



# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

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# *The Prexie Era*

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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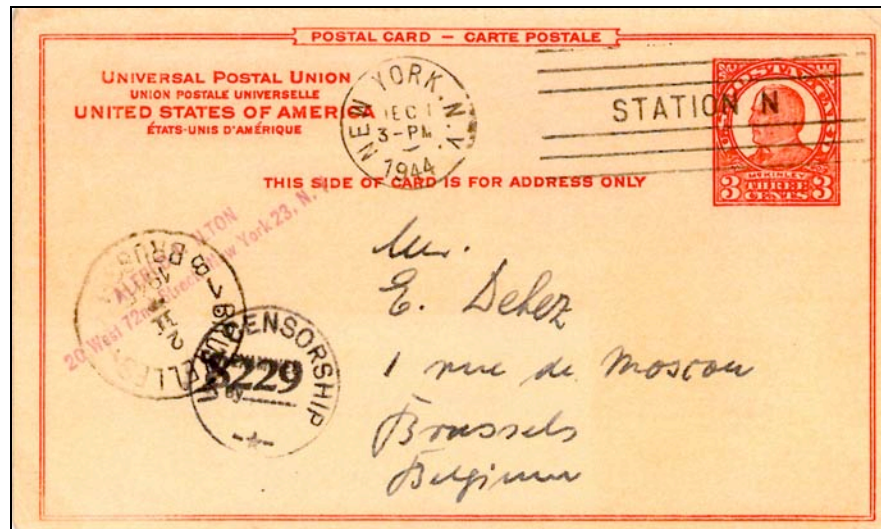
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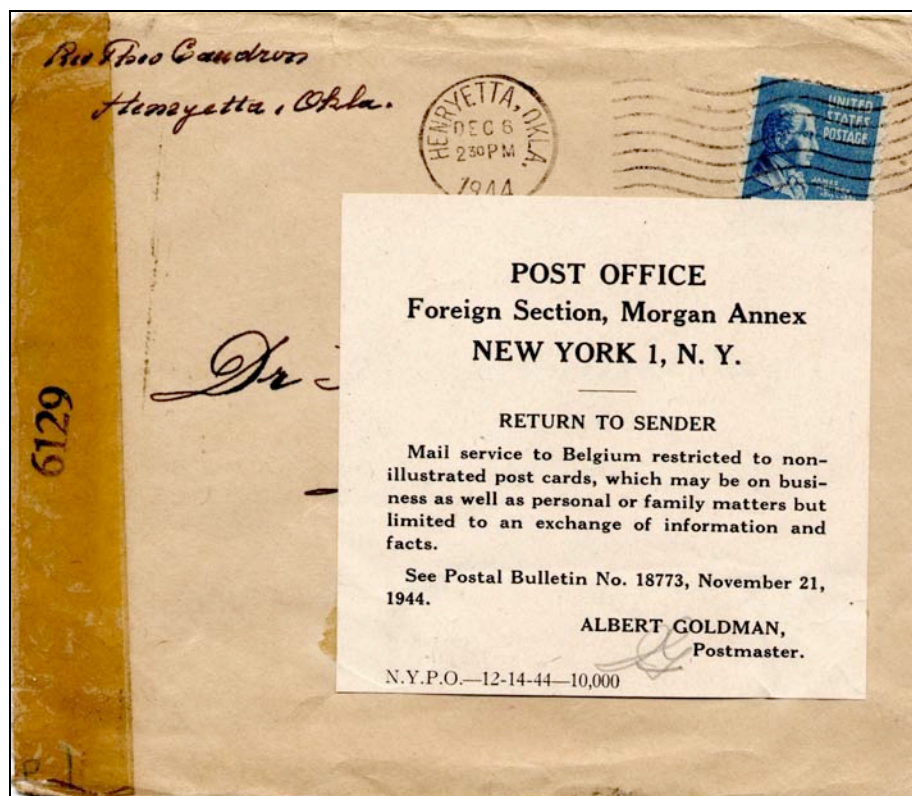
## Resumption of Postal Service to Belgium, 1944

by

Bill Hart



The illustration above shows the beginning of resumed mail service to Belgium near the end of World War II. Permitted were non-illustrated postcards only, starting November 23, 1944. This example shows a postal card mailed one week later, on December 1<sup>st</sup>, and censored at the New York field station. A Brussels receiving mark shows the card arrived February 2, 1945, after more than 60 days in transit. Attempts to send surface letters, such as the one shown below, were turned back until February 2, 1945 when one-ounce letters were permitted.



## Surface Mail Sent in Air Mail Envelopes – Part II

by

Dickson Preston



**Figure 5.** Returned for postage. Hand stamped "Returned for Additional Postage." Mixed Liberty and Prexie franking. November 18, 1954.

