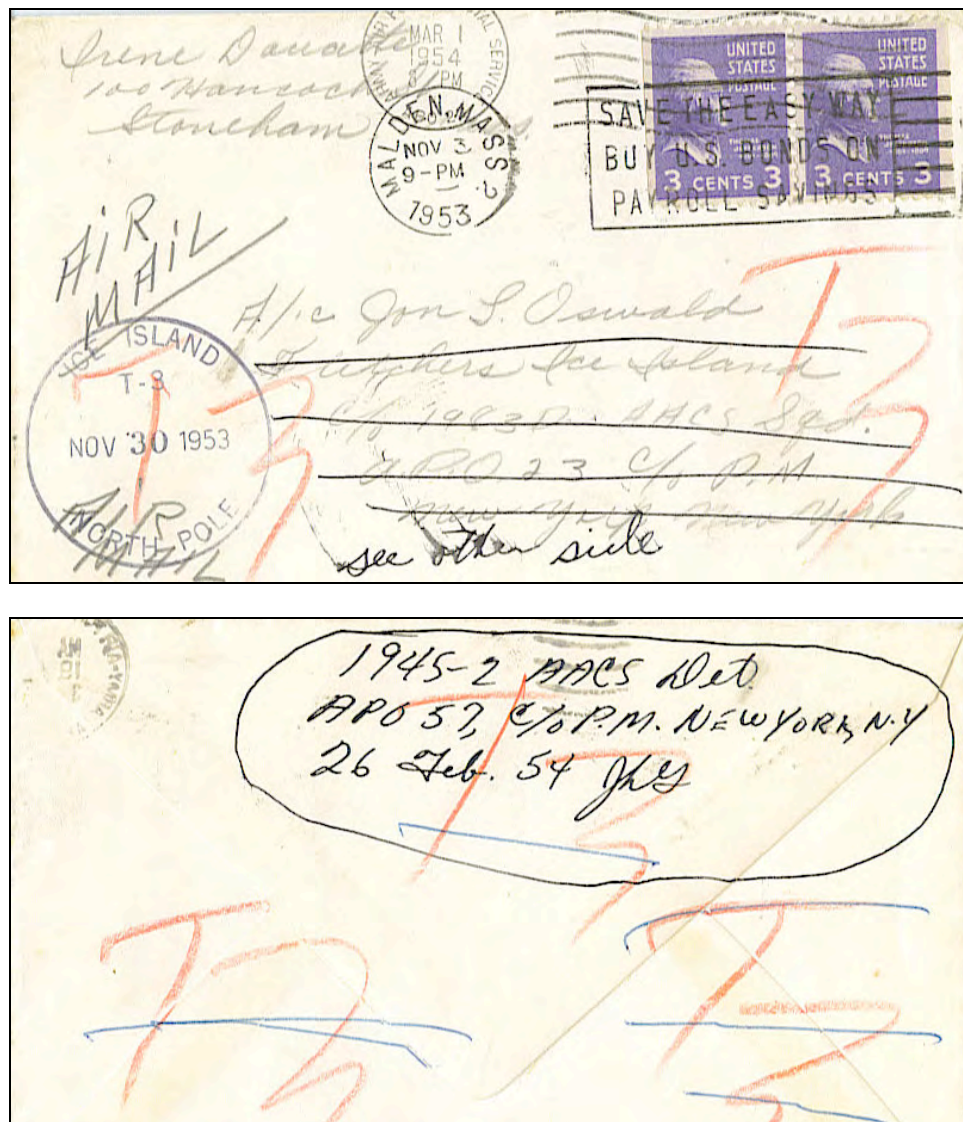
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Air Mail to an Iceberg

by

Albert Briggs

During their years of service Presidential Series stamps may be found on covers traveling to many exotic destinations. In the realm of domestic uses mail to various APO's can provide an interesting source for different routes and locations. I recently obtained a cover addressed to "Fletcher's Ice Island" which certainly makes my Top 10 list of fascinating destinations.



This letter was mailed from Walden, Massachusetts on November 3, 1953 and directed to Thule, Greenland via APO 23. The "AACS Sqd." in the address line likely refers to Alaska Air Command Station Squadron. The letter was received November 30, 1953 bearing the circular receiver with the words: Ice Island/T-3/North Pole. The addressee was apparently no longer at Fletcher's Ice Island, and the letter was forwarded to APO 57 located at Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany. It was forwarded from APO 23 on March 1, 1954. The North Pole designation refers

to the fact that T-3 drifted as high as 88 degrees north latitude, close to the geographic North Pole.

Fletcher's Ice Island was the name given to a large iceberg discovered in 1946. Initially designated T-3, it was determined to be a huge piece of the Arctic ice shelf that had broken off from the ancient glacial ice foot of Ellesmere Island. Measuring seven miles long and three miles wide, it rose 50 feet above the surrounding ice pack.

In 1952 Alaska Air Command organized Project ICICLE with the goal of establishing a weather station on one of the ice islands. Colonel Joseph Fletcher was put in command, and T-3 became the selected site.

On March 19, 1952 a C-47 plane from Thule Air Base landed on the iceberg. Insulated huts were flown in pieces to the island and assembled. Scientists arrived shortly afterwards and embarked on a number of investigations. The station was abandoned in May 1954. It was reoccupied intermittently for the next 25 years, including 1957-1958 during the International Geophysical Year. The ice mass drifted through the Fram Strait in 1983 and presumably into the northern Atlantic Ocean, eventually melting away.

Air-Surface-Air Postcards to Europe

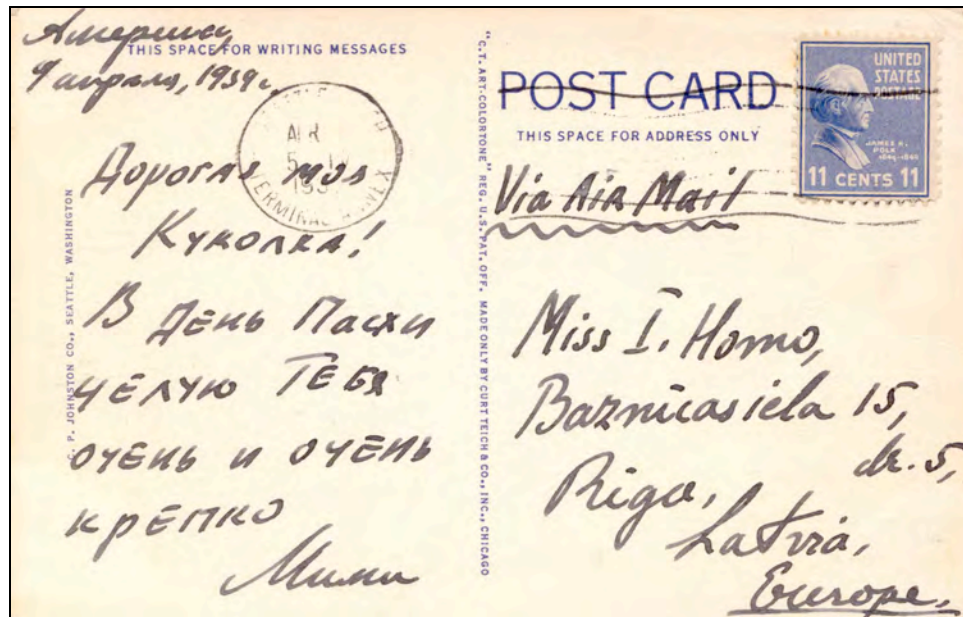
by

Bob Hohertz



Prexie-Era postal history collectors are well aware of the surcharge plus basic rate pattern for letters sent airmail in the United States, surface mail to Europe, and airmail within Europe, 3 cents + 5 cents + 3 cents. What was the proper charge for a postcard sent air – surface – air? The air surcharges presumably would have remained the same as for a letter, but what would the surface postage have been: the 3-cent foreign postcard rate of the 5-cent foreign letter rate?

The first postcard shown, franked with three Prexies totaling 11 cents postage, paid the full letter rate for air-surface-air service from Seattle to Riga, Latvia in 1939. The principle must have been that since no reduced airmail rate existed for postcards, if any portion of the route was by air, the full letter rate applied.



The second postcard, mailed a month later than the first one shown, gives evidence that the 11-cent rate was not an isolated charge as the result of a decision by an over-zealous postal employee. This time the sender purchased an 11-cent Prexie adhesive to cover the postage, to the delight of at least one later collector.



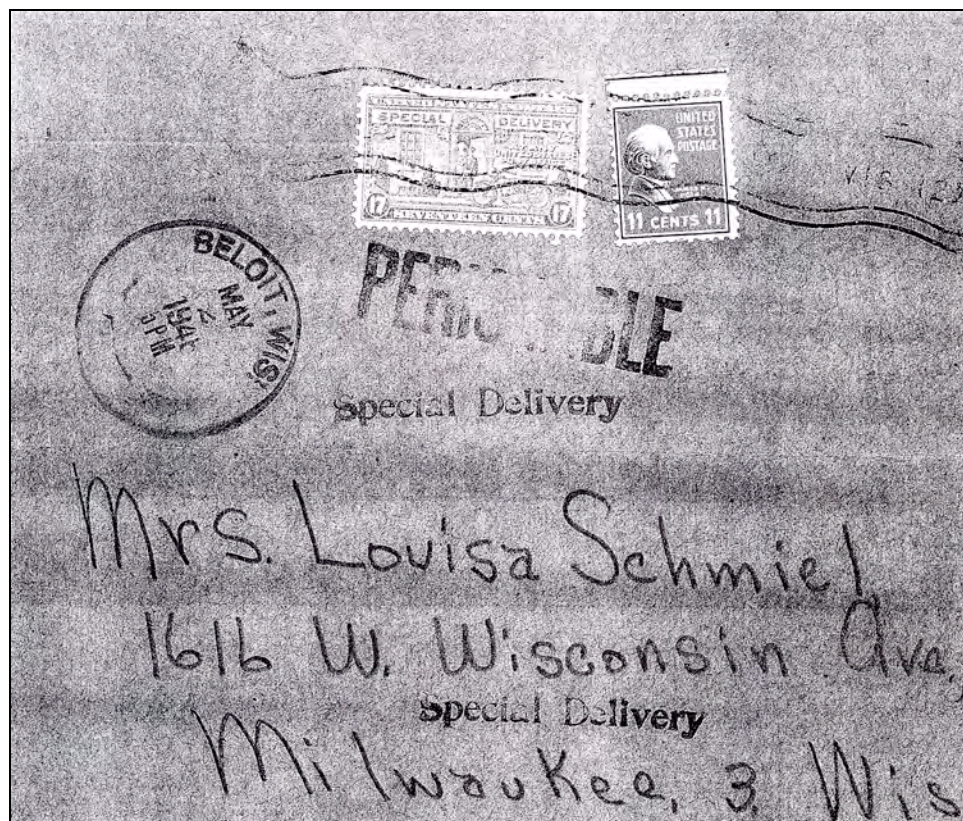
The final example bears out the general principle that if airmail was involved, full letter rates applied. In this case the 3-cent surcharge was for airmail from San Francisco to New York, but 5 cents was assessed for the surface rate to Athens. [Ed. Note: By April 19 1945 normal postal relations between the U.S. and Greece had resumed except for registration and special delivery services.]

Can anyone cite a PL&R reference that covers postcards sent partly by air and partly by surface? If not, and we are left to deduce the rate, does anyone have a counter example, either a postcard sent air-surface-air for eight cents or air-surface for five cents? There must be other examples in our collections.

Prexie Era Postal Rates – Third Class/Special Delivery

by

Jim Felton



Third-class single piece special delivery mail, postmarked May 2, 1948. 11 cents pays seven times the 1.5 cents per two ounces rate (June 15, 1925 - December 31, 1948); and 17 cents pays the special delivery rate for mail other than first class weighing less than two pounds (November 1, 1944 – December 31, 1948.) Note the **PERISHABLE** marking indicating merchandise is enclosed.



Tales from the Other Side – Part IV: Gutter Pairs

by

Francis Ferguson
ferg@FloridaStampShows.com

There are many things in the arena of Prexy EFO material that can make a person stand up and take notice. One in particular always gets my undivided attention – gutter pairs and gutter snipes. This article will deal with gutter pairs and sometime in a future article, gutter snipes.

For definition purposes, a gutter pair is one that has two complete stamps with all perforations intact with a margin paper gutter between. If any portion of the either stamp is missing it is not a gutter pair, but rather a gutter snipe. Gutter snipes are fairly common whereas gutter pairs are much more rare.



Gutter pairs represent a total failure of the production and inspection process. Horizontal or vertical gutter pairs can exist showing the common margin between two adjacent panes that should have been trimmed down the middle to create two separate panes. The basic cause is simple – the failure of the cutting process to separate two sheets in the appropriate manner.

Numerous ways exist for a gutter pair to be created; the occurrence of a paper fold in the perforation/cutting process, and the failure of the cutting knife to be properly aligned are the most likely. The end result being a gutter pair, either horizontal or vertical that exists for collectors to find ---that REALLY should not have escaped the over-sight of the inspectors.

In my collecting efforts I have managed to obtain “2.98” examples of gutter pairs. All three are illustrated with this article. The 2- and 3-cent gutter pairs are classic examples. The 30-cent pair is technically a gutter snipe because it lacks perforations on the left side of the pair. Regardless of the technical requirements for a gutter pair, the 30-cent value is a visual treat.



According to the 2007 Scott Specialized Catalogue only seven of the thirty-two Prexies exist with either a full vertical or horizontal gutter; many are un-priced due to infrequent sales activity. I am personally aware of a 6-cent horizontal pair illustrated in Roland E. Rustad's *The Prexies* that provides a stunning example of a pair that to this day remains unlisted in the Scott catalogue.

Resumption of Airmail Service from Hawaii after Pearl Harbor

by

Robert Schlesinger
Robertsles@aol.com



I recently acquired a cover that may shed light on the resumption of airmail service from Hawaii to the mainland following the December 7, 1941 bombing at Pearl Harbor. The item illustrated here is a registered “two ocean” cover with correctly paid additive airmail rates (20 cents + 30 cents) from Honolulu going to Scotland. The letter entered the mail stream just five days after the attack. Although postmarked at Honolulu on December 12th, the cover was not received at San Francisco until January 3, 1942, presumably having arrived on a flight earlier in the day or the day before. The letter was back stamped New York the next day and, after a delay imposed by censorship in Great Britain [Ed. Note: Examiner #709 is not a known Bermuda censor station number] reached London on January 23, 1942. I am soliciting comments on the date airmail service resumed from Hawaii to the mainland. Is January 3, 1942 when airmail service resumed or can anyone provide an earlier date?



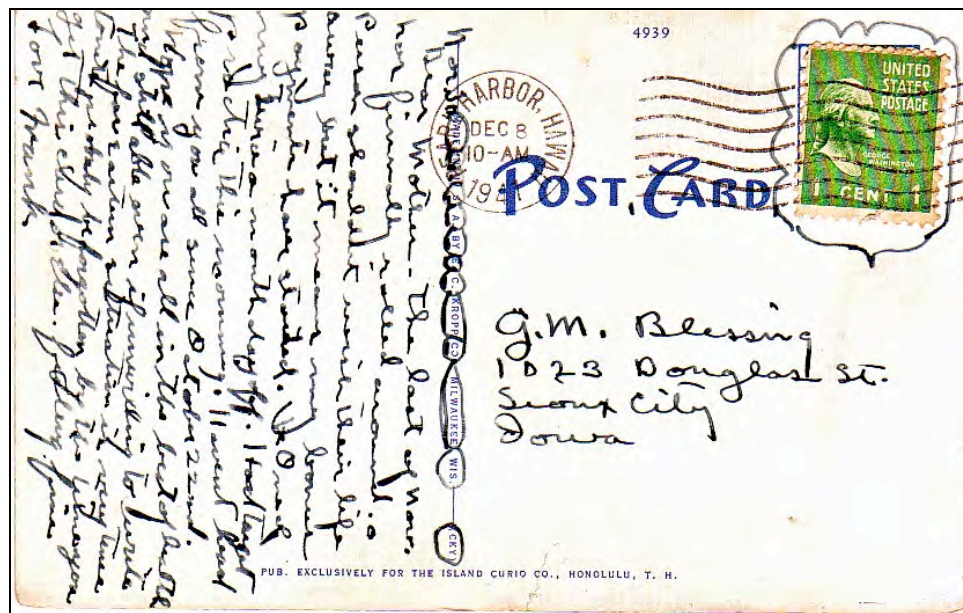
"December 8, 1941"

by

Jeff Shapiro

While not usually considered part of the study of postal history, I find there's a certain guilty pleasure in reading other's people's mail!

To make my point I'm illustrating here two covers postmarked at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 8, 1941, one day after the attack by Japanese naval forces against the United States. Each offers a special perspective at the dawn of the US involvement in World War II in the Pacific Theater.