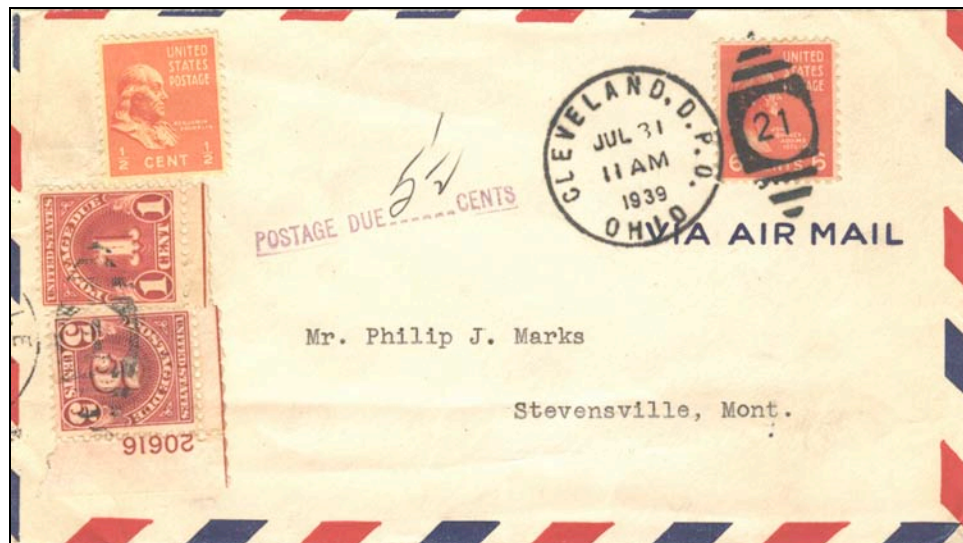
The Postal Bulletin of 16 February 1954 clarified what were probably procedures already used by many postmasters. Short paid airmail letters paying at least 3 cents should be returned for postage, unless that would cause undue delay, in which case "Air Mail" should be obliterated and the letter dispatched by surface (Wawrukiewicz, 119). One such letter, which was returned for postage, resulted in a mixed issue franking, since a new 3-cent Liberty Series stamp was used to add the postage (Figure 5). The postal people in Oklahoma City chose to use neither of the alternatives spelled out in the Postal Bulletin (Figure 6). This letter was neither returned for postage, although the sender's address was present, nor sent as surface mail. Instead it was forwarded as airmail, and postage due was collected from the addressee. The meaning of the red crayon marking "ECE" is unknown to this writer. Do any *Prexie Era* readers know what it means?

The final example is a slightly different kind of short paid airmail, which raises a number of questions (Figure 7). The envelope is designed for airmail and franked with the 6-cent airmail letter rate. The back is covered with dried glue, indicating the envelope was attached to a larger item. When the combined sending reached its destination of Stevensville, Mont., 5½ cents postage due was collected, indicating that 11½ cents postage was the assessed rate for both items. Unfortunately the attachment, including any postage stamps or markings on it, has been lost.

There were no fractional postage rates for first class mail, so the attachment must have been a third class item. On the other hand, in 1939 only first class mail traveled by air. The letter was sealed and opened, so it was first class matter. It could have been charged 6 cents because of the air mail envelope, even though it could not have gone by air, or it could have been charged 3 cents surface postage. In neither case would the remaining amounts of 8½ or 5½ cents, after the letter postage was deducted from 11½ cents, yield a valid fractional third class rate.



**Figure 6.** Sent as airmail, contrary to regulations. Hand stamped "Postage due 3 cents." Meaning of "ECE" is sought. March 23, 1954.



**Figure 7.** Air envelope attached to larger item. Hand stamped "Postage due 5½ cents" Amount due collected in Stevensville, Mont. Half-cent Prexie as change. July 31, 1939. Any ideas about the rates or handling of this item would be appreciated.

So what is the answer to this rate puzzle? The writer would like to pose this conundrum to readers of the *Prexie Era*? Any facts, theories or speculations will be welcome.

One final aspect of this letter is clear. Since 6 cents postage due was collected, but only 5½ cents was due, an unused half-cent Franklin was attached to the letter as change.

Reference:

- Wawrukiewicz, Tony and Henry Beecher. *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1993*. Shawnee-Mission, KS: Tradition Press, 1994.

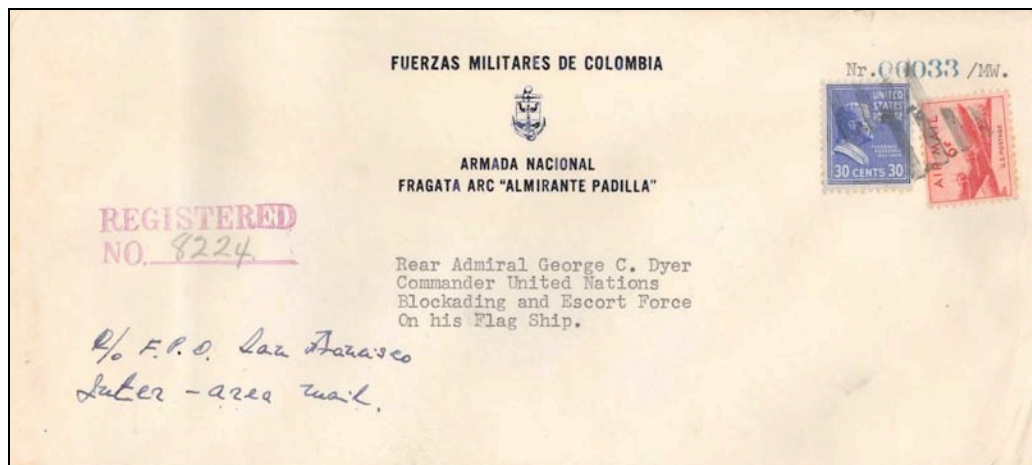


## U.S.-Colombia Cooperation during the Korean War

by

Jeffrey Shapiro

After decades of an uneasy relationship between the United States and Colombia following US support of the Panamanian revolt against Colombia, formal contacts were established in the fall of 1939 following the German invasion of Poland to formulate plans to protect the Panama Canal. Post-war cooperation continued with Colombia becoming the first nation to send personnel for training at the newly opened US Army School of the Americas in Panama in 1949 to defend against Communist unrest in the hemisphere. US military assistance continued to increase. In return, the Colombian government agreed to join the United Nations' sanctioned offensive in Korea in 1950, becoming the only South American country to support the effort. (Twenty-two nations made up the United Nations' forces sent to combat Russian and Chinese aggression on the Korean Peninsula)



Besides four battalions (approximately 3,100 personnel) the Colombian military sent their premier sailing vessel, the Frigate *Almirante Padilla*, to serve in the Korean "police action." Formerly the USS *Groton*, the ship was sold to the Colombian government in 1947 and rechristened *Almirante Padilla*. After refitting in San Diego by the US Navy, the *Almirante Padilla* was assigned to the United Nations fleet in June 1951 for patrol duty off the coast of Korea. She served with distinction until relieved by her Colombian sister ship, the ARC *Capitan Tono* (formerly the USS *Bisbee*) on January 19, 1952 with ceremonies at the US Naval Base at Yokosuka, Japan.

The airmail registered cover illustrated here was sent from the *Padilla* through the Naval Post Office Branch 13766 at Yokosuka, Japan a few days later, on January 24, 1952. The correspondence was received on January 27, 1952 by Rear Admiral George Dyer, Commander of the United Nations Blockading and Escort Force, aboard his flagship, USS *Piedmont*.

## Tales from the Other Side – Part VIII: Color Errors

by

Francis Ferguson  
[ferg@FloridaStampShows.com](mailto:ferg@FloridaStampShows.com)

The two-decade life of the Prexie series produced a number of minor color variations, but only two major color errors – the 30-cent deep blue and \$5 red brown/black. The variations are noticeably distinct from the corresponding regular colors (i.e., deep ultramarine, carmine/black.) Shown here, from the Robert A. Siegel rarities sale archive is a plate block of the \$5 color error ([http://www.siegelauctions.com/lot\\_lkp.php](http://www.siegelauctions.com/lot_lkp.php)).



The quantities of the two normally issued stamps (30-cent value = 716.8 million; \$5 value = 9.32 million) is well known. However, the number of error stamps is simply a guess. Little solid information can be found to document with certainty what may or may not exist in the public realm.

Published reports of the \$5 error in the 1950s and 1970s reported numbers with little substantiation. Finally, Roland Rustad published an article in the July 1990 issue of *The United States Specialist* exhaustively detailing all he was able to uncover. The article provided illustrations of the nine blocks believed still to exist. Apparently no subsequent research has appeared since then. However, a report in *Linns* (August 27, 2001) detailed a certified block from the Turner estate auctioned by H.R. Harmer bringing to ten the number of documented blocks.

At one time 12 plate blocks of this error were reported to exist, which means that 1,200 stamps should theoretically exist. Most examples appearing in auctions feature position pieces or large multiples. Where are all the singles? It seems that with the quantity of known singles believed to exist there should be some in the market place at any one time. That does not seem to hold true. Singles rarely show up for sale.

Further notes for consideration:

1. This number may become more flexible as more holdings are examined more closely and more \$5 color errors are found in old albums and accumulations. Time will tell.
2. Most \$5 color errors sold in recent auctions have been multiples or position pieces – which of course have commanded high dollars. Two used copies have been certified and may be truly the rarest of all.
3. One should note the comment under the listing in the Scotts Catalog for 834a that reads “No. 834 can be chemically altered to resemble Scott 834a. No. 834a should be purchased only with competent expert certification.”

### A Little Seen Return Receipt Usage

by

Robert Schlesinger

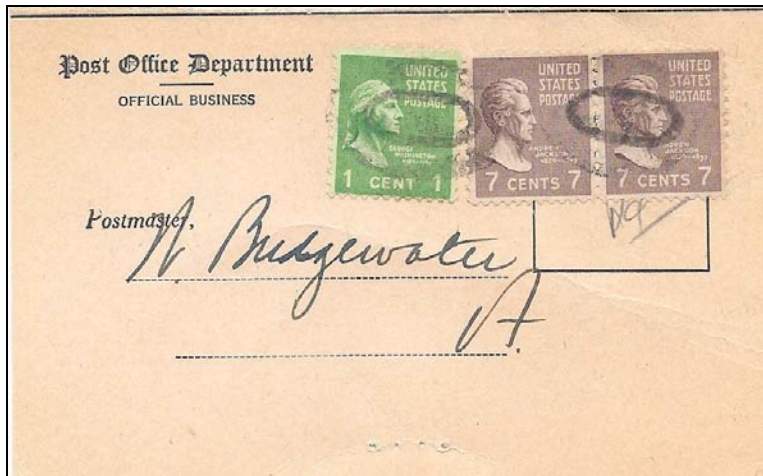
[Robertsles@aol.com](mailto:Robertsles@aol.com)

The items shown below illustrate a seldom seen domestic usage during the Prexie era. The form appears to have been printed in a format similar to a postal card reply card and was folded, stapled (as evidenced by the staple holes on the bottom of the card) and mailed to the postmaster of the city where the item (whether a postal card, envelope or parcel) was mailed.