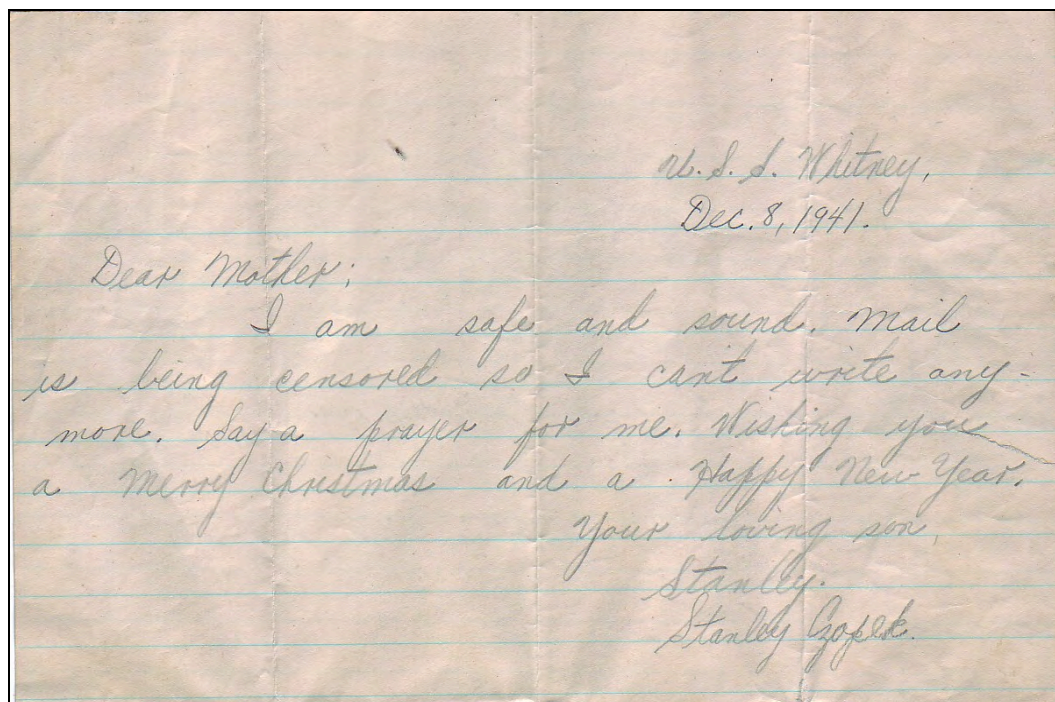
The first example, a picture post card datelined November 30, 1941, was written and then probably forgotten by a sailor enjoying the rest and relaxation of shore leave in Honolulu. Probably mailed on Saturday and postmarked Monday, December 8, 1941, this uncensored postcard, franked with a 1-cent Prexie paying the domestic post card rate, contains the following understatement: "The far eastern situation is very tense tonite probably be forgotten by the time you get this card."

The second cover, from a sailor on the USS Whitney, is franked with a pair of 10-cent Prexies paying the 20 cents per half-ounce Clipper airmail rate to the mainland. It too was postmarked December 8, 1941. A much shorter message, it likely sums up the thoughts of all in the military that terrible historic weekend --- "Say a prayer for me. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

The writer was likely in the thick of action on that fateful Sunday morning. The destroyer tender USS Whitney, launched in 1923, was built to provide unglamorous but vital service supplying and repairing the destroyer fleet. This is exactly what the crew was doing on the morning of December 7, 1941 while moored at Pearl Harbor along side five destroyers. Japanese pilots

strafed the ship during their first wave over Ford Island, but none of Whitney's sailors were injured.. The crew fought back with the ship's antiaircraft guns. Following conclusion of the attack the crew went on to fight fires on the ships burning nearby.

Over the next few days and weeks surviving crewmen from the ships at Pearl Harbor were each provided a single officially printed "I am well" formula postcard to be sent to next of kin. They are relatively scarce. Not as scarce, however, as the "unofficial" ones that got out of Hawaii even fires at Pearl Harbor were still smoldering.



59-Cent Airmail Rate To Netherlands East Indies

by

Louis Fiset

The two covers illustrated here show business mail to Java, in the Netherlands East Indies revealing an unusual and relatively short lived (May 23, 1939-June 14, 1940) airmail rate of 59 cents per half-ounce. The rate paid for trans-Atlantic air service to Europe, and subsequent air service from Europe to the destination via Cairo and Singapore. This provided an alternative to the 70 cents per half-ounce rate routed through San Francisco and Manila, through Hong Kong or Singapore. The covers, both postmarked in March 1940, show Singapore and Palestine censorship, respectively, suggesting the first went via the Pacific route despite the lower franking and clear directive, whereas the second was indeed routed via Europe. The trans-Atlantic route was terminated after June 14, 1940.

The same 59-cent rate via Europe applied to South Africa, but only from May 23, 1939 until June 30, 1939 when the rate was reduced to 55 cents. In effect for only 39 days, the 59-cent rate to South Africa presents a significant challenge to collectors.



Summer 2008



Whole No.42

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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Prexie Era Website

by

Steve Davis, Webmaster
stamperdad@yahoo.ca

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

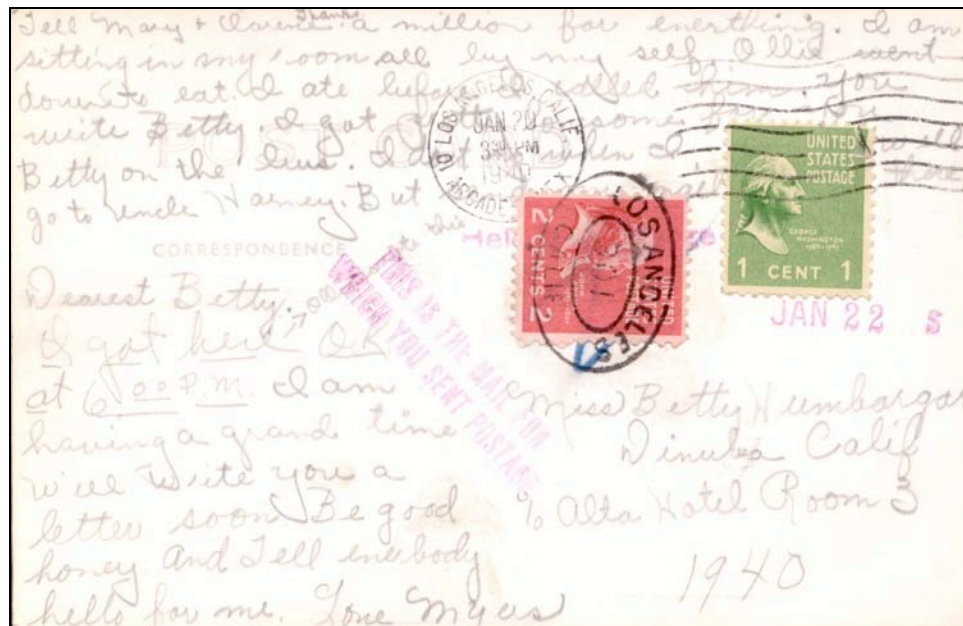
Gordon E. Katz presented the subject of Prexies on postcards in the March 2006 issue of *La Posta*. The items provided here illustrate additional usages not shown by Katz.



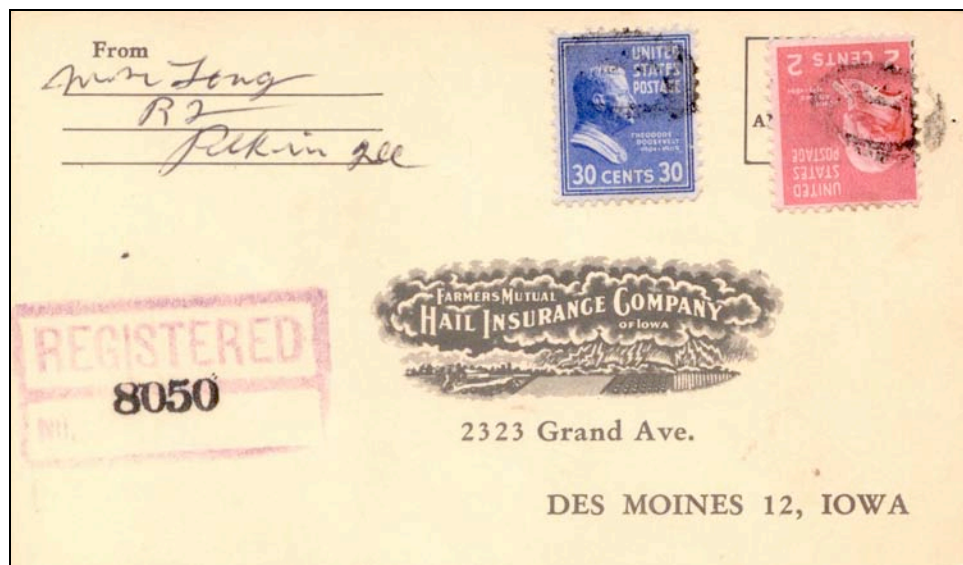
Special delivery postcards are not particularly common, but cannot be called rare, either. Airmail special delivery cards are even less common. Katz did locate and illustrate one airmail special delivery postcard from 1947. The example above is much earlier, from 1941. It contains market advice sent 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.

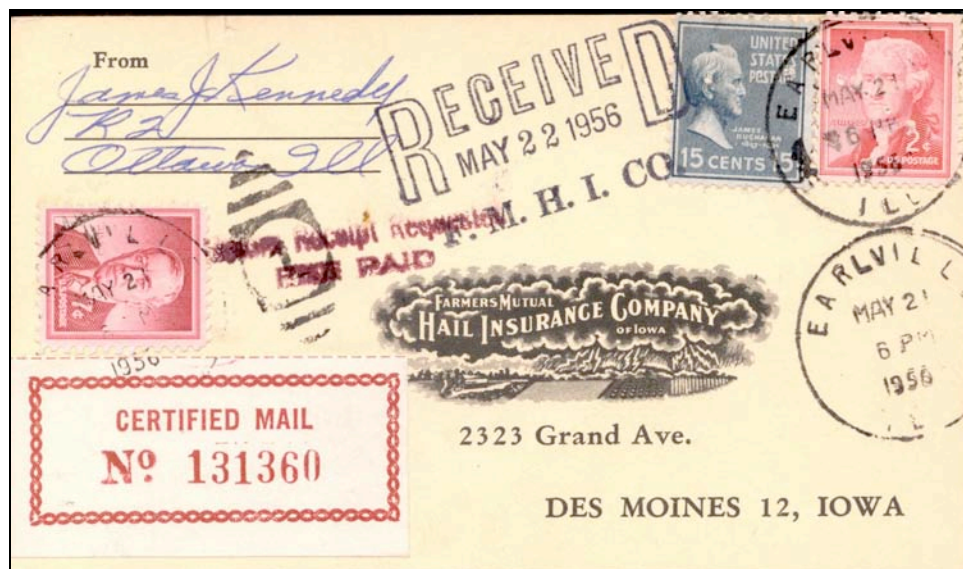


The next three post cards, all posted to the same commercial address, provide variations of special services ordinarily seen on letter mail. One of the most difficult services to find applied to a postcard surely must be registry. This card was used to report storm damage. It was mailed on

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.

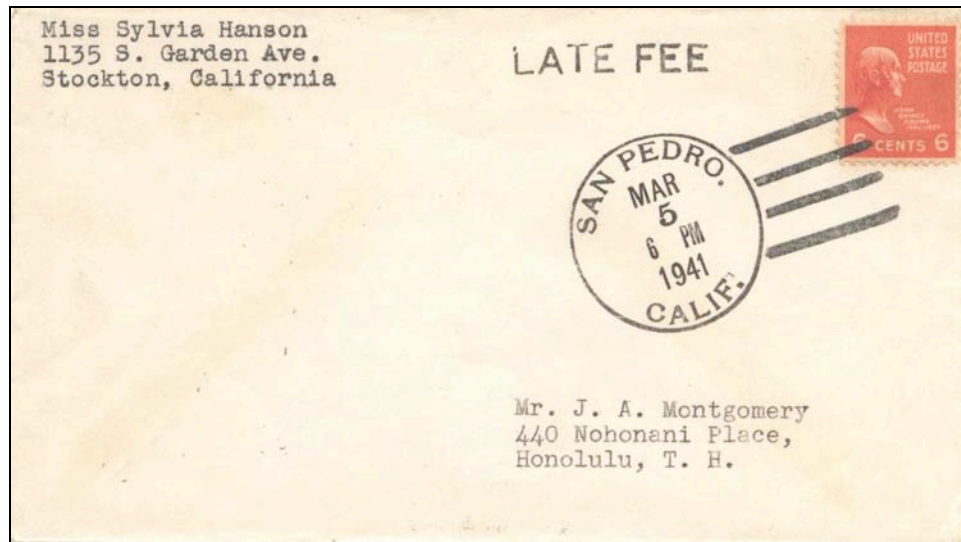


The final card illustrated here, bearing 24 cents postage, was sent by certified mail, with sufficient postage to pay for Return Receipt Requested. The 15-cent Prexie pays the certified mail fee, while the two stamps from the Liberty series pay the postcard rate (2 cents) and return receipt service (7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

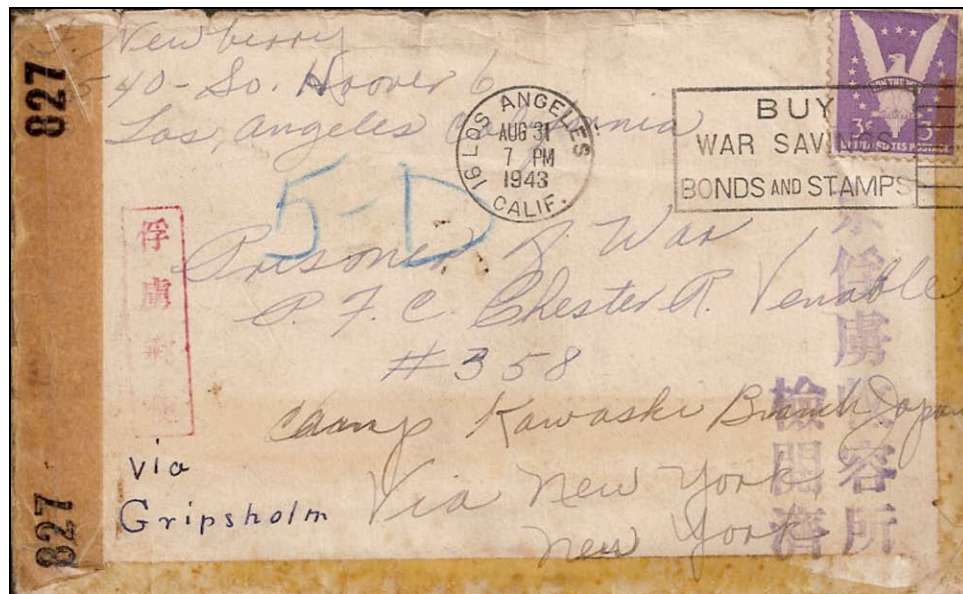
Kurt Stauffer

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*.



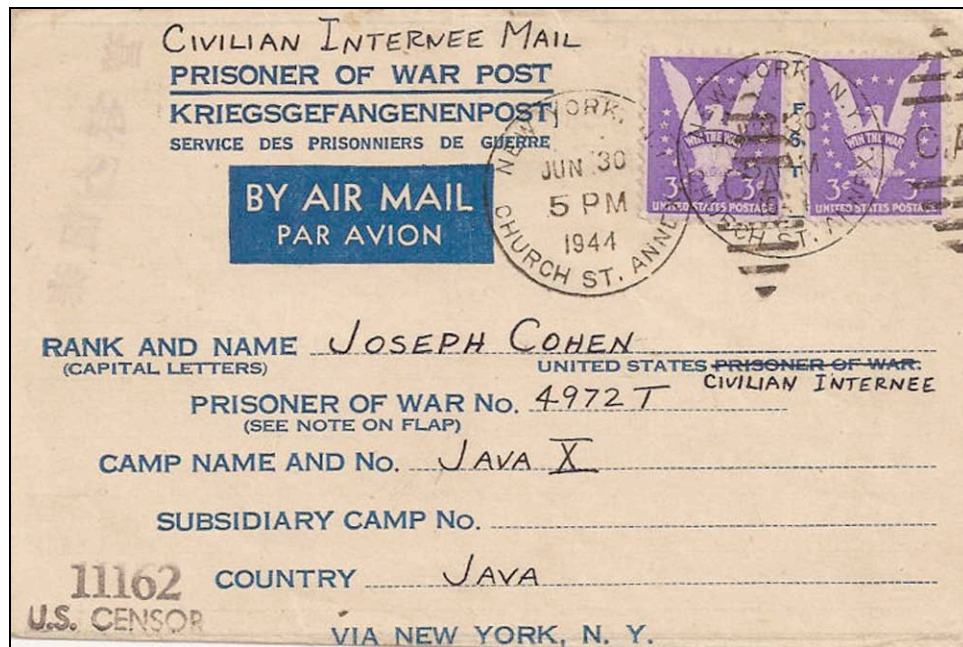
The second example was postmarked August 31, 1943 mailed in plenty of time to be carried on the second diplomatic exchange voyage of MS *Gripsholm*. The 3 cents postage paying the domestic surface rate was unnecessary on POW mail. The cover was received at Kawasaki Dispatch Camp # 5 in Japan (5- D). 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.

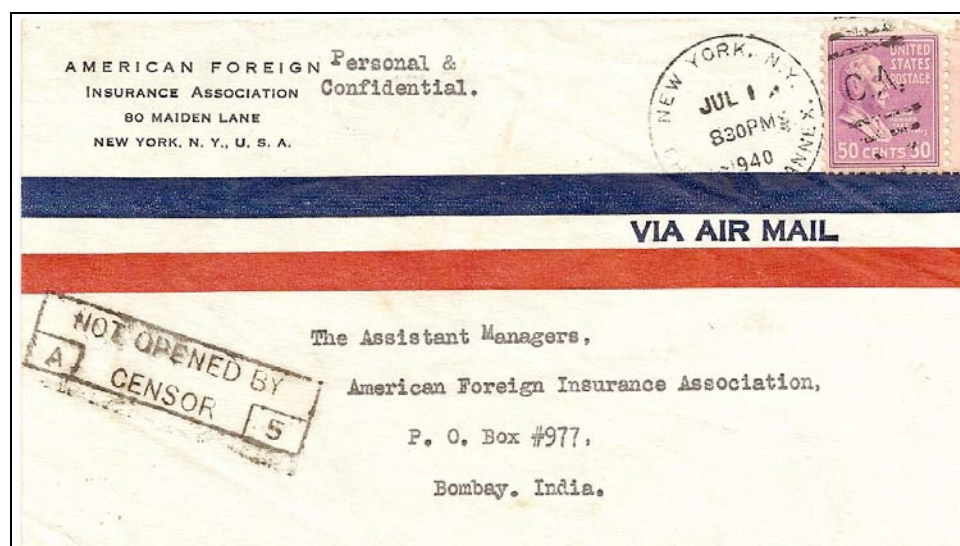


This group of four covers suggests Japanese censors allowed POW mail sent to Japan to pass bearing stamps with “patriotic themes.” If not, then they certainly missed a few!