The postmaster of the city where the original item was mailed had four possible options to check (see card). In this case the box marked **The sender has paid the fee for a return receipt after mailing** was checked off. Please note the obvious fold and tear marking on the back (and top of the front) of the card. The instructions read as follows: “**Have the person whose receipt you hold sign the attached receipt. Show date article was delivered, postmark the receipt and mail it direct to the sender.**”

Such service began on March 18, 1931, with an assessed fee of 5 cents. By January 1, 1952 the fee had increased to 15 cents. The illustrated form was used in September 1954.

It is interesting to note that the form, when mailed, received a dumb, not dated cancellation. In addition, the Post Office Department went to the trouble of devising a whole form for this usage, along with a tiny number assigned (presumably) by the Government Printing Office. Few of these seem to have survived and reside in philatelists' collections.



United States Post Office

Postmaster:

The article described on the attached form was mailed on Sept 22 1954 and was addressed as follows:  
Barton Lathbridge, W. Kinsquon

☐ The sender has not been furnished a return receipt requested at time of mailing.

☒ The sender has paid the fee for a return receipt after mailing.

☐ Delivery restricted to addressee only.

☐ Receipt to show address where delivered.

(Mailing postmaster will check appropriate blocks)

Have the person whose receipt you hold sign the attached receipt. Show date article was delivered, postmark the receipt and mail it direct to the sender.

Detach this portion from receipt.

76-64072-2

Postmaster, per FRANK H. DUFFY, JR., P.M.

## Update On the Prexie Era Website

by

Steve B. Davis, Webmaster  
[stamperdad@yahoo.ca](mailto:stamperdad@yahoo.ca)

In the Summer 2008 (No. 42) newsletter I announced formation of the Prexie Era website intended to provide a forum for articles and scans of provocative stamps and covers, as well as a place where news can be quickly posted to the site. The website provides an overview of the Prexies, Transport Airmails, 30-cent Globe airmail, Famous Americans, and the Win the War and 5-cent Skymaster stamps. The site has been updated with interesting usages on cover of the Prexies. However, we still need scans of the "Win the War" and Globe issue. In addition, the suggestion has been made to include the Overrun Nations issue.

Readers should also send me Palmares of Prexie era exhibits from shows throughout the country, which I will post.

The website may be found at: <http://prexie-era.org/>



## Canada Censors Search for Secret Messages

by

Louis Fiset



Occasionally collectors encounter wartime covers with stamps partially or totally ripped off by censors looking for secret messages. The German government went so far as to prohibit the use of stamps on outgoing international mail to POWs and internees, and frequently destroyed adhesives on incoming mail looking for messages designed to elude censors.

This practice by U.S. and Canada censors was unusual during World War II, which makes the illustration here of particular note and requires some explanation. The six 1-cent Prexies on the cover mailed April 7, 1940, pays the one-ounce airmail rate to Canada. The correspondence was addressed in care of Internment Operations at Ottawa and, following censorship, forwarded to the addressee, a German enemy alien, at one of two internment camps for civilians then in operation.

At the time this cover was posted Canada had been at war with Germany for seven months. As early as September 1939 German enemy aliens believed to pose a security threat to the nation were arrested under the Defence of Canada Regulations and taken to internment camps established by military authorities to hold them for the duration of the war. In spring 1940 two camps were in existence, one at Petawawa, Ontario, and the other at Kananaskis (Seebe), Alberta.

The Post Office Department was instructed to forward all foreign incoming mail for internees to the Chief Postal Censor, Ottawa, where it was to be examined before forwarding. In the illustration, the censor has written on top of the row of six damaged and undamaged stamps in red ink a check mark, "Examined," and his initials. The ink is the same color as the initials on top of the boxed censor marking confirming that the damage to the stamps was by the censor.