A Short Lived Airmail Rate to India

by

Robert Schlesinger



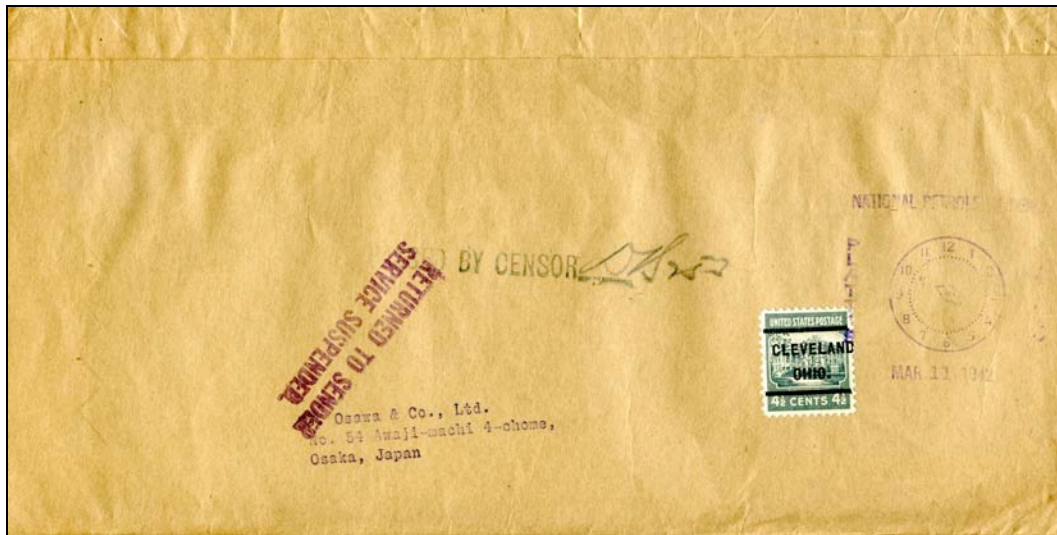
The 50 cents per half-ounce rate to India was in effect from May 23, 1939 through June 14, 1940, a period of just over one year. This mail was carried by trans-Atlantic carrier to Europe then on to India by air. The rate was relatively obscure, even to postal clerks, as this cover, postmarked July 1, 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.

Fall 2008



Whole No.43

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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2009 Subscriptions Payable Now

The Fall 2008 issue is the last in the quartet of *The Prexie Era* for 2008. This means it is time for readers to renew your subscriptions. Rates for 2009 remain the same as for last year: \$5 for the electronic version, \$10 for the “snail-mail” version and if you subscribe to both versions, well, you do the math. Please send payments and questions to Jeff Shapiro directly:

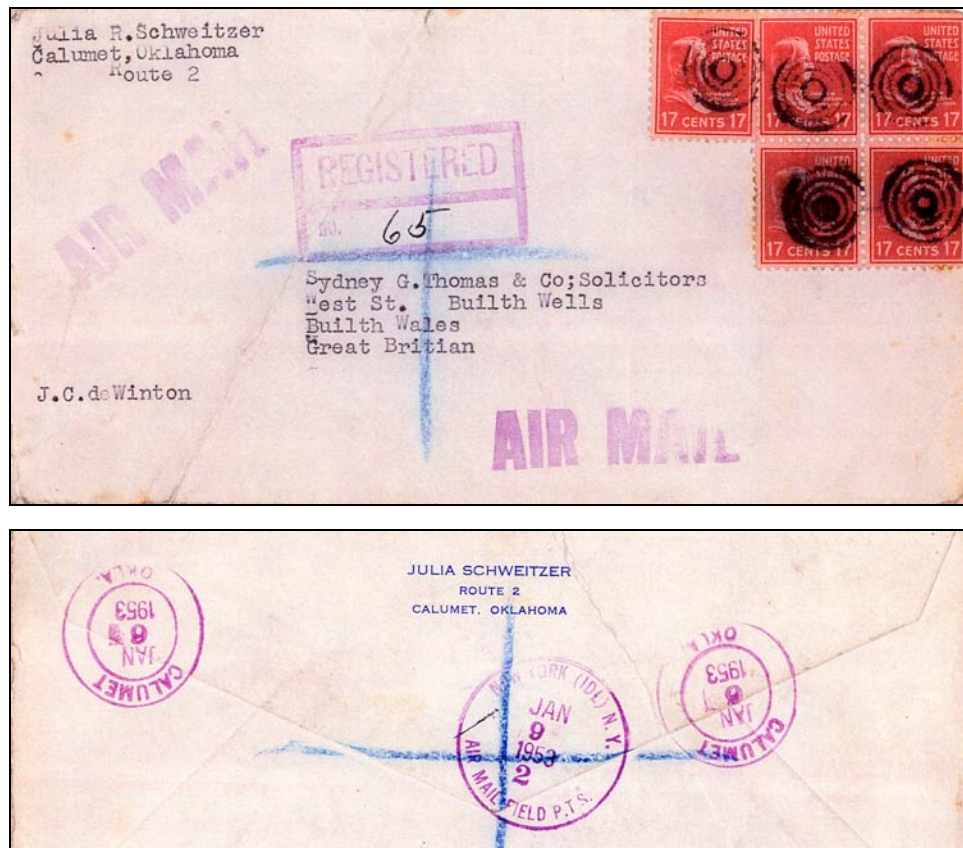
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If your subscription is not current by the time the next issue comes out this will be the last one you receive.

17-cent Prexie Multi-franking on Foreign Airmail/Registered Mail

by

Jim Felton



This 85-cent cover to Great Britain, postmarked January 6, 1953, is franked with five 17-cent Prexies, which paid the triple (1.5-ounce) airmail rate to Europe (15 cents x 3), effective November 1, 1946, plus the 40-cent international registration fee, effective September 1, 1952.

\$5 Prexie Bank-To-Bank Correspondence

by

Bill Helbock

This multi-franked \$5 Prexie cover illustrates inter-bank correspondence, likely containing negotiable securities. The postmarks indicate it was sent from Wilmington, Delaware on June 14, 1944, arriving at Philadelphia the same day. The total distance between the cities by road was no more than 25-30 miles.



Calculating the indemnity amount is a bit of a mystery. Note the faint pencil sums on the cover “ $175 \times 4 = 700$ ” and “ $16 \times 30 = 480$ ” for a total of “1180.” It’s tempting to think those numbers might refer to more than one million dollars in negotiable securities.

But, according to Beecher and Wawrukiewicz’s book on domestic postal rates, in Table 35-2 the registry supplemental charges for one zone in June 1944 should have been 11 cents per thousand. For \$1,180,000 in value, at this rate \$129.80 postage should have been assessed. The total postage paid however, comes to \$141.36, leaving the \$11.56 difference only partially accounted for by first class postage and normal registration fee.

Additionally, Beecher and Wawrukiewicz indicate that the 1944 rate changes were announced in the PMG Order of July 17, 1944 and *The Postal Bulletin* dated July 17th. Would the Wilmington post office clerk been aware of the impending new rates or would he have still be calculating on the 1932 basis of 8 cents per thousand value?

I don’t know the answer to this question, and it’s too damned hot here today in Australia to run simulations and come up with a precise accounting of the franking. I will leave that task to interested readers.

5c DC-4 Skymaster Crash Cover

by

Steve B. Davis

This crash cover, bearing two 5-cent Skymasters, paying the 10-cent per half-ounce international airmail rate to countries in the Western Hemisphere, recently appeared on eBay. I tried to obtain it, but the bidding got too pricey for my budget. I did do the research on it before I bid, however, which proved to be an interesting exercise.



The key to the cover is the purple markings applied by the Post Office indicating a crash near Baltimore, Maryland on May 30, 1947. Using the date and location I searched for plane crashes. Below I provide an itemization of pertinent accident details to help us understand the cover and humanize the event. [Source: www.planecrashinfo.com copyright: Richard Kebabjian]

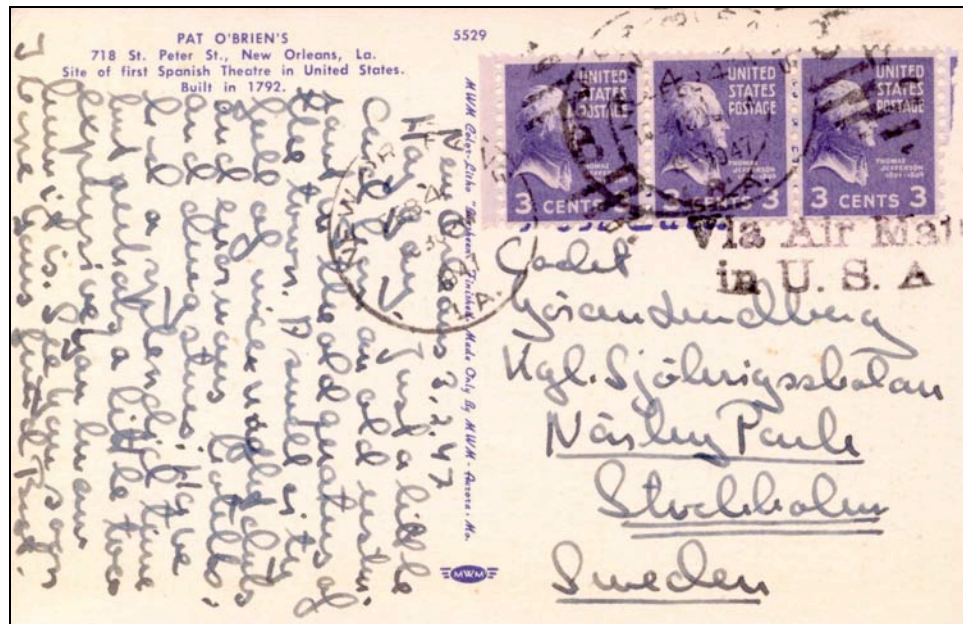
Date: May 30, 1947
 Time: 17:41 hrs (5:41 p.m.)
 Operator: Eastern Air Lines
 Flight: 605
 Route: Newark-Baltimore-Miami
 Aircraft Type: Douglas C-54B-15-DO
 Registration: NC88814
 Aboard: 53 (passengers: 49, crew: 4)
 Fatalities: 53 (no survivors)
 Ground: 0 injuries or fatalities
 Summary of accident:
 While on approach to Baltimore at 4,000 feet, the plane suddenly went into a nosedive, inverted and crashed. Possible problems with the elevator. The official cause was never determined.

I also browsed the years 1946 through 1948 for other air crashes and found a number of them listed. This suggests more crash covers with Skymaster franking out there to be had. I am still looking for one to include in my exhibit. This particular cover sold for well over \$100.

Air-Surface-Air Postcard Rate(s?) Revisited

by

Bob Hohertz



In Issue 41 (Spring 2008) I asked if readers could provide an example of an air-surface-air postcard mailed for 8 cents. This was a rather ignorant query since 3 cents plus 3 cents plus 3 cents equal 9 cents. Someone who made his living as an actuary really ought to know this but then, there is quite a difference between mathematics and arithmetic.

Regardless, soon after the article appeared the postcard illustrated here, sent from New Orleans to Sweden on February 4, 1947, turned up on eBay. It is clearly marked “Via Air Mail in U.S.A.” Since 9 cents franking would otherwise have represented an unnecessary and significant overpayment, presumably air service was also provided after it reached Europe. This therefore appears to be an example of a postcard rated 3 cents for air in the US, 3 cents for surface transport across the Atlantic, and 3 cents for air in Europe.

I have thus presented postcards provided with the same air-surface-air service, postmarked during a similar time frame but franked at two different rates. Barring a rate change I am currently unaware of, it appears the rate for air-surface-air postcard service was either 9 or 11 cents depending on the whim of the postal clerk working behind the counter on any particular day. Does anyone have another idea?

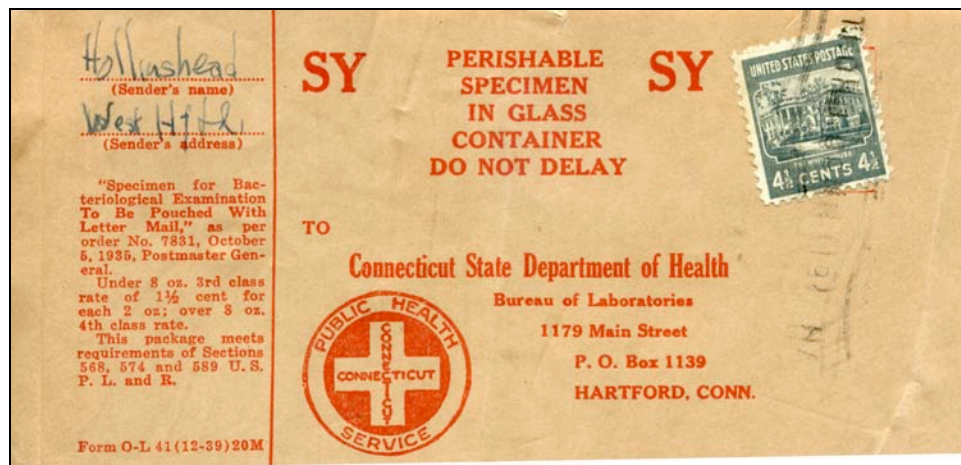
Entry In *The Postal Bulletin* for February 4, 1947

EXTENSION OF RESTRICTED MAIL SERVICE TO JAPAN
ORDER No. 33886; DATED JANUARY 31, 1947.
 Effective at once, the territory of Japan to which mail for civilian addressees may be sent is extended to include the islands listed in the first column below. Civilian mail service has not been authorized to the places listed in the second column.

Third-Class, Single Piece: Syphilis Specimen

by

Howard Lee



The mailing label shown here identifies medical contents contained within -- a glass vile specimen (blood) sent for analysis to the Connecticut State Department of Health for a suspected case of syphilis (SY). The sender, likely a West Hartford, Connecticut private physician, used a typical glass-protected mailer box provided by the health department.

The 4 1/2-cent Prexie pays the third-class single-piece, 1.5-cent per 2-ounce rate in effect from April 15, 1925, as modified October 5, 1935. The contents weighted ≤ 6 ounces. As the mailing instruction at the left side of the mailer states, the specimen for bacteriological examination was to be pouched with letter mail as per a Postmaster General order implemented to expedite delivery of time-sensitive biological material. This rate remained in effect until January 1, 1949 when the 6-ounce rate was reduced to 4 cents (2 cents for the first 2 ounces, plus 1 cent for each additional 2 ounces.) Absence of a postal zone in the HARTFORD, CONN. address line sets the time period around 1943 or earlier.

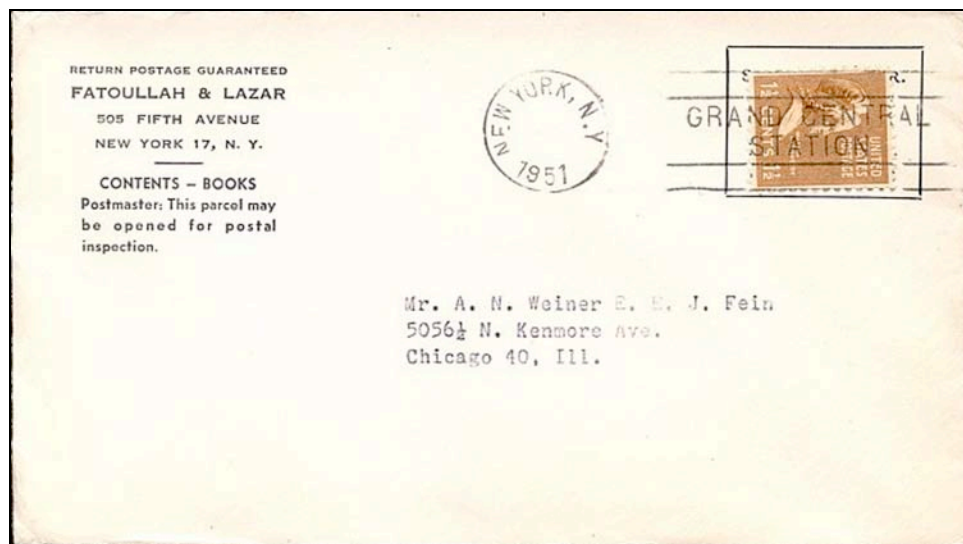
Third-Class, Books, Catalogs, and Material for Planting

by

Bob Hohertz

At various times, from June 8, 1872 through July 31, 1958 a special third-class rate category existed for "Books, Catalogs and Material for Planting" because the rates per ounce differed from other third-class rate items. Covered in this category in addition to books and catalogs were seeds, cuttings, bulbs, roots, and scions, all designated for propagation, but not consumption. On January 1, 1949 both the rate per ounce for books and catalogs, and the rate per two ounces for material for planting was raised to 1 1/2 cents. These rates, adjusted on January 1, 1952 to accommodate authorized nonprofit organizations only, remained in effect until August 1, 1958.

In the cover shown here, postmarked in 1951, the 1 1/2 cents paid is far too late for it to be a regular third class or a fourth class rate. It therefore pays the books and catalogs rate of 1 1/2 cents per ounce, effective January 1, 1949.



These rates provide opportunities for collectors of both third-class mail and the 1 1/2-cent Martha Washington Prexie definitive. I have not yet seen a solo 1 1/2-cent stamp from the Prexie era on a two-ounce mailer for seeds, cuttings, or other planting material and would like to know if anyone owns or has seen one and can provide an illustration for the newsletter.