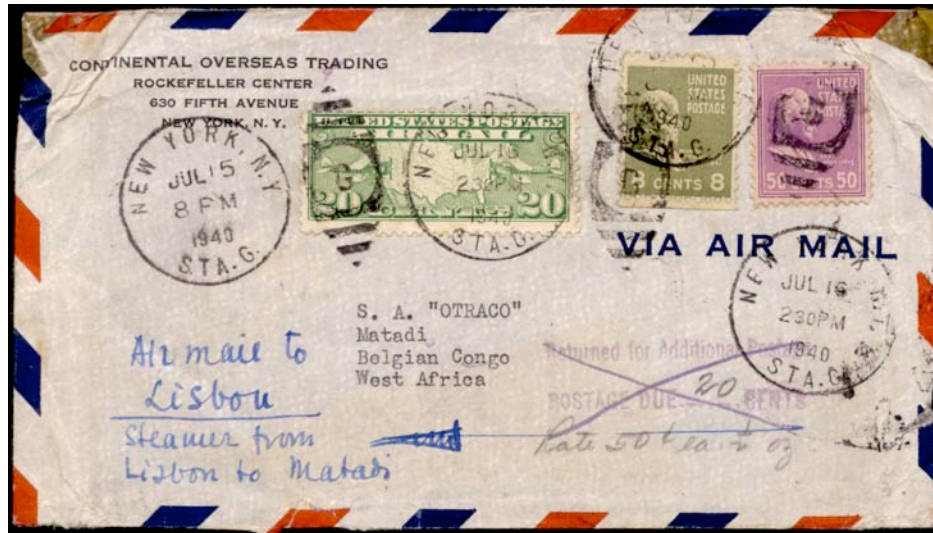
No doubt Canadian authorities applied this practice of censorship to other incoming mail to internees. The unusual use of six stamps to pay a common airmail rate may have drawn suspicion to this particular piece of mail as it provided ample space to write a lengthy secret message. In 20 years of collecting Canada internment mail this is the first example I have seen.



## Confusing Rate to Belgian Congo

by

Bob Hohertz



I am very confused by this cover. It was sent via airmail to Europe, then onward by surface to the Belgian Congo. The rate for such routing is not obvious, but could be taken as the full air rate to Europe plus the foreign surface rate.

I assume this letter exceeded one ounce in weight, which could have been sent for triple airmail (ninety cents) plus double surface (eight cents), for a total of ninety-eight cents. Although a small cover, the back was taped shut, suggesting heavier than normal contents.

The actual franking is seventy-eight cents, with a notation that twenty cents additional postage was due, to make up the ninety-eight cents mentioned. However, it appears the same person who penciled in the "20" in the postage due area also wrote that the rate was 50 cents per half ounce – the full airmail rate to the Congo, which would have resulted in \$1 or one \$1.50 total postage to transport the letter. Perhaps the clerk wrote the note first and then changed his mind and filled in the "20"?

Evidence is lacking that an additional 20 cents was paid. Two date stamps appear on the cover – 8 p.m. July 15, and 2:30 p.m. July 16, 1940. The earlier date stamp ties all three stamps. The cover was mailed with 78 cents postage, and went to its destination for that amount.

It is possible the sender asked the post office to weigh the letter again on July 16, resulting in a weight up to one ounce. In that case the postage would have been more than sufficient. Otherwise, if it was due, there is no sign of the extra 20 cents having been applied.

Even if both of my guesses are correct, what rate did the senders think they were paying in the first place? And are there better explanations than those I've offered for the markings and lack of an additional 20-cent stamp?

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Whole No. 49

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## U.S. Mail to Turkey in World War II

by

Louis Fiset

Despite intense pressure from Nazi Germany and the Western Allies, Turkey remained neutral until the last months of World War II, joining the Allies on 23 February 1945. This largely ceremonial move assured the country of charter membership in the United Nations.

Turkey's neutrality meant international mail moved in and out of the country throughout the war, and mail service was never suspended. Nevertheless, geographically situated in a region of intense combat in nearby Mediterranean and Balkan countries, creative routes had to be devised to circumvent the fighting. This article shows U.S. mail to Turkey generated from 1940 to 1944. Because *The Postal Bulletins* and *U.S. Postal Guides* remain largely silent on wartime alternate routings and their accompanying rates to Turkey (and other countries, as well), collectors must rely on the philatelic evidence. Some of the evidence is provided here.