Tales from the Other Side – Part V: The Wandering Heads

by

Francis Ferguson
 ferg@FloridaStampShows.com

The three Prexie high value stamps had the good fortune to each be produced in two colors. With a standard black vignette and, in the case of the \$1 value a frame with an especially lovely shade of purple, the design creates a nice containment for the busts of the three presidents. A printing total of 309.4 million for the dollar value, 13.6 million for the \$2, and 9.3 million for the \$5 value, makes for a good deal of material in which to look for treasures.



While one expects to find inking variations on this issue, during the last five years I have been accumulating this material I have yet to see any. But hope always exists. And how about an inverted vignette? So far none have appeared in the market place or even been rumored to exist. But wouldn't that be a find!

What we do find with some frequency is a misalignment of the black portraits within the frames. Given enough examples lined up on the page, one could lay out a “round-the-clock” movement of the central portrait with varying degrees of encroachment on the frames. Modest movements of the portrait are no more than minor curiosities and command little premium, if any. However, a severe misalignment that results in the vignette moving significantly into the frame is highly uncommon and commands a hefty premium. The examples shown here are but a few of the ones known to exist. No doubt cover collectors have examples in their own holdings. Can anyone provide an example for the newsletter?

While checking through accumulations that most of us run across during the course of collecting, in addition to the wandering heads collectors should be on the lookout for the USIR watermark error on the \$1 value, the subject of a future article.

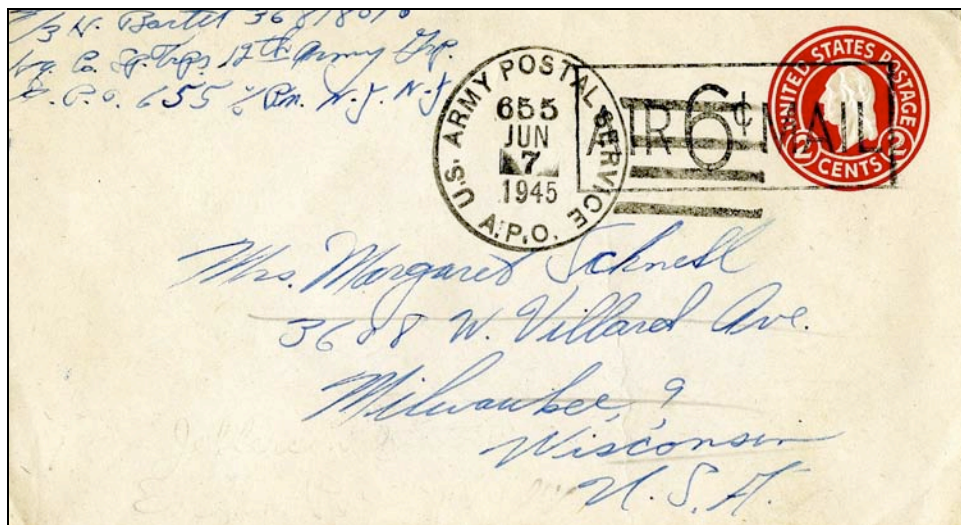
UC8 and the Prexie Issue (and A Little Postal History)

by

Bill Geijsbeek

In an effort to reduce the growing shortfall of airmail stamped envelopes for overseas Army and Navy post offices, in 1945 POD devised a plan to convert useless 2-cent stamped envelopes into 6-cent airmail concession rate envelopes.

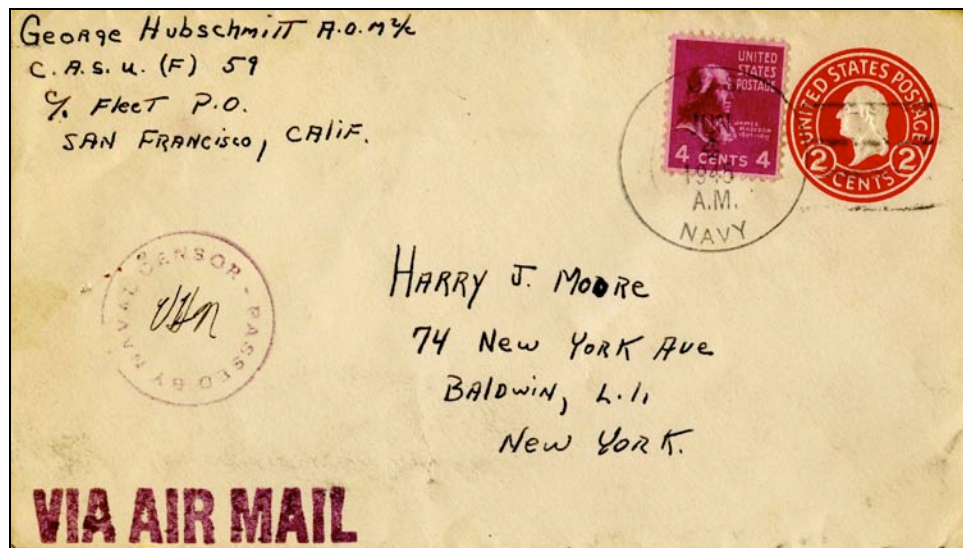
Earlier in June 1944, in a first attempt to curtail the growing shortage, POD halted domestic distribution of all airmail stamped envelopes – plain ones to civilian post offices and special request corner card orders for individual customers. Simultaneously they eliminated the red and blue borders on newly produced airmail stamped envelopes. These efforts were only partially successful in keeping up with the demand.



In the same year POD eliminated the first class intra-city rate of 2 cents per ounce forcing those users to pay 3 cents. This affected all first class mailers except those in towns without local carrier service where patrons qualified for the local drop letter first-class rate of 1 cent per ounce. Discontinuance of the intra-city rate left POD with a surplus of 50 million 2-cent stamped envelopes.

Given the rising demand for airmail stamped envelopes and the surplus of 2-cent envelopes, New York postmaster, Albert Goldman, was directed to convert the unusable envelopes into airmail stock for use by US armed forces overseas. He set up ten canceling machines outfitted with slugs reading **AIR 6¢ MAIL** inside a rectangular border. POD then requested that postmasters forward full cases of 2-cent stamped envelopes (in P.O. sizes 5 and 13, either standard or extra quality white paper.) Colored paper (amber and blue) and window envelopes were specifically excluded.

The cover shown above illustrates a typical example of the up rated 2-cent envelope, posted on June 7, 1945 at XII Army Group Headquarters, Wiesbaden, Germany (APO 655). With the war in Europe now ended, so has censorship of the mail there.



By mid-June 1945 the conversion was complete. However, during the “cancellation” process occasionally multiple envelopes got fed into the machine together, resulting in the bottom ones receiving no impression – known as “skips.” Goldman was ordered to affix 4-cent stamps to any stock returned to him by APO/FPO post offices and to return them as 6-cent airmail envelopes.

The second cover shows an example of such a “skip,” with a 4-cent Prexie applied to make up the short franking. It is postmarked June 4, 1945 with a U.S. Navy 4-bar cancel, at Honolulu (Navy 59). Military post offices, having no use for them, did not carry 2-cent stamped envelopes. Thus this cover must have resulted as a “skip” that was caught at the APO/FPO level and up rated locally. Who knows how they accounted for the loss of a 4-cent stamp. It is not clear whether APO/FPO post offices routinely stocked the 4-cent Prexie definitive. A second possibility exists, that the Honolulu post office (which had stocked 2-cent stamped envelopes for the intra-city rate), decided to convert their unusable envelopes into a more usable stamped envelopes. Since Honolulu certainly had 4-cent Prexies in stock, these could easily have been up rated and transferred to a military post office.

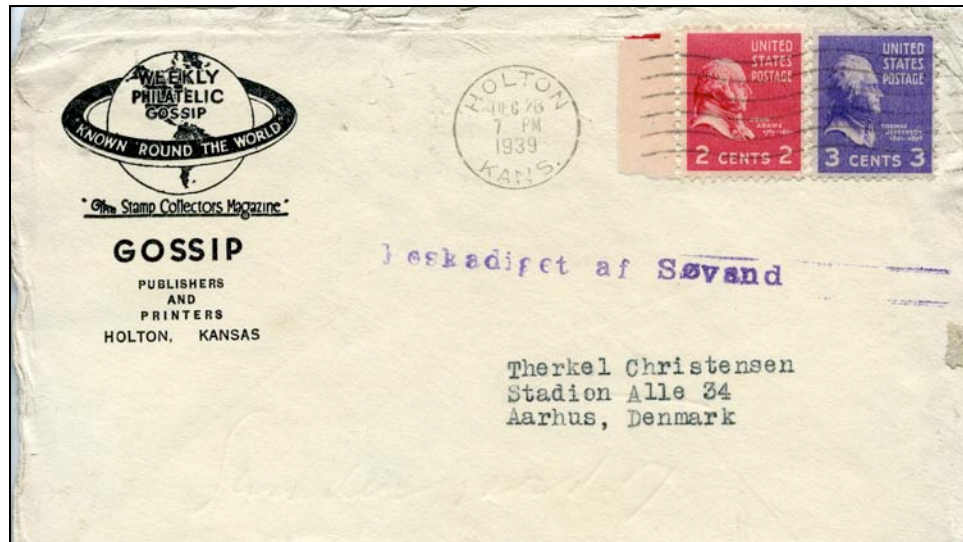
The 6-cent airmail concession rate per half-ounce remained in effect until October 1, 1946 when airmail between *any* two U.S. post offices was charged the new uniform rate of 5 cents per ounce.

[Ed. Note: Bill Geijsbeek writes a column on 20th-century postal stationery for *Postal Stationary*, the journal of the United Postal Stationary Society.]

John Adams and Thomas Jefferson Survive Sinking Of Their Ship by A German Submarine

by

Lawrence Sherman



The Danish steamship *Vidar* has the distinction of being the first vessel sunk in World War II to have any of its mail salvaged. The cover shown here, with its straight line Danish-language hand stamp translated as “Damaged by Seawater,” was originally carried in one of the ship’s mail sacks. The hand stamp barely hints at the unfortunate fate of the steamship, its crew, and its postal cargo.

Vidar left New York in early January 1940 carrying 134 sacks of letters, prints, registered articles, and parcels from the United States, together with 11 sacks of foreign closed transit mail, all destined for delivery to Denmark. While crossing the North Sea from England to Denmark on January 31, 1940, the ship was bombed and damaged by a Luftwaffe plane. The next day, the German submarine U-21 torpedoed and sank *Vidar*. Sixteen of *Vidar*’s crew were killed in the attacks; eight survivors on a raft were rescued by a Danish ship and taken to Stavanger, Denmark.

About six weeks later, three sacks of mail from the sunken ship washed ashore on the east coast of England. British postal authorities dried the mail and forwarded it to Copenhagen. Much of the salvaged mail was undeliverable as addresses had become illegible or had simply washed away.

Not so with the cover shown here. Its printed corner card and typed name and address of the intended recipient are clearly preserved. The two Prexies, 2-cent John Adams and 3-cent Thomas Jefferson, paid the 5-cent international surface rate from the United States, but floated off the envelope and were hinged back into place. There they sit today after their interrupted journey, “damaged by seawater,” but survivors of the brutal business of war.

[Ed. Note: Lawrence Sherman is editor of the award winning book *The United States Post Office In World War II*.]

Winter 2009



Whole No. 44

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

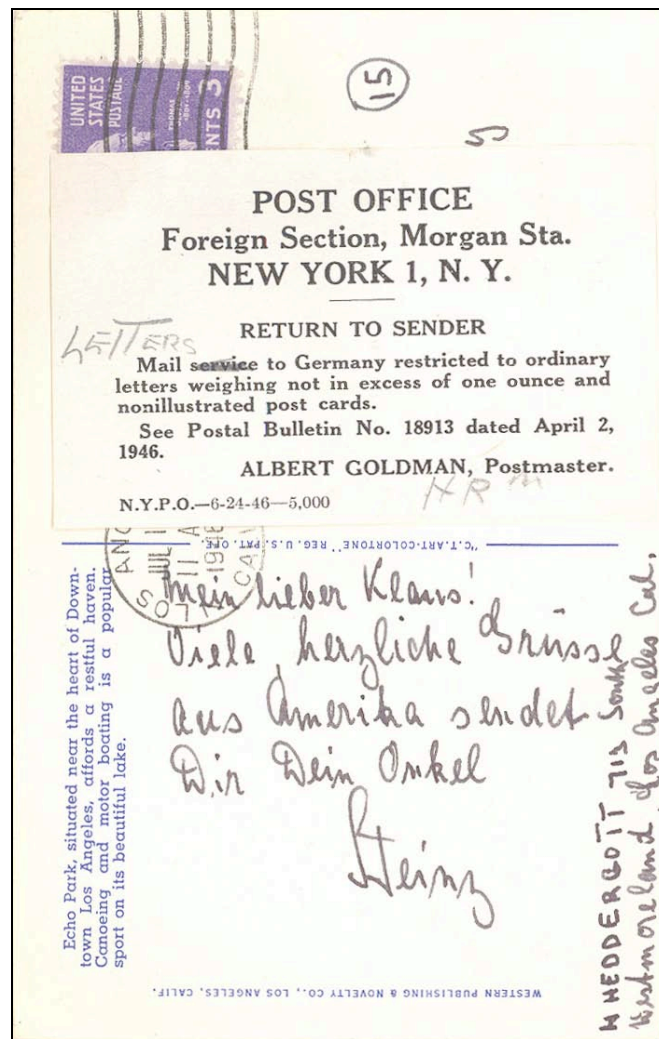
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Resumption of Postal Service to Liberated Countries 1944-1946: Nonillustrated Post Cards

by

Louis Fiset



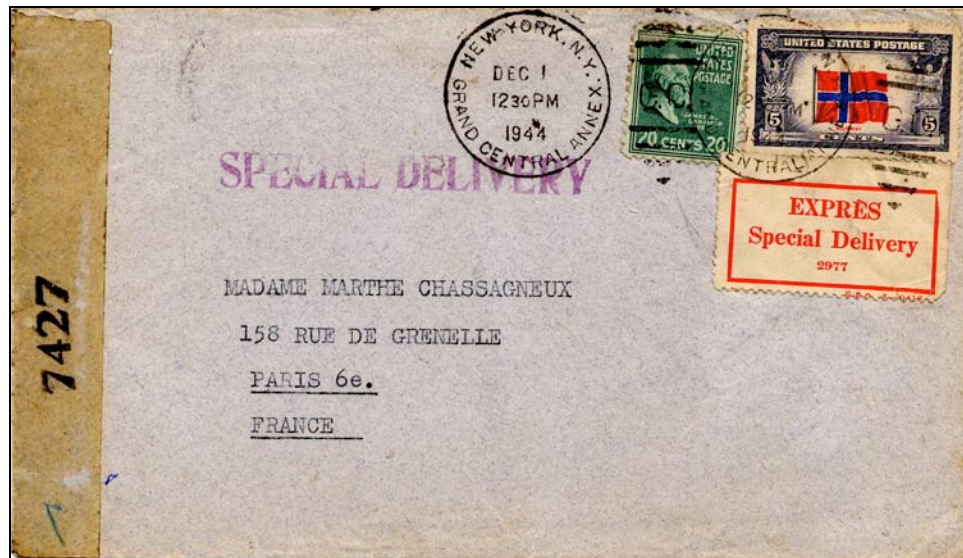
Partial resumption of mail service from the U.S. to the overrun countries of Europe began on February 16, 1944 when post cards and letters weighing up to two ounces could be sent to Sardinia and Sicily and southern provinces in Italy (PB 18693). Rome was added the next month (PB 18736). When partial mail service to France resumed, starting September 4, 1944 (PB18751), the term “post card” was amended to “nonillustrated post card,” thereby specifically excluding picture post cards. Like correspondence to Italy, messages had to be personal, not business related, and content was now restricted to English or French. Presumably picture post cards might contain secret messages to confound New York censors, and reduce the amount of text that could be written.

The nonillustrated post card ban remained in effect in most cases until full mail service was restored to an individual country. The illustration above, from Jeff Shapiro’s collection, shows a failed July 1946 attempt to send a picture post card to Germany. On September 23, 1947 (PB 19069), following restoration of airmail and business mail service, the ban was rescinded. Full mail service to Germany, including registry, resumed August 23, 1948 (PB 19161).

Resumption of Postal Service to Liberated Countries France 1944-1945: Special Delivery Service

by

Louis Fiset



Allied advances in France following the Normandy landing on June 6, 1944 liberated large areas as German forces were pushed southward. Gradually mail service to France resumed as regions became secured and infrastructure set in place. Initially, personal postcards to the northern areas sent by surface routing were permitted, followed by weight restricted surface letters, and eventually special services such as registered mail, airmail, and special delivery. Full restoration of mail service did not take place to the whole of France, however, until August 1945, a full three months after Germany capitulated.

Examples of mail postmarked within a week or two of a resumed postal service are difficult to come by, leaving collectors having to accept postmarks a month or two later with hopes for later upgrades. I got lucky when I acquired the example shown above. Special Delivery service to most of France, including Paris, resumed on December 1, 1944 (PB 18775). Thus, this letter was posted on the first day of resumed Express Mail service to France. The 25-cents franking pays the 5-cent UPU rate plus 20 cents for Special Delivery service at the prewar rate. The letter was censored at the New York censor station. At this time Allied and German forces were still engaged in deadly combat. In two weeks German forces would launch a massive counteroffensive along a 40-mile front in the Ardennes Forest that became known as the Battle of the Bulge.

Readers may wonder why the writer paid for service to rush the letter to the addressee via special delivery, but failed to further expedite transport of the letter by trans-Atlantic airmail. A look at postal bulletins answers the question. Airmail service to the whole of France did not resume until June 21, 1945, more than seven months later.

FURTHER EXTENSION OF LIMITED MAIL SERVICE TO FRANCE
ORDER No. 26616; DATED NOVEMBER 27, 1944.
Effective December 1, 1944, order No. 23429, dated November 3, 1944, is modified so as to allow the acceptance for mailing of letters and packages prepaid at the letter rate of postage up to a weight limit of 4 pounds 6 ounces, when addressed for delivery in the liberated areas of continental France to which limited mail service has previously been placed in effect. Provision likewise is hereby made for the resumption of registration and special-delivery service at the usual international rates applicable thereto.