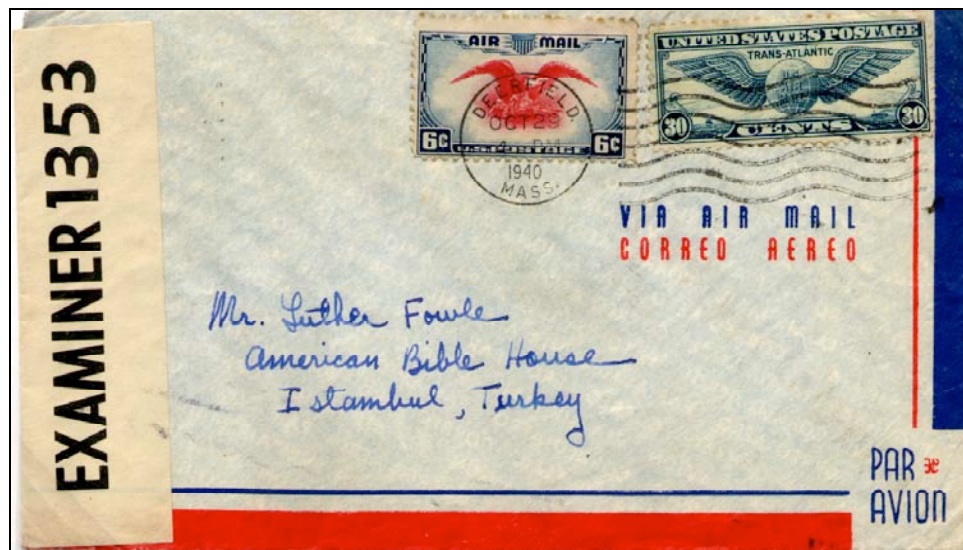


Figure 1: Postmarked 29 Oct 1940; received 21 Nov. Transit time 24 days

Figure 1 shows a trans-Atlantic airmail (FAM-18) cover to Lisbon, censored at Bermuda, with onward air carriage to Istanbul. The 1939 *U.S. Postal Guide* indicates the rate for trans-Atlantic airmail to Turkey was 30 cents, a rate that also included air service within Europe. By mid-June 1940, Italy had entered the war, cutting off airmail service routed across the Mediterranean. Thus, this letter was most likely carried on BOAC's trans-Africa route: Lisbon – Lagos – Khartoum – Cairo. The Egyptian airline, Misr Airwork, then carried the letter to Adana, Turkey. The Turkish airline, Devlet Hava Yallari (DHY), carried it from Adana to Istanbul. This emergency airmail routing via Egypt, in Africa, required prepayment of a 6-cent "beyond Europe" airmail fee. However, because the cover bears no evidence of British censorship at Cairo, this routing, although logical, remains speculative.

A second FAM-18 cover, from 23 May 1941, is shown in Figure 2, paying the trans-Atlantic rate to Turkey with onward air service within Europe. It, too, was censored at Bermuda. However, Deutsche Lufthansa carried it from Lisbon along the following route: Munich – Vienna – Budapest – Sofia – Istanbul. The letter was passed by a German censor at Vienna (**Ag**). This



letter took twice the time to reach its destination than the first cover, most likely due to the stopover at Vienna for censorship.



Figure 2: Postmarked 23 May 1941; received 10 July. Transit time: 49 days

Figure 3, postmarked 6 October 1941, also paid the trans-Atlantic airmail rate, but this letter was diverted to FAM-14 on the trans-Pacific route via its recent (May 1941) extension to Singapore. There British censors opened the letter (brown resealing tape), then forwarded it on BOAC's Horseshoe Route: Singapore – Cairo. At Cairo British censors opened the letter a second time. Like the cover in Figure 1, Misr Airwork and DHY flew this letter onward to its destination.



Figure 3: Postmarked 6 Oct 1941; received 21 Nov. Transit time: 47 days

Figure 4 shows yet another attempt to employ the 30-cent trans-Atlantic route to reach Turkey. This 25 November 1941 correspondence indeed reached Lisbon, but from there was flown by BOAC to London. It was then placed on a ship bound for Durban and was censored upon arrival. The letter was flown by BOAC to Cairo and passed by British censors there. Carriage by Misr Airwork: Cairo – Adana; and DHY: Adana – Istanbul, completed the journey. The 96-day transit reflects the long ocean voyage down the west coast of Africa.



Figure 4: Postmarked 25 Nov 1941; received 28 Feb 1942. Transit time: 96 days

Figure 5 shows mail postmarked 5 September 1941 and paying the combined domestic airmail rate and onward surface from the New York exchange office. It was carried by ship via Portugal or Spain and onward by surface routes to Istanbul. The letter was docketed (T8287) and censored at Cairo. This all-international surface letter was 97 days in transit, only one day longer than the cover shown in Figure 4 that went by trans-Atlantic air to Lisbon.

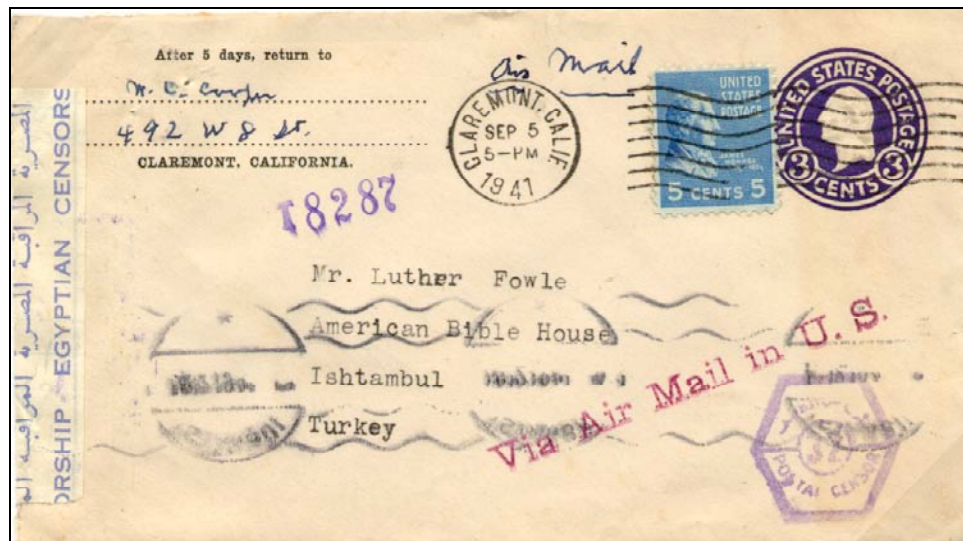


Figure 5: Postmarked 5 Sep 1941; received 10 Dec. Transit time: 97 days

On 5 November 1941 the *Los Angeles Times* announced a new trans-Atlantic airmail route between the U.S. and Africa, scheduled to start about 29 November (actual, 6 December). This gave correspondents weeks to prepare FAM-22 mail for addressees in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. The cover shown in Figure 6 was intended for this new service as shown by a "TRANSATLANTIC CLIPPER" directive and 70 cents postage paid. It was posted 3 December 1941 in time for the inaugural flight of FAM-22 across the South Atlantic to Leopoldville. Instead, it was directed to San Francisco for trans-Pacific (FAM-14) carriage to Singapore and onward via the BOAC Horseshoe Route. The letter, flown from San Francisco, reached Hawaii



as Japanese imperial forces were attacking Pearl Harbor. It was held there, eventually censored (I.C.B.), then returned to the mainland, possibly on PanAm's first resumed flight after the attack, departing 19 December. From San Francisco it went via domestic airline to Miami for carriage on FAM-22 -- as originally intended. The cover received both U.S. (Hawaii) and British (Palestine) censorship.



Figure 6: Postmarked 3 Dec 1941

Most civilian mail carried on FAM-22 occurred after April 1942, including the 25 February 1943 cover shown in Figure 7. Paying the 70-cent airmail rate for South Atlantic service to Africa and beyond, the letter was carried along the following route: PanAm, Miami – Lagos; BOAC, Lagos – Cairo; Misr Airwork, Cairo – Adana; and DHY, Adana – Istanbul. The letter was censored at New York and Cairo.



Figure 7: Postmarked 25 Feb 1943; received 10 Apr. Transit time: 45 days

The cover shown in Figure 8 was only 11 days in transit, representing the shortest duration in this series, by far. It followed the same route as the cover in Figure 7. However, the letter was passed without opening by British censors in Cairo, which may partially explain the reduced transit time.

By now, German forces had been largely pushed out of the Mediterranean Theater, making transit times to Turkey shorter and routing more predictable. The tortuous routing had come to an end.

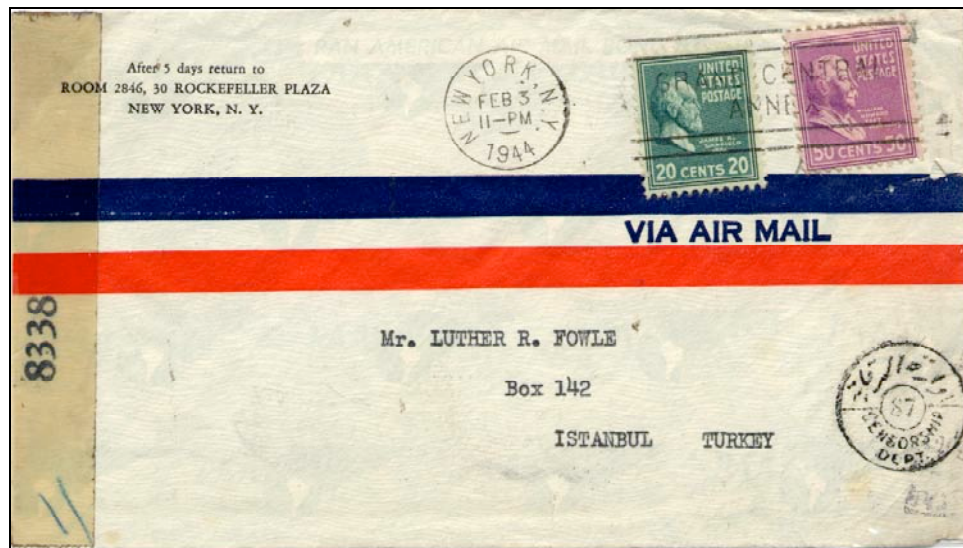


Figure 8: Postmarked 3 Feb 1944; received 13 Feb. Transit time: 11 days

Each of the covers in this article reveals a different journey to Istanbul. Other routes may exist by which mail to this neutral country was sent. I encourage readers to share covers from their collection that may shed further light on the subject.