Airmail from Europe to Siam with 4½-Cent Prexies

by

Howard Lee

Collectors usually find the 4½-cent Prexie on domestic mail franking third class parcels weighing 6 ounces (three times the 1.5 cent rate per two ounces) as seen in the last issue of the newsletter (No. 43). The cover illustrated here, postmarked April 23, 1939, shows a multi franking of the White House Prexie paying the 23-cent airmail rate from Europe to Siam (Thailand after September 15, 1939), in effect for the previous four years.



Beginning April 21, 1937 correspondents in the U.S. could choose two routes for their airmail letters to Siam. On that date airmail service began from San Francisco to Hong Kong (FAM-14) with air onward to Bangkok at the rate of 70 cents per half ounce. This new service was designed to shorten transit times of the old service where mail was routed by ship from the east coast to Europe, with air service beyond and payable at the rate of 23 cents for the air service. This rate had been in effect since July 9, 1935.

The cover shown here bears 28 cents postage. It pays the 5-cent UPU rate to Europe plus the 23-cent airmail rate from Europe (Amsterdam). Note the manuscripts “via Amsterdam” and “from Europe directly” beneath the airmail directives. The cover is back stamped Bangkok May 1, 1939 documenting a transit time of a mere ten days.

The writer, from New York, may have timed his posting to a ship scheduled to leave port the next day, thereby shortening the over all transit time. Correspondents from the western U.S. wishing to send their mail to New York by airmail would have been assessed an additional 3 cents per ounce.

The combined surface/airmail service via Europe remained in place until June 14, 1940. After that, until the beginning of World War II when service was suspended altogether, all airmail to Thailand went on the FAM-14 route, and writers had to pay the full 70 cents per half ounce.

Tales from the Other Side – Part VI: Gutter Snipes

by

Francis Ferguson
ferg@FloridaStampShows.com

Ugly duckling. That is one word that comes to mind for a gutter snipe. A gutter snipe is created when something fails in the production process affecting the final cutting of the 4 subject sheets into post office ready panes for distribution. A misalignment of the cutting blade or a paper-fold could be responsible. According to established procedures such defective material should be removed and destroyed. As may be seen from the examples accompanying this article, it did not always happen.



While the visually interesting blocks with gutter snipes are great to look at, the ones that keep me going are used examples that pop up from time to time. I have managed to find more used examples of gutter snipes than I ever expected. Several have appeared on cover or piece, but most appear off paper in general stamp mixes and accumulations. What is someone else's junk is my treasured find. This collecting area of Prexie EFO material can be dirt cheap -- if not free.

The examples shown here are a bit odd to look at and may give the false impression of additional stamps being attached. In the case of the gutter snipe of the 30-cent value shown in the Spring 2008 issue (No. 41), 98 per cent of that stamp is accounted for. The missing 2 per cent makes it a true oddity -- a really big gutter snipe! I venture that 99.99 per cent of the non-collecting public would use that pair for postage, counting it as two stamps never giving a second thought to the extra paper salvage between them. The thought sends shivers down my spine! [I do make sure the 30-cent gutter snipe "pair" is not left out as a temptation for my other half to use as common postage.]

* * * * *

Using eBay to Provide Illustrations for Write-Ups

Steve Davis's crash cover illustration article in the last issue (No. 43) was downloaded directly from the eBay website. This is instructive, because we can all enjoy sharing our expertise without having to own the covers we discuss. In the Fall 2007 issue (No. 39) I presented an early FAM 22 non-military cover I have never owned. In this case the owner was willing to provide a jpg color scan at 300 dpi resolution enabling me to reproduce it for the newsletter at high resolution. Readers should be on the lookout for interesting items on eBay they cannot afford to purchase or that may lie outside their immediate collecting interest.

Vichy French Internment Camp de Noé

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



On this April 1941 cover from New York City to Camp de Noé, at Haute-Garonne, France a 30-cent Winged Globe stamp prepaid the half-ounce airmail rate for trans-Atlantic service to Europe (in effect May 1939 to November 1, 1946) and a 15-cent Prexie paid the international registration fee (in effect April 1925 to February 1, 1945). The letter was routed through Bermuda where it was censored (#2019). The faint double circle purple ink marking was applied at the camp. Mail service to Vichy France continued until November 1942 when German forces occupied the region in response to Allied gains in North Africa, cutting off all service from the U.S.

The French government established a number of civilian internment camps before the start of World War II to house Spanish Republican refugees fleeing the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939. One of these camps was Camp de Noé, which under Vichy French jurisdiction was a guarded hospital facility intended for the disabled and individuals over age 60. Established in February 1941 it was located near Toulouse in the Midi-Pyrenees Region and set up to house wounded Spanish Republican and International Brigade prisoners. The Camp also accepted detained Jewish refugees with tuberculosis who had been deported from areas of the Saar, the Rheinland, and France.

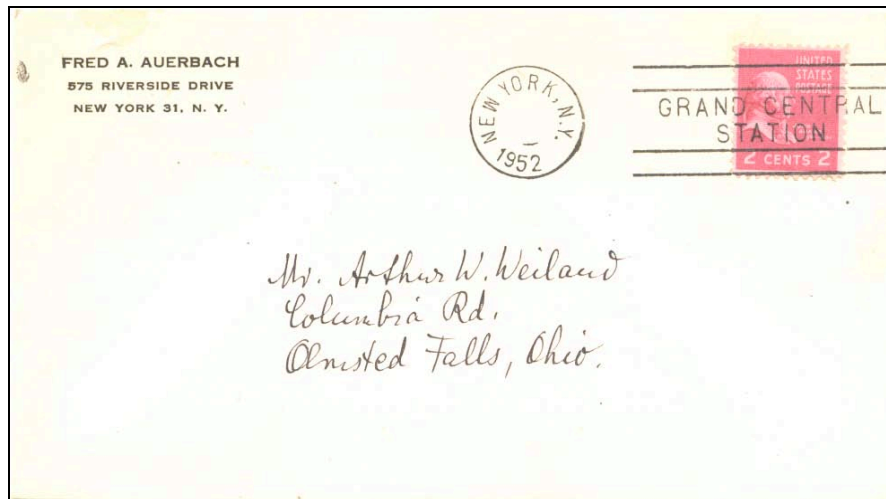
Records show that by April 1941 when this registered letter was sent, nearly 1500 individuals were detained at Camp de Noé.

The hospital closed in December 1941, but the Camp remained operational, serving as a staging area for deportation to the concentration camps. Beginning November 1942 the Germans began sending Jewish detainees to the east, mainly Auschwitz.

A UPU Printed Matter Rate Anomaly, 1949 to 1953

by

Dickson Preston



The domestic rate for third class single piece mail matter was 1½ cents per two ounces from 15 April 1925 until 31 December 1948. The equivalent UPU rate for printed matter to foreign destinations was also 1½ cents per two ounces. Thus, the rates were the same for both domestic and foreign mail until the domestic rate rose to 2 cents on 1 January 1949.

Since the rates were in effect for almost three years the reason for the anomaly remains unclear. US businesses would enjoy an advantage over foreign rivals if their UPU printed matter rates were lower because they could send advertising at relatively cheaper rates. Perhaps this accounts for the odd rate structure. The covers illustrated here were generated during the anomaly period.

In any case the anomaly ended on 1 November 1953 when the UPU printed matter rate was raised to 2 cents for the first two ounces and 1½ cents for each additional ounce.

Common as Dirt – The 6-Cent Transport Airmail Stamp

by

Bill Helbock

When I started collecting Prexies back in the 1980s I enjoyed a multi frame exhibit at WESTPEX prepared by Walt Cole that focused entirely on the 3-cent Jefferson stamp. I was so impressed with his imagination and ingenuity that I prevailed upon him to contribute a chapter on the subject for my 1988 monograph, *Prexie Postal History*. In my opinion Walt accomplished a feat, taking one of the most common stamps of the 20th century and with it exploring the many and varied aspects of contemporary postal history.

For us who share a penchant for airmail postal history a similar candidate exists with the widely overlooked and almost equally common 6-cent Transport airmail stamp. As G.H. Davis reports, from June 26, 1941 until distribution finally ended in the late 1940s, postmasters received a total of 4,746,527,700 copies. That's almost five billion stamps -- enough to rate it a *common* stamp by any standard. In addition, the definitive was also released in booklet pane format beginning March 18, 1943.



Figure 1. A 6¢ Transport used by a Canadian serviceman through Field Post Office 524 in Italy. Although the letter was mailed by a Canadian through a Canadian field post office to an address in Canada, it was to be transported on a space available basis by the U.S. Army Postal Service. Use of U.S. postage was therefore authorized.

A logical approach for building a collection of 6-cent Transport postal history would include division of subjects into domestic and international uses -- just as Davis and Cole have done. Domestic uses might include proper franking of the stamp in sheet and booklet formats for single and multiple weights. Since the basic domestic airmail rate increased from 6 to 8 cents per ounce on March 26, 1944, opportunities exist to find interesting auxiliary markings associated with improper franking at the old rate. Other auxiliary markings--including interrupted mail transport--also provide subjects to be explored. 6-cent Transports used in lieu of special service stamps such as special delivery and postage due or in combination with other stamps to pay for these special services, and registry, might also be fruitful areas for exploration.

Military and military-related uses would be a major component of the collection. The Postmaster General ordered a special 6-cent rate applied to airmail to or from members of the U.S. armed forces on Christmas Day 1941. Often referred to as the armed forces concession rate, in October 1942 this rate was extended to mail of American civilians served by military post offices outside the continental U.S., and later to the U.S. Merchant Marine in January 1943 and selected allied forces mail carried by the United States on a space available basis (*See Figure 1 above*). The concession rate remained in effect until October 1, 1946.

As Steve Suffet relates in his essay, “United States Postal Rates During World War II” (Sherman, 2002), there has long been a debate over when the PMG order authorizing the 6-cent concession air rate came into effect. Apparently, the order was dated December 23, 1941, and a press release announcing the order was made Christmas Day. However, since the *Postal Bulletin* did not publish Christmas Day, the order did not appear for the record until December 26th. From a practical standpoint, it is interesting to speculate how long it took news of the PMG’s order to reach military units in the field.



Figure 2. This cover, franked with a 6-cent Transport and clearly endorsed, “Clipper,” was postmarked at Hickam Field January 7, 1942. It is the earliest use of 6-cent concession rate applied to a clipper cover from troops in Hawaii known to the author. Does anyone have an earlier example to show?

In Hawaii it appears the 20-cent clipper rate was commonly used throughout December and into the first week of January. The earliest use of a 6-cent Transport I have seen is postmarked Hickam Field, January 7th (*Figure 2*). A few examples of mail from troops in Hawaii marked “airmail” and franked at the 6-cent rate may be found prior to January 7th, but these were not intended to pay for clipper service but merely air service to destination once the letter reached the mainland.

The largest components of U.S. Army troops stationed outside the continental U.S. in late December 1941 were located in Hawaii (42,000), the Canal Zone (31,000), and Alaska and Puerto Rico (22,000 each). Prevailing airmail rates for the first ounce to and from those territories were: Hawaii (20 cents), Canal Zone (15 cents), Puerto Rico (10 cents) and Alaska (6 cents). Obviously the greatest monetary advantage gained with the new rate would accrue to personnel stationed in Hawaii.

A census of my admittedly limited collection of mail from December 1941 and January 1942 from troops assigned to the territories reveals that in Puerto Rico the 10-cent rate was still being used on December 27th. In the Canal Zone, airmail letters addressed to the U.S. through late December and well into January 1942 were still being franked with the 15-cent Canal Zone Gaillard Cut airmail stamp, but by early February franking had switched to 6 cents—typically paid with a pair of 3-cent Goethals stamps.

Wartime uses of the 6-cent Transport provide the specialist with unbounded opportunities for the stamp to tell interesting stories. Let me offer a few examples here. *Figure 3* shows a domestic airmail cover originating at New York, Bronx Central Annex, on December 22, 1941. Addressed to PO Box 1539, Missoula, Montana, lying almost dead center on the cover it has a small circular magenta hand stamp reading FORT MISSOULA / CENSORED / MONTANA. Censorship on any piece of domestic mail suggests no ordinary correspondence and that likely a detainee/internee or prisoner of war was somehow involved.



Figure 3. This somewhat enigmatic domestic airmail cover from New York to Missoula two weeks after the U.S. entered the war represents an artifact from one of the less celebrated aspects of America's war on the home front – the internment of Italian merchant seamen.

The address line, “Ex Biancamano,” is the key to why this letter was censored. The addressee was Don Alfredo Bruno, Chaplain (*Reverendo*) of the luxury Italian liner SS *Conte Biancamano* that, homebound from Valparaiso, sought safe harbor in the Canal Zone in June 1940 after Italy entered the war against France and England. The ship was later seized and its crew of 483 interned in the U.S. for the duration of the war. Notably, the crewmen were sent to Fort Missoula internment camp in April 1941 eight months before the U.S. entered the war. As U.S. booty, the ship was re-outfitted as a troop ship, sailing as the USS *Hermitage*. The ship was returned to its Italian owners in 1947.

To be continued . . .

Spring 2009



Whole No. 45

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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Great Britain Interns Her Jewish Refugees In World War II

by

Louis Fiset

Early in 1939, The Council for German Jewry in Great Britain made arrangements to rent Kitchener Camp, a World War I facility located in Southeast England at Richborough, near Sandwich. Kitchener Camp was an accommodation by the British for German Jews who had documentation for emigration to another country but were awaiting their place on the quota. Originally, the camp was to house about 3,500 male refugees, primarily from Germany and Austria. After the outbreak of the war, most of the detainees were allowed to volunteer for the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps, with the remainder being transferred to the Ramsey Camp on the Isle of Man. The camp was disbanded by June 1940.



The multiple significance of the incoming cover to Kitchener Camp shown above is easy to miss. Postmarked June 27, 1940, the 30-cent franking with Famous American stamps paid the trans-Atlantic half-ounce airmail rate to England. By this time Kitchener Camp had closed with its occupants dispersed. Directory assistance was provided ("No trace B3"), after which the letter was forwarded to one of the numerous hotels serving as internment camps on the Isle of Man.

The manuscript pencil marking, "1. 10/7" indicates the addressee had left the Isle of Man on 7 July, the same day the S.S. *Dunera* departed Liverpool with 2,288 Jewish internees and POWs bound for internment in Australia. The name, Leon David Halpersohn, appears on the passenger list, thereby confirming the significance of the pencil marking. The Jewish refugee disembarked at Sydney 57 days later and was transported to the Hay Internment Camp.

Mail for internees sent to Canada on ships departing Liverpool earlier that month was forwarded to them via Canada's Base A.P.O at Ottawa. However, mail for internees sent to Australia was returned to the sender. In this case the letter has a New York receiver on the back, dated 6 December 1940.

Finally, the letter was posted during the period from March to November 1940 when mail planes on the FAM 18 route were diverted to avoid Bermuda censorship. The censor resealing tape was applied in England.

Honolulu/Dec 7/8:00AM/1941/Hawaii

by

Lucien Klein



In 1997 I acquired the cover shown above, postmarked Honolulu, December 7, 1941. It was part of a State Life Insurance Company lot acquired earlier by a part time dealer. The back side reveals the sender as Clifton C. Steggs, USS *Medusa*, c/o Postmaster, San Pedro, Calif., and the provisional censor marking, “**RELEASED BY I.C.B. 72**”. Likely the correspondence contained a premium payment and was dropped into a Honolulu mail receptacle on Saturday evening, December 6th. [Ed. Note: The repair ship *Medusa* (AR-1), was at Pearl Harbor during the attack. The crew is credited with downing two Japanese dive bombers and firing on a midget submarine in harbor waters that was eventually sunk by a destroyer.]

I have seen several covers addressed by military personnel to the same company, both before and after December 7th. For some years after acquiring this cover, I was unable to learn of any other cover with a similar historical cancel, thereby raising doubts about its authenticity. Then, the Oct – Nov 2003 issue of *La Posta: A Journal of American Postal History* documented a cover with an 11:00 a.m., December 7, 1941 Honolulu cancel. More recently, from the Randy Neil collection a Mason Shoe Manufacturing Company cover with a 9:00 a.m. December 7, 1941 Honolulu cancel appeared in a Nutmeg auction.

Then, notice came of the National Postal Museum exhibit, running from June 6, 2009 to June 6, 2010, focusing on FDR and Stamps of the Great Depression. It includes a cover postmarked Honolulu, Dec 7, 8:00 A M, 1941. This double weight cover is shown below, which now documents two known covers with an 8:00 a.m. Honolulu cancel. Are there more?

This cover was donated to the museum by the estate of John R. Rion, who died in 2006. According to the website, on December 6th Private Rion dropped the oversize envelope at the Honolulu post office, containing a photograph, and addressed to his business partner, a barber in Perry, Iowa. The website showing this cover and telling more about Rion can be found at:

http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/museum/1d_Pearl_Harbor_Mail.html



I am compiling a census of covers processed at the Honolulu post office on December 7, 1941, addressed to any destination and postmarked at any hour of the day. If you have such a cover, please send me a scan and description. My email address is: lusal@msn.com

I am also searching for original (primary) source information on the operation of the Honolulu post office on December 7, 1941. Please let me know if you have or have seen any such information.

- - - -

The Postal Bulletin, Thursday December 11, 1941 (No. 18343)

JAPAN—SUSPENSION OF MAIL SERVICE TO

ORDER No. 16547:

Ordered that, during the continuance of hostilities between the United States and Japan, no letters, packages (including parcel post) or other mail matter originating within the United States or its possessions and destined for Japan or its possessions, or addressed to any post office, port, or other place under the jurisdiction or control of Japan, shall be dispatched from the United States, or its possessions, to their respective destinations. All foreign transit mails to and from Japan, or its possessions, etc., shall be held at exchange offices. With respect to other foreign transit mails, further instructions will be given exchange offices.

Postmasters at offices of the United States and its possessions are hereby instructed to forward to the appropriate exchange office any mail matter on hand or hereafter received, addressed for delivery in Japan, its possessions or any post office, port, or other place under the jurisdiction or control of Japan.

The Japanese possessions are to be considered as including Chosen (Korea), Taiwan (Formosa), Bokoto (Pescadores) Islands, and Karafuto (Japanese Sakhalin).

The places under the jurisdiction of Japan are to be considered as including Marianne (Ladrone) Islands, Marshall Islands, Caroline Islands (Mandates under Versailles Treaty), and Leased Territory of Kwantung.

The territory under the control of Japan is to be considered as including Manchuria and the occupied part of China.

FRANK C. WALKER,
Postmaster General.

More Unusual Prexie Postcard Uses

by

Bob Hohertz

Here are two more postcard usages that may be of interest to readers of *The Prexie Era*. The first is the original message half of a registered international paid reply postal card sent to Ternopil, Soviet Union, in 1941. Ternopil is a major city in what is now the western part of Ukraine. The card is written in German and, from what I can determine concerns serious family matters. Interestingly, the card was routed via San Francisco.



The second postcard was also sent in 1941 to the western Ukraine region, then part of the Soviet Union. It went airmail via FAM-18 with registry and return receipt requested fees paid. There is a 1-cent convenience overpayment of postage – 30 cents air, 15 cents foreign registry and 5 cents return receipt fee.

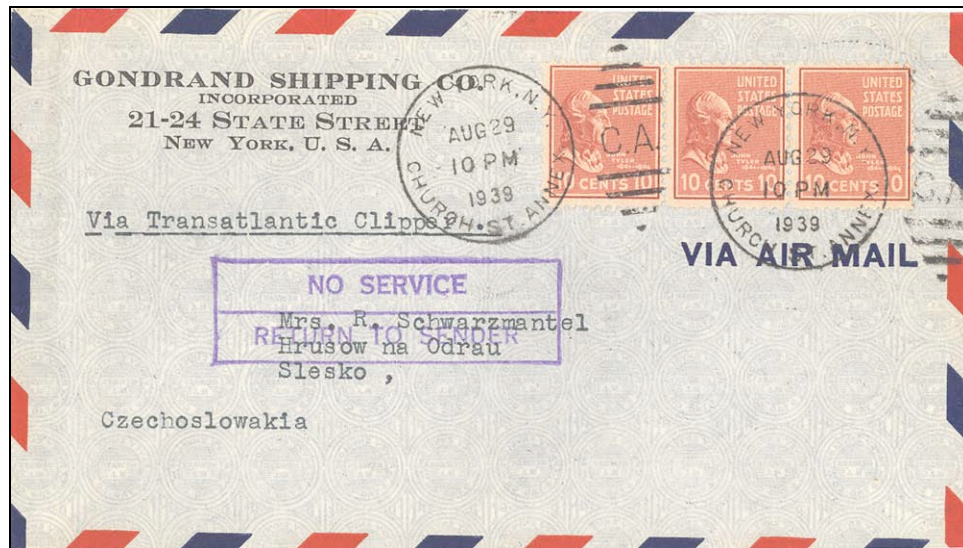


The card and its message, in Yiddish, was sent to Kremenets exactly two months before the German-Soviet war broke out. The Germans moved into the area several days later, and by August of 1942 had murdered virtually the entire Jewish population, some 15,000 people.

Suspended Mail, September 1939

by

Jeff Shapiro



Illustrated here is a cover sent by trans-Atlantic airmail service franked with a strip of three 10-cent Prexies to prepay the 30 cents per half-ounce rate to Europe. It was in transit at the outbreak of World War II.

The cover is addressed to the Slesko region of Czechoslovakia, a part of North Moravia, located on the Czech-Polish border, an area rich in iron and coal deposits. Normal mail service continued to the region even after Czechoslovakia was annexed and incorporated into Greater Germany in March 1939.

But on September 1, 1939 and without a declaration of war, German forces invaded Poland from the north, south and west. Invasion forces marched through the Slesko region. The German invasion resulted in declarations of war by Great Britain, France, Australia, and New Zealand on September 3, 1939.

With the turmoil of the German invasion, this cover, mailed on August 29, 1939 from downtown Manhattan, likely made the September 1st FAM-18 flight of PANAM's *Yankee Clipper* to Southampton, but was intercepted by British postal authorities and returned to the sender.



“Detain” Label: A Mystery of World War II Bermuda Censorship

by

Lawrence Sherman



Peter A. Flynn’s book, *Intercepted in Bermuda: The Censorship of Transatlantic Mail During the Second World War*, provides a great resource for collectors of World War II postal history to help understand their wartime trans-Atlantic mail. It records that on the day German forces entered Polish soil on September 1, 1939, nine British censors (four for international cables, five for mail) set to work at Hamilton, Bermuda. Intercontinental aviation became a reality by 1939, and Bermuda was strategically located to serve as a refueling station for flying boats on the new transatlantic air route. Laying close to major sea routes in the North Atlantic, the island colony quickly became “the most important censorship and contraband control point for transatlantic mail.” Transit mail -- mail to and from other places that went through Bermuda, became the main concern of the Imperial Censorship Detachment, whose numbers peaked at nearly 1,000 in 1941.

Flynn details the markings, sealing tapes, and labels used by Bermuda censors and analyses 7,854 covers handled by them. He also tabulates usages of censorship devices. The “Detain” label on the cover shown here is a PC116 label (tiny print, upper right of label) used only in 1940. Six “Detain” examples are known, 0.08% of the total (p. 55). Flynn states it is “another rare label, printed in black and also used in late 1940. Examples have been recorded on letters from the United States to Hungary, Germany, and Italy” (p. 75).

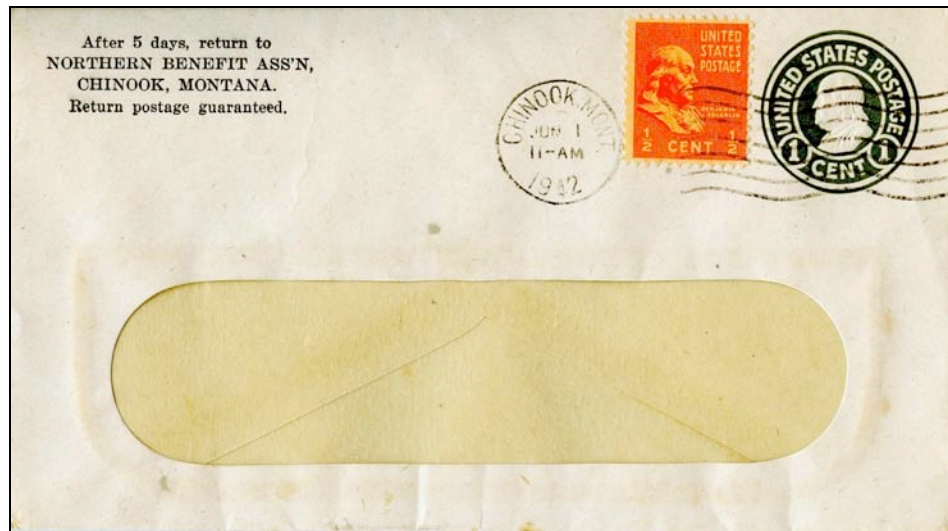
The cover shown above originated in Cordelia, California on November 5, 1940 as surface registered mail intended for delivery in Budapest. Two Prexies paid the 15-cent registry fee; two Famous Americans the 5-cent UPU rate from the United States. The cover was examined and detained by a Bermuda censor.

Why was the cover detained in Bermuda and when was it released? Manuscript markings on the label tell us: the cover was docketed on “21.11.40”; the likely examiner was “3655”; and unnamed vessel “16” was traveling eastbound (“E”). But the markings are silent on a reason for detention. Did the envelope contain unused postage stamps? Was the addressee on the Black List maintained by United Kingdom censors (“listed”)? We know that most detained mail was released in 1946. But why it was detained in the first place *Intercepted in Bermuda* cannot tell us.

Third Class 1.5-Cent Rate

by

Bill Geijsbeek



It can be surmised that the Northern Benefit Association was a typical beneficent organization covering illness and/or death benefits. It needed to make announcements of assessments (typically printed matter - thus qualifying for third class rates). Since many members were local, this material could be sent by the 1-cent drop letter rate. But for addressees outside of Chinook, Montana, the 1.5-cent third class rate per 2 ounces could be used (effective April 15, 1925 – December 31, 1948), as was the case here. And yes, the envelope was mailed with an unsealed flap. In addition, this 1-cent window envelope has a 1941 watermark, which was therefore current when used.

Common as Dirt – The 6-Cent Transport Airmail Stamp

by

Bill Helbock

Continued from Issue No. 44

Another story of wartime imprisonment and corresponding human loss is represented by the following two covers. The double weight letter shown above is from a wife in Wyoming desperate to contact her husband in the Philippines. It was received by Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces in Australia (U.S.A.F.I.A.) probably in February or March 1942. The red “LAST REPORTED P.I.” handstamp on the reverse indicates USAFIA was aware of the last reported location of Sergeant Sinadine. Apparently USAFIA made an additional effort to locate the sergeant as evidenced by the pencil manuscript notation “Mindanao P.I. / mia.s(?) 5/28/42” on the left side of the cover. It is known that the U.S. Air Corps operated flights to an advance base on Mindanao into May 1942.

I speculate that being transported to Mindanao, the cover was returned to USAFIA and forwarded on to the Adjutant General’s Office in Washington. A black “Rec’d A. G. O. / For Directory Service” with SEPT 10 1942 date appears top center. The further “RETURN TO SENDER /

Soldier Missing in Action / (Verified in War Department) struck in red at far left would have directed the letter back to Mrs. Sinadine.



The next cover illustrates another attempt by Mrs. Sinadine to contact her husband. Postmarked March 30, 1942, it was addressed in care of General Douglas MacArthur at the 19th Headquarters Bombing Squadron in Australia. A clerk at APO 501, which served MacArthur's headquarters, applied a "SERVICE SUSPENDED" marking and directed the letter to be returned to sender. It appears that an earlier handstamp to "TRY U.S. ARMY / WAR DEPARTMENT / WASHINGTON, D.C." was crossed out. Interestingly, another handstamp located under the 6c Transport that originally read "Last Reported P.I." with mss. Mia 8/22/42 was crossed out.



These few examples illustrate only a tiny sample of the many fascinating stories that can be told through a collection specializing in the domestic wartime uses of the common 6-cent Transport.

Although the 6-cent Transport was not a convenient denomination to pay prevailing international airmail rates—the 30-cent per half-ounce rate to Europe required five copies for example, they can occasionally be found in “helping” roles, such as may be seen in the next two covers.



The first is an airmail cover to South Africa from Renton, Washington, postmarked December 7, 1942. It was franked with a 6-cent Transport stamp helping pay the old 95 cents per half-ounce rate in effect August 6, 1940 through July 17, 1941. The correct rate at the time of posting was actually 60 cents (effective December 2, 1941), but confusion over rapidly changing international rates was common.



A 6-cent Transport makes up part of the 90 cents franking to pay air post and registration to Mount Isa, Queensland, Australia shown in this second example. The cover was postmarked Portland, Oregon, June 29, 1942. Unfortunately, no civilian international airmail service to Australia existed by this date so the cover was first flown to San Francisco and then went by ship to Brisbane where it arrived August 21st. From there the letter was carried on to its destination, arriving six days later.

Summer 2009



Whole No. 46

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

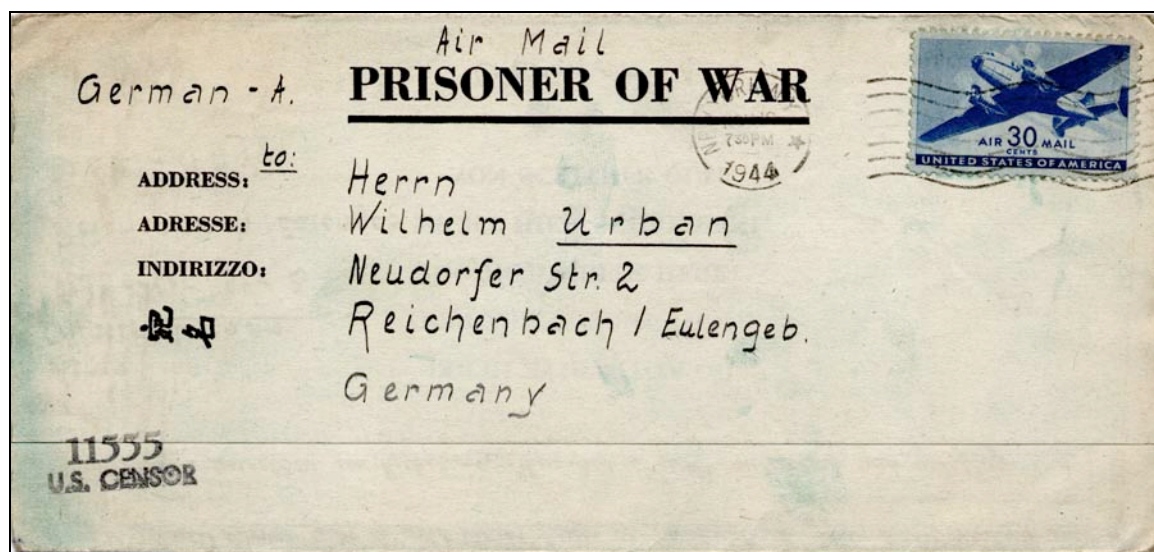
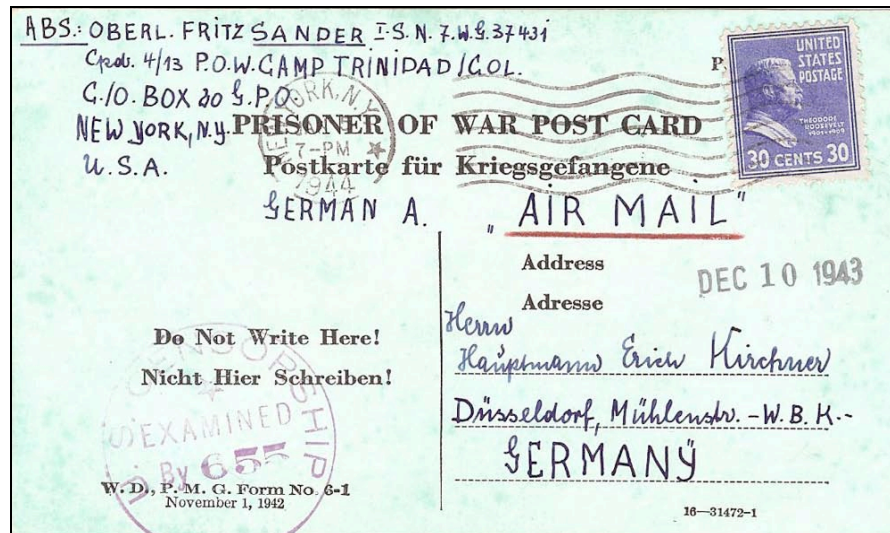
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Prexie/Transport Usage on POW Mail

by

Robert L. Markovitz



In World War II more than 600,000 German prisoners of war were brought to the US from the European and North African theaters. As a result, POW mail back to the homeland is common. Less common is POW mail sent by air, which required full prepayment of the prewar 30-cent airmail rate to Europe on both post cards and letterforms, the only permitted means of communication.

Internees and POWs who volunteered to work while interned received 80 cents per day in wages. Thus, payment of airmail postage was expensive. More, no guarantee existed that the letter would arrive any quicker than regular mail since postal service to Germany had been suspended since December 11, 1941. For these reasons, correspondence sent by air is seldom seen in dealers' stock. When it does, post cards and letterforms franked with Prexies and Transport stamps appear with the same frequency.

Tales from the Other Side – Part VII: Splices

by

Francis Ferguson
ferg@FloridaStampShows.com



Think of the high speed Stickney rotary presses churning out seemingly endless impressions of stamps on a continuous roll of paper (web). Wait one minute. Every roll of paper must have a beginning and end. So, how does the end of one roll get joined to the start of the next roll? One word – tape.

In the ideal world of rotary stamp production the forward and trailing edge of the web would be overlapped and taped together by hand, then marked in red pencil or crayon for removal during the post-press production process. Thankfully for collectors, such a perfect world does not exist, with a happy result that a lot of taped/sliced material has fallen into collectors' hands. While one would think the tape/splice kind of pieces would be mostly the same, in reality many varieties exist. In theory there should be sheet splices for every value of the series through the 50-cent definitive as well as the eight coil values. I have managed to obtain 12 examples of the 29 face-different stamps.

Because the \$1, \$2, \$5 values were produced on flat plate presses that did not employ a web, such splices would not be expected to occur.

Splice/taped material should be collected in strips or blocks to show the important elements of a splice. One or two placements of tape may be present along with single or multiple strokes of red crayon. [A word of caution: the adhesive nature of the tape after nearly 70 years is often in question. Make sure your pieces do not fall apart! Encase in mylar sleeves, if needed, to preserve the integrity of the item.] Most pieces show a close to 50/50 single/double paper layer. However, I have seen pieces that are either almost totally single paper and others that had nearly total double paper. It all depends on how much of a paper overlap was used and how it was taped.

The example accompanying this article is representative of splices to be found on Prexie stamps and other rotary stock. It shows both the splice and accompanying red pencil marking to alert post production press workers

Tales From the Other Side – Part VI: A Follow-Up

by

John M. Hotchner

I've been enjoying Francis Ferguson's series on Presidential EFOs. In Issue 44 (Winter 2009) he discusses gutter snipes and provides illustrations. He omits one differentiation evident in the illustration that is worth discussing. Let's look at his last two items, the 6-cent and 8-cent singles reproduced here.

Note that unlike the 6-cent value, the 8-cent example has a horizontal joint line through the margin. To put this into proper context, recall that web production resulted in a continuous roll of printed stamps in a repeating series of units of four-pane plate impressions totaling 400 definitive sized stamps, with plate numbers in the four corners.



Each plate impression is segmented from the other by a joint line where the two semi-circular rotary plates meet.

Converting the web (the large roll of paper) into finished stamps involved first slicing the web into plate impression sections of 400 stamps, then cutting the plate impression sheets into retail panes of 100.

A gutter snipe with a joint line in the margin results from a miscut involving the intersheet margin, and a clear margin from a more commonly seen intrasheet miscut.

The proof of this explanation is shown by the plate block accompanying this article. Note particularly the intersheet gutter snipe caused by a horizontal misperf. Complicating matters a bit further, this piece also shows the perforation process took place before the web was sliced into sheets of 400. Obviously the slicing keyed on the perforations. Had they been in the proper location the slicing would have been entirely accurate.

Now, if you are not thoroughly confused . . . you now know that gutter snipes with marginal joint lines and associated with plate numbers are very scarce items and much more desirable than plain intrasheet snipes. Happy hunting!

Common as Dirt – The 6-Cent Transport Airmail Stamp

by

Bill Helbock

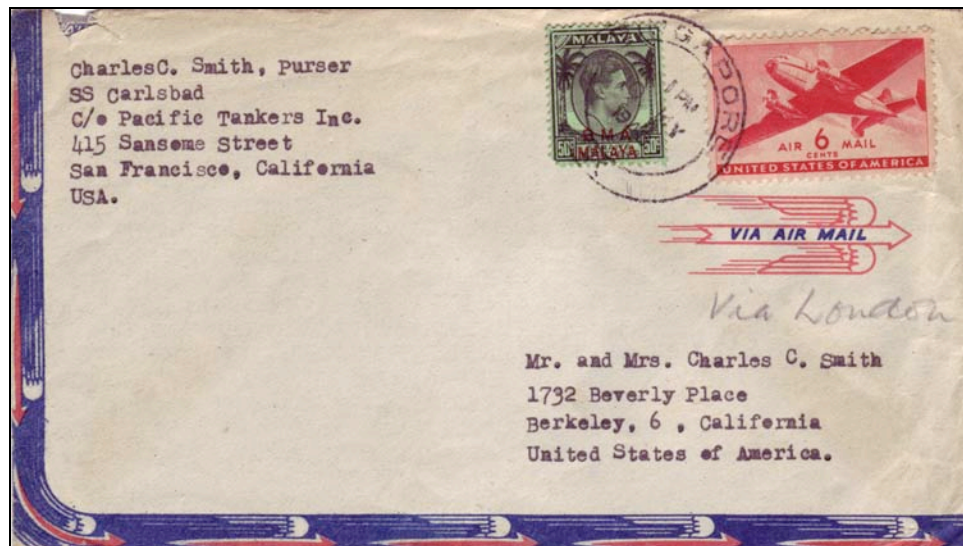
Continued from Issue No. 45

As is the case with domestic uses of the 6-cent Transport, one may find occasional international uses that are frankly surprising, or at least very unusual. The cover below originated with a Filipino national—perhaps associated with the American military. It is franked with a 6-cent Transport and was posted to the International Correspondence School in Scranton, Pennsylvania. The stamp is tied by a manuscript “Victoria, Tarlac, Philippines” and dated February 8, 1945. The author has seen no references to POD authorization of the concession airmail rate extended to civilians in the Philippines. And, if the sender was an employee of the U.S. military, it is not clear why the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD) would have censored his mail.



My final example of an unusual international use of the 6-cent Transport is illustrated in the next figure. This cover, from the purser of the S.S. *Carlsbad*, is franked with a 50-cent Malaya KGVI value overprinted B.M.A./MALAYA and a 6-cent Transport stamp, both tied SINGAPORE May 10, 1946. The letter is addressed to Berkeley, California, with the Via Air Mail envelope endorsed “Via London.”

BOAC resumed twice-weekly air service between Singapore and the United Kingdom on February 5th, 1946. The 50 Malay cents paid the current rate for air carriage to the UK and onward steamer across the Atlantic. The 6-cent Transport apparently paid the 6-cent airmail concession rate extended to civilian crews of the U.S. Merchant Marine on January 1, 1943. Since the purser was apparently eligible for the concession rate, the 6 cents postage would have been sufficient to provide U.S. airmail service. Likely he believed that a combination of British and American carriage would provide his letter faster delivery.

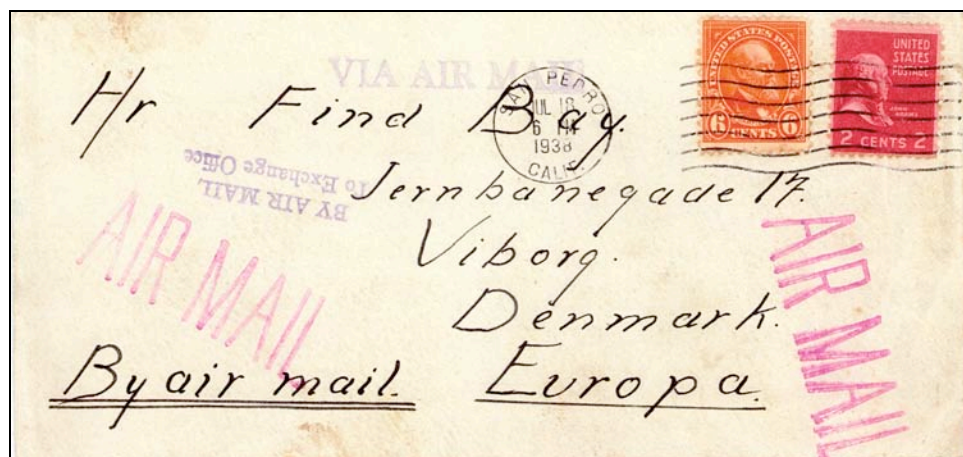


These are but a sampling of the interesting kinds of stories that might be told with examples of the humble 6-cent Transport used internationally. I do not claim the search for such material will be easy. However, with perseverance and patience there are pearls to be found. Happy hunting!

Mixed Franking On An Early Prexie Airmail Cover

by

Jim Felton



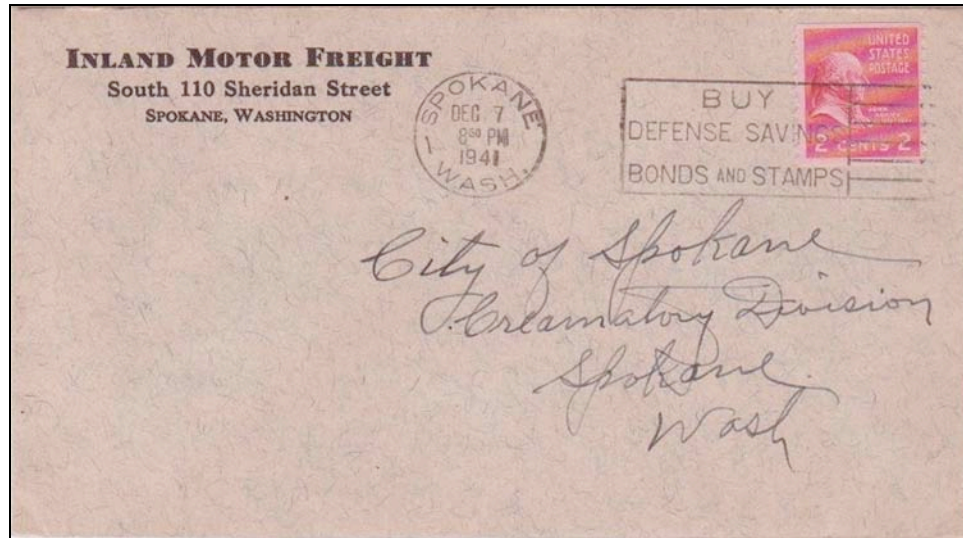
Mixed franking on early and late Prexie covers is popular among some Prexie collectors. Illustrated here is a cover to Denmark postmarked July 18, 1938, with postage paying the 3-cent domestic airmail surcharge from California to the exchange office at New York in addition to the 5-cent UPU rate.

The 6-cent value of the Fourth Bureau Issue used here was still current, since the 6-cent John Quincy Adams value that replaced it did not appear until July 28th, ten days later.

Spokane Postal History – A Day of Infamy

by

Larry Mann



My collecting interest focuses on the postal history of Spokane, located in eastern Washington state, from its beginnings as Spokan Falls in 1881 down to the present time. My covers touch on most aspects of nineteenth and twentieth century U.S. history, including World War II.

The most unusual aspect of the Prexie cover illustrated here is the December 7, 1941 cancellation. This was the day of the Pearl Harbor attack by Japanese Imperial forces that brought the U.S. into World War II. This commercial cover was sent by a freight company to the City of Spokane's Crematory *[sic]* Division.

The "BUY DEFENSE SAVINGS BONDS AND STAMPS" Spokane slogan cancel goes well with the date. First used in cities around the United States beginning in spring 1941, it advertised a campaign to encourage citizens to invest in savings bonds and stamps in support of national defense. Savings stamps were first issued May 1, 1941 and could be redeemed later for US Treasury Defense, War, or Savings bonds.

Cancellations with a December 7, 1941 date are scarce because this was a Sunday, and most post offices were closed. Mail already in the system, however, was canceled at mail processing centers, such as the one in Spokane.

This cover also shows a legitimate usage of the 2-cent Prexie vertically perfed coil paying the carrier post office local letter (in-city) rate, effective July 1, 1933 to March 26, 1944.

FAM 14 Airmail To Australia Via Hong Kong

by

Louis Fiset



Although beginning July 2, 1940 the FAM 19 route was available for airmail service from San Francisco to New Zealand and onward by air to Australia, correspondents could also direct their mail along the well established FAM 14 route from San Francisco to Hong Kong, with onward BOAC airmail service to Australia. The rate of 70 cents per half-ounce was the same for mail carried on both routes, with an estimated 13-day transit time between San Francisco and Sydney.

This double weight registered letter, postmarked August 26, 1940 at New York City, was routed on FAM 14 to Hong Kong where it was opened by censors then allowed to pass. However, the correspondent clearly indicated his preference for the new FAM 19 route as indicated by the directive "By P.A.A. Clipper to NEW ZEALAND." The letter arrived at San Francisco too late for the scheduled August 24th flight to Auckland and was placed on the next available flight, to Hong Kong, scheduled to depart on September 3rd. The alternative was the next FAM 19 flight scheduled to leave San Francisco September 11th. The Postal Bulletin indicated airmail service for Australia would be routed via Auckland as well as via Hong Kong.

U.S. Official Postal Guide Monthly Supplement - July 1940

FOREIGN AIR-MAIL SERVICE

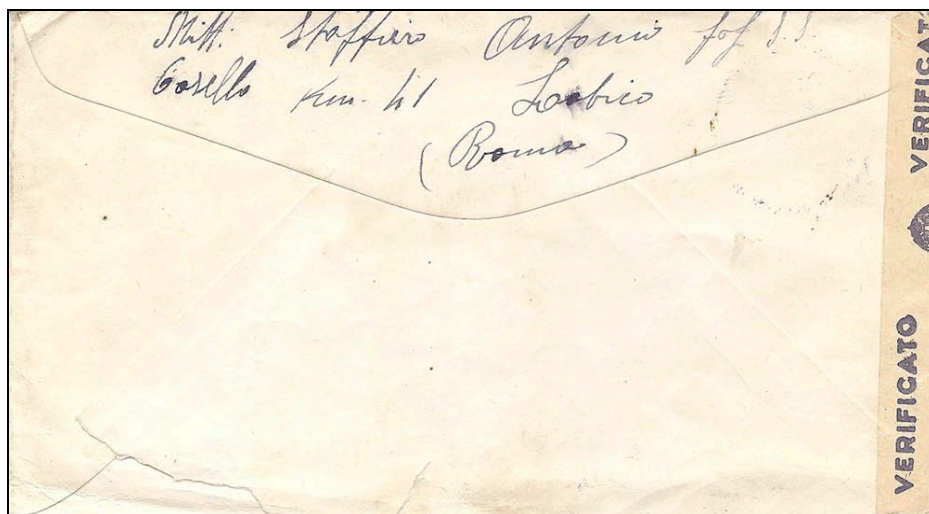
There is fortnightly air-mail service on the route from San Francisco by Los Angeles, Honolulu, Canton Island (South Pacific), and Noumea (New Caledonia), to Auckland (New Zealand), with connecting air service between Auckland and Sydney (maintained by New Zealand). The British air-mail service has been resumed from Hong Kong via Bangkok, Singapore, and Netherlands Indies to Australia, connecting at Hong Kong with the weekly service between San Francisco and Hong Kong. The transit time between San Francisco and Sydney is about 13 days weekly. Air mails for Australia will be routed via Auckland as well as via Hong Kong. Air mails for New Zealand will be routed via the direct service only. Air mails for Thailand (Siam), Malay States, Indo-China, Straits Settlements, and Netherlands Indies will be sent through by air.

The air-mail postage rates involved, per half ounce, are as follows: From the United States to Canton Island, 30 cents; to New Caledonia, 40 cents; to New Zealand, 50 cents; and to Australia, 70 cents. From Hawaii to Canton Island, 10 cents; to New Caledonia, 20 cents; to New Zealand, 30 cents; and to Australia, 50 cents.

Curious U.S. Postage on Post-War Italian Mail

by

Robert Schlesinger
robertsles@aol.com



The cover shown here was postmarked Labico Roma (a commune located 35 km southeast of Rome), on August 10, 1945, and addressed to the United States. It has an Italian censor tape as well as a censor hand stamp put into use after Italy's capitulation in 1943. Instead of Italian franking, affixed were a 2-cent Prexie and 3-cent commemorative stamps paying the then current 5-cent UPU rate for a foreign letter from the U.S.

This curious cover raises questions. Postal service from the U.S. to Rome resumed July 12, 1944, but more than a year would pass before full service was restored to the entire country. When did mail service *to* the U.S. resume, and what role did the APO system play in helping move the civil mails? Why were U.S. stamps tolerated on this letter – no Italian stamps available at the rural post office, perhaps staffed by U.S. army personnel? Please contact me or your editor with your ideas so any explanation can be shared with the readership.

5-Cent Stamped Airmail Envelopes In Partial Payment of A 10-Cent Rate

by

Louis Fiset



When the 5-cent airmail letter rate within the continental U.S. went to 8 cents per ounce on July 6, 1932 the 5-cent airmail stamped envelope, in production since 1929, became obsolete. In anticipation of a return to the 5-cent rate, the Post Office Department continued to produce the envelope until 1937. The resumed 5-cent rate, however, was still nine years away. Rather than destroy the entire large stock on hand, POD shipped some of its excess to post offices in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands where the airmail rate to the continental U.S. was 10 cents. Postal patrons could affix a 5-cent Prexie to make up the difference, as seen here in the two examples, from Charlotte Amalie, V.I. and San Juan, P.R.

The second example is of added interest to me because the addressee was a crewman from the German liner, S.S. *Columbus*, scuttled off the coast of New Jersey in December 1939. The detained ex-*Columbus* crew was awaiting repatriation at the Angel Island quarantine station. Repatriation never came, and the crew was subsequently interned at Fort Stanton, New Mexico throughout the war. Mail from U.S. dependencies to interned Axis sailors is uncommon.

Fall 2009



Whole No. 47

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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Larry Robert Paige
October 18, 1937 - October 26, 2009

I always enjoyed talking with Larry Paige at major stamp shows, because of his great enthusiasm and his philatelic knowledge. He was also a person of great compassion, who felt keenly the sufferings of others. We have lost a fine philatelist and a kindly human being.

Dickson Preston

Most subscribers to this newsletter will remember Larry Paige as one of the premier collectors of Prexie postal history and certainly one of the most knowledgeable. His encyclopedic grasp of details associated with the series enabled him to find Prexie covers with elusive rates and dates, the best postal markings, and undiscovered material often missed by other experienced collectors. His collection focused on solo and multi-franked single stamp usages. At the time of his death last October he lacked only one solo usage – the \$5 value – yet to be discovered.

Larry came relatively late to Prexie philately. His stamp collecting interests began with British North America, and he built major collections of Canada's 'Small Queens' and 'Admiral' issues. He became a recognized expert on the Canadian Flag Cancells, in use at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. His in depth article "Canadian Flag Cancells The Classic Era -- 1896-1902" was published in the 1981 *Congress Book*. His exhibit of the flag cancells was a consistent gold medal winner at major World Series of Philately shows.

* * * * *

2009 Subscriptions Payable Now

The Fall 2009 issue is the last in the quartet of *The Prexie Era* for 2009. This means it is time for readers to renew your subscriptions. Rates for 2010 remain the same as for last year: \$5 for the electronic version, \$10 for the color "snail-mail" version and, if you subscribe to both versions, well, you do the math. Unless prior arrangements have been made, please send payments and/or questions to Jeff Shapiro directly:

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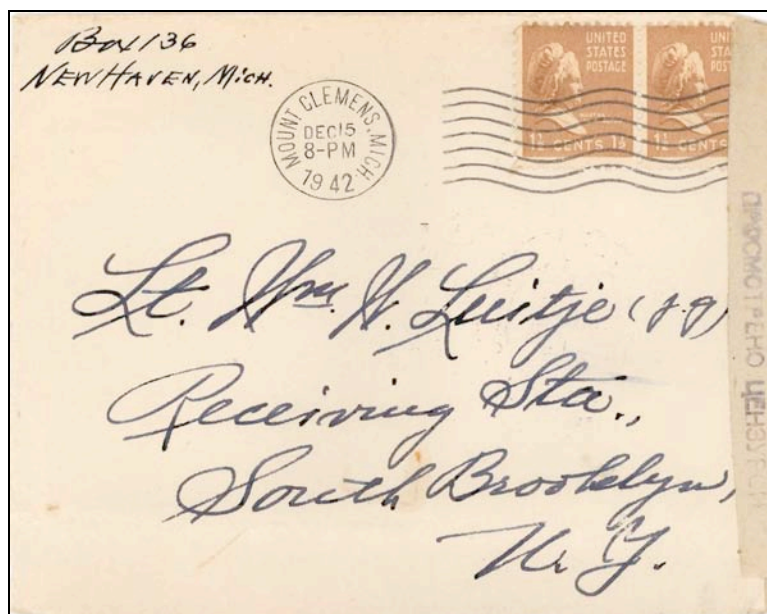
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A Domestic Cover (Michigan to New York) With Russian Censor Tape

by

Jeffrey Shapiro

The Arctic Convoys of World War II operated between the United States and Great Britain to the northern ports of Archangel (Arkangelsk) and Murmansk, providing essential supplies from the Allies for the Soviet Union's struggle against the Germans. Records show there were 78 convoys between August 1941 and May 1945. These convoys ran twice monthly, but were suspended for three months in Summer 1941 after German aircraft and U-boats attacked and heavily damaged a 35 vessel convoy. After a secret German plan to intercept the remainder of the Convoy by the German battleship *Tirpitz* was discovered by the British Enigma Project, the surviving group of eleven ships, now known as the "Lost Convoy," was ordered to scatter and reassemble at Archangel instead of returning to England as planned.



Communication between the "Lost Convoy" and the rest of the world remained open. Individuals writing to the crew, such as this December 15, 1942 Christmas greeting to Lieutenant William W Luitje, in command of the Convoy's armed guards, were instructed to address their correspondence to "Receiving Station, South Brooklyn, NY, where mail was collected and sent to England for delivery via the British navy to Archangel. This, therefore, explains the cover's Russian censor tape and receiving mark.

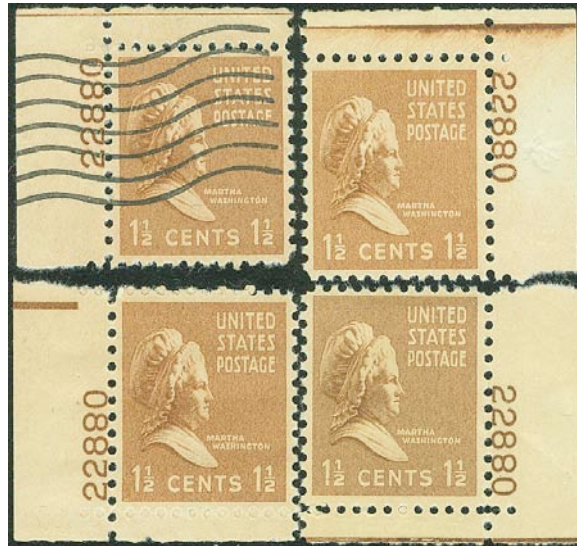
The events surrounding the "Lost Convoy" are believed to have inspired Alistair Maclean's 1946 novel, *H.M.S. Ulysses*.

Tales from the Other Side – Part VII: Troubled Eights

by

Francis Ferguson

ferg@FloridaStampShows.com



EFO material covers a wide range of types and presentations. Duplication of some of the more common errors is routine, while others happen in a totally random fashion --- resulting in unique pieces.

What do you call an error that can be found on all printings of a specific plate number? I call it an “oops”. The Bureau called it a mistake – on all 918,142 impressions of plate number 22880 from the 1½-cent Martha Washington definitive. Every plate number from all four positions on the press sheet has its second 8 inverted. To the casual viewer the inverted fat bottom of the eight is not seen. Close examination of the illustration above will show the mistake.

This production error represents the only plate number specific error found in the Presidential Series. A rather remarkable achievement considering the quantity of material produced.

In the course of attending two major stamp shows, I was able to locate the four position pieces of plate 22880, for a total cost of less than four dollars. An on-line auction (in the last year) has been noted screaming the description “PRINTING ERROR” with an opening price of \$5 --- way over priced for something that was produced in such quantities as this! Of course the person who posted the auction item failed to note that ALL of the material printed from this plate had the error. Sadly, this is considered a small matter of omission in the world of online stamping.

The piece sold for \$11 after spirited bidding. A little knowledge would have saved the buyer some dollars.

To put this in perspective, the most expensive plate number for the 1½-cent Martha Washington stamp is number 21880 – which had only 6,800 impressions recorded. It has a Durlands catalog value of \$100. And both eights are right side up!

US Navy Air Transport Squadron (NATS)

by

Bob Watson

During World War II arrangements for airmail service from the USA to New Zealand (and other areas of the South Pacific) were poorly spelled out in *The Postal Bulletin*. From July 12, 1940, when Pan American Airways (PAA) established a through route, these destinations were served by FAM 19. The bombing of Pearl Harbor caused PAA to quickly pull out of the Pacific region except for service to Hawaii. Almost immediately, however, service was restored to the South Pacific by the Navy Air Transport Squadron (NATS) including carriage of civilian airmail on a space available basis.

NATS initially operated between San Francisco and Brisbane, Australia, but later extended its route to Sydney, Australia with branch flights to Auckland, New Zealand. The US Navy Post Office (USN PO 132) opened at Mechanics Bay, Auckland on July 15, 1942.



Normally no markings were applied to give evidence of the route taken, but registration transit marks can give sure evidence. The first figure shows an example of such a registered cover, and the several postmarks on the back have provided a bit of fun tracing its route:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|--|
| Los Angeles (Del Valle Sta.) | Sep 25 1943 | |
| San Francisco | Sep 25 1943 | |
| San Francisco | Sep 29 1943 | [presumably held for the next available flight] |
| Honolulu | Oct 1 1943 | |
| US Navy 128 (Pearl City, Hawaii) | Oct 5 1943 | [transferred to the Navy for NATS service] |
| US Navy 132 (Auckland) | Oct 13 1943 | |
| Upper Symonds St. Postmen's Branch | Oct 15 1943 | [only evidence of receipt in the NZ postal system] |

The second figure shows the cover was censored at the San Francisco field censor station (10401). Sixty-five cents paid the 50-cent half-ounce airmail rate to New Zealand plus the 15-cent foreign registry fee.



Navy pilots and PAA personnel under Navy contract jointly operated the transpacific service from San Francisco to Brisbane and later to Sydney. This service flew forces mail, urgent cargo, and personnel in that order of priority.

Aircraft shortages meant a through flight could be made only once each week, every ten days, or an even longer delay. Since civilian mail was carried on a space available basis, this cover, although unusual, is likely not rare.

The main Pacific route flown by NATS was as follows*:

| | <u>FPO address</u> |
|---|--------------------|
| Honolulu | US Navy 128 |
| Palmyra | US Navy 309 |
| Christmas Island, or Canton Island | US Navy 308 |
| Wallis Island (Uea), or Pago Pago, Tutuila | US Navy 310 |
| Lauthala Bay, Suva | US Navy 207 |
| Ile Nou, Noumea | US Navy 129 |
| Brisbane | US Navy 130 |
| Sydney | US Navy 131 |
| | US Navy 143 |
| | US Navy 135 |

From Pago Pago, on the NATS San Francisco-Australia trunk route, branch flights were made eastward to Bora Bora (US Navy 156), and south to Auckland (US Navy 132).

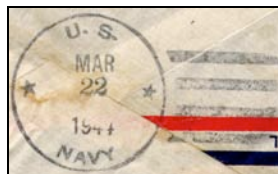
*Robin Startup (ed.) *Airmails of New Zealand, Volume III: International Airmails 1940-1970*, (The Air Mail Society of New Zealand Inc., 1997), pp.49-50.

[Ed. Note:] Airmail service to New Zealand and Australia during World War II by the Navy Air Transport Squadron is not widely known to Prexie era collectors. This article should send us all scurrying to the backs of our wartime covers for evidence of the Navy's treatment of airmail to and from the South Pacific. See the next article. Who can provide an example of NATS service to or from other countries?

U.S. Diplomat's Mail from New Zealand Via NATS

by

Louis Fiset



In this issue Bob Watson has nicely introduced Prexie era collectors to the role played by the Navy Air Transport Squadron (NATS) in providing airmail service to and from the South Pacific following Pan American Airway's suspension of FAM 19 service. Likely the triple rate (50 cents x 3) cover shown here bearing Fleet Post Office markings was flown by the same service, from New Zealand to the U.S. The U.S. Navy cancel and transit marking, however, do not provide information to determine the route, as in Watson's example. However, the March 22, 1944 transit marking indicates when the correspondence was turned over to the U.S. Post Office Department for final delivery. This transfer, after nine days in transit, may have occurred at Honolulu or San Francisco.

The cover is of special interest to me because of the writer's connection to the diplomatic exchange ship, M.S. *Gripsholm*. Thomas Eliot Weil was a career diplomat, having joined the Foreign Service in 1935. He was serving as vice consul in Shanghai at the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941 and held there by Japanese forces for seven months before his repatriation. This began June 29, 1942 when the Japanese exchange ship, S.S. *Conte Verde*, departed Shanghai for a rendezvous with the *Gripsholm* at Lourenço Marques, Moçambique, which occurred on July 22nd. His journey home ended August 25, 1942 when the *Gripsholm* reached New York Harbor.

After returning to the U.S., Weil, like most diplomats held by Japan, Germany, and Italy, was reposted, in this case to Wellington, New Zealand, with the American Legation. Diplomats were permitted to censor their own mail, but required to fully prepay postage for airmail service.

Surface Mail Sent in Air Mail Envelopes – Part I

by

Dickson Preston

One intriguing aspect of Prexie era postal history is the manner in which the USPOD handled short paid airmail letters. The primary focus of this informal article will be examples for which 3-cent domestic surface postage was paid but airmail envelopes were used.

Two sections in the 1948 Postal Laws and Regulations are relevant to these examples. Section 34.92 concerns prepayment of airmail. "The postage on air mail should be fully prepaid in order to expedite its handling, and postmasters shall make every effort to have patrons prepay the full amount of such matter. Nevertheless short paid mail ... shall, if it bears at least one full rate (that is, 6 cents), be rated with the deficiency and dispatched as intended by the sender. The amount shall be collected upon delivery of the matter." Section 34.91 concerns the use of airmail envelopes. "Envelopes of distinctive design approved by the department for air mail may be used for air mail only."

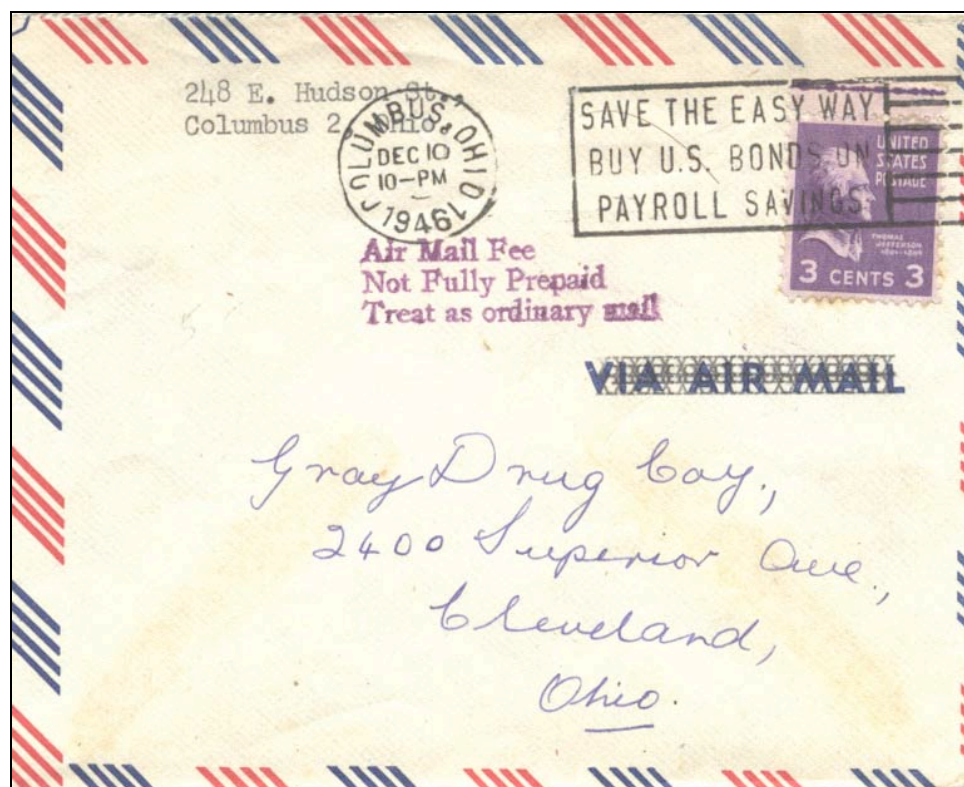


Figure 1. Sent as surface mail. Hand stamped "Air Mail Fee / Not Fully Prepaid / Treat as Ordinary Mail." December 10, 1946.

These sections leave the treatment of letters paying 3-cent surface postage but enclosed in air mail envelopes up to the discretion of the local postmasters. Since these letters did not bear one full airmail rate, they did not qualify for forwarding by air. Left to their own devices, postmasters employed a variety of methods ensure that airmail was fully prepaid. One method was to note that airmail postage was not fully prepaid and treat the letter as surface mail (Figures 1 and 2).

Another method was to deny any service at all because postal regulations were not followed and return the letter to the sender (Figure 3). A third method was to return the letter for additional postage, but this did not always work out as easily as planned (Figure 4). In this example, the return address was insufficient, so the letter was forwarded to the addressee, who was assessed postage due. It all seems rather silly, since the letter only traveled within Portland, Oregon, but regulations are regulations.



Figure 2. Sent as surface mail. Hand stamped "Not Entitled to Air Mail Service/Insufficient Postage." May 21, 1947.



Figure 3. Returned to Sender. Hand stamped "Air Mail envelopes not permissible / in other than Air Service" and "Return to Sender." November 16, 1944.

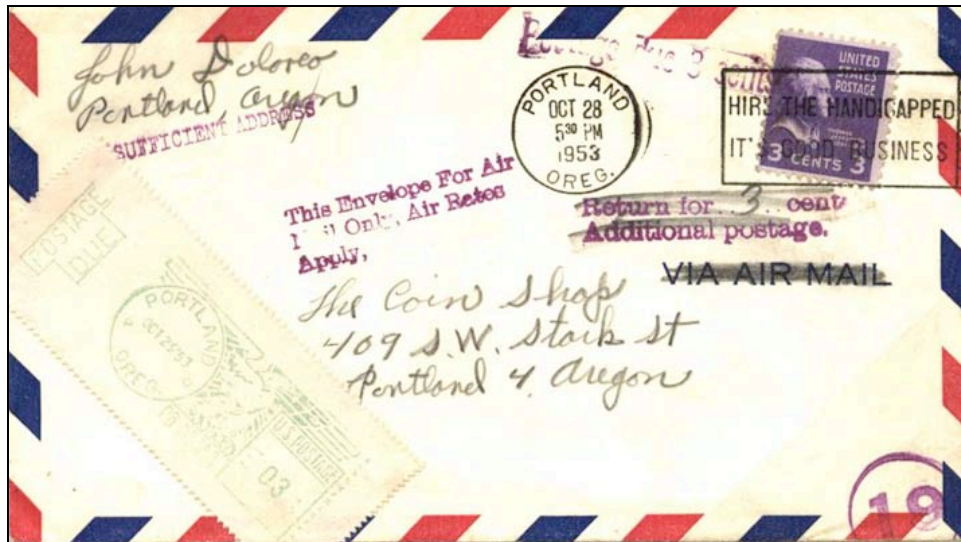
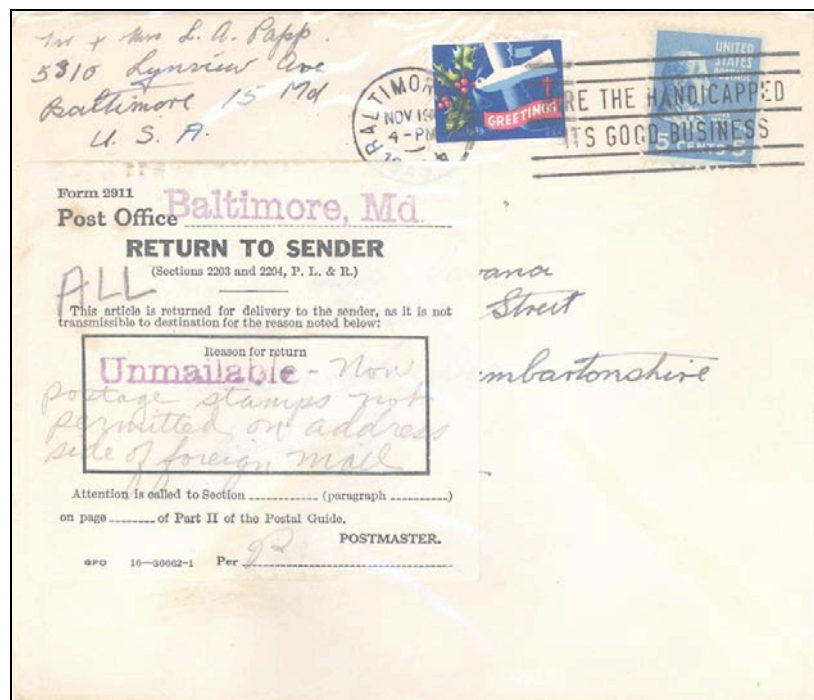


Figure 4. Returned for postage. Hand stamped "This Envelope for Air / Mail Only, Air Rates / Apply" and "Return for 3 cents / Additional postage." Corner card had "Insufficient Address," so addressee charged 3¢ postage due. All within Portland, Oregon. October 28, 1953.

RETURN TO SENDER - "Unmailable"

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



This letter, postmarked November 19, 1949 to England, was returned to the sender because postal regulations regarding foreign mail prohibited the use of "non postage stamps" on the address side of the envelope, such as the Christmas seal seen here.