## World War II Adventures of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson : Seeds

by

Lawrence Sherman

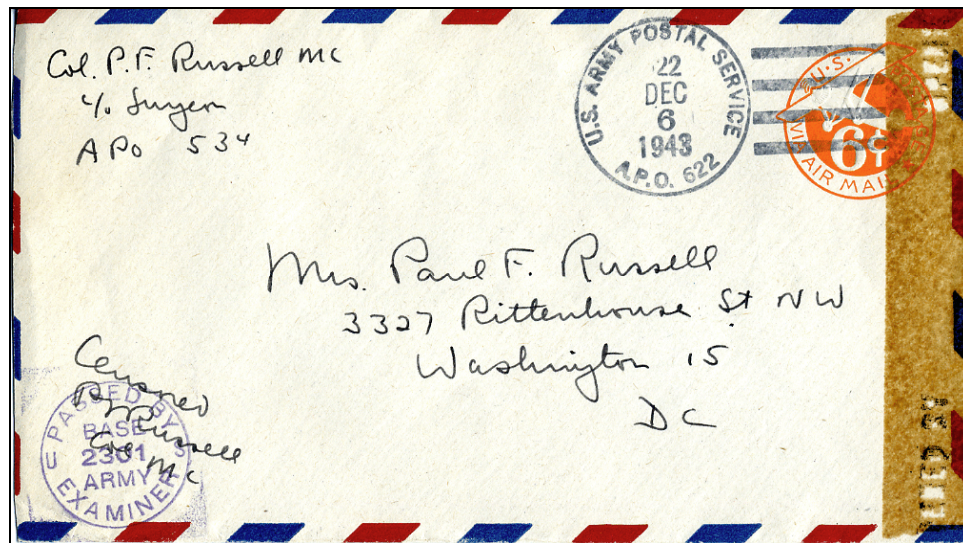


Having survived their harrowing voyage on the torpedoed Danish steamship *Vidar* (see *The Prexie Era* No. 43, Fall 2008, p. 10), the two intrepid Prexies, Adams and Jefferson, were



again ready for international postal duty. Time of departure: October 1940. Assignment: carrying seeds, this time not of independence, but of useful plant varieties. Destination: India.

There are several areas of interest for this letter that carried Burpee's seeds from Philadelphia to Madras. The stamps paid the international letter rate for correspondence that cleared Customs, as shown by the "Letter Rate" and "Affidavit Filed" handstamps and turquoise Customs label declaring that the envelope "May Be Officially Opened." It was indeed opened by a censor in Madras. Konrad Morenweiser's *Zivilzensur in Britisch Indien 1939-1945* documents these facts about the censor markings: the red and white censor tape, type 6A1, was used in Madras between September 1939 and April 1941, and the double triangle black handstamp, type 3A, also used in that city, between May 1940 and December 1941.



Adding special interest to the mail is its recipient, Dr. Paul F. Russell. Before Pearl Harbor, Dr. Russell was a research specialist in tropical diseases with the Rockefeller Foundation. He spent years in the Philippines, Malaya, and India studying the epidemiology, prevention, and control of malaria. It was in India in 1940 that the Prexies encountered him working in the Madras facility of the renowned Pasteur Institute.

After Pearl Harbor, Dr. Russell accepted a commission in the United States Army. Soon Col. Russell was assigned to General MacArthur's headquarters in Australia and served on MacArthur's senior staff. He later wrote that he would never forget the general's remarks to him in May 1943: "Doctor, this will be a long war if for every division I have facing the enemy I must count on a second division in hospital with malaria and a third division convalescing from this disease!"

The main source of casualties filling hospitals and complicating the system of evacuation in the jungle warfare of the South Pacific? Endemic malaria. During the New Guinea campaign more than 1.5 times as many American soldiers were evacuated from the combat zone for malaria as for battle wounds; disease caused 71 percent of evacuations by air, and three fifths of the sick were malaria cases. The incidence of malaria at the heavily infected Milne Bay base reached 4,000 cases per 1,000 troops per year. Col. Russell recommended to Gen. MacArthur that commanders be made responsible for their men taking Atabrine, a malarial suppressive drug, and that antimalarial units be given first priority for transport. Gen. MacArthur turned these recommendations into direct orders. Within weeks already-trained



malaria survey and control units were at work in the field, men were taking their suppressive medicine, and malaria rates among American forces declined. (General MacArthur established the Combined Advisory Committee on Tropical Medicine, Hygiene, and Sanitation in March 1943; by June 1944, MacArthur had issued 15 directives, 14 of them dealing with malaria.)

Control of malaria was urgently needed in another theater of war after Allied forces invaded North Africa in November 1942 and occupied Sicily in July-August 1943. The highest malarial disease rate among American forces in the world was recorded in the North African theater, where there were 8,516 cases per 1,000 troops per year in August 1943. Yet survey and control units did not reach theater until September because of shipping delays. Col. Russell became theater malariologist in September 1943 and was responsible for all malaria control activities. Implementation of the program became a command responsibility. Groundwork was finally laid for an effective control program in North Africa and the similarly malaria-afflicted Italian communications zone.

The second illustration, above, shows an airmail letter to Col. Russell's wife, sent from Senegal (APO 622) where he was then the area malariologist.

### Prexie Rate Anomaly

by

Dickson Preston



Here is one for my rate specialist friends out there in Prexie-Era Land. The cover shown was sent by military airmail from APO 652 in Stone, Staffordshire, Great Britain on 14 November 1944. At the time 2nd Lt. Parker, who was in a Casual Squadron of the Army Air Force, was in transit using high number APO 16640-LA-9. He paid the 6-cent military concession rate to send the letter to his home town, Highland, Kansas.

What is odd is the application of 1-cent postage when the letter arrived in Highland on New Year's eve morning. I do not have the data for 1944, but in 1949 Highland was a third class post office with post office boxes and Rural Delivery boxes, but no carrier delivery. The 1-cent could represent the drop letter rate. But why would this letter be charged this 1-cent rate in addition to the airmail postage? Perhaps someone can make some sense out of this franking.

## **The 1938 National Air Mail Week and Early Prexie Usage**

by

Jeffrey Shapiro

1938 was an important year for American philately. Not only was it the year most of the Fifth Bureau Series (Prexies) were issued, but 1938 marked the 20th anniversary of airmail service in the United States.

Going about our busy lives in the 21st century, we seldom reflect on the stunning scientific achievements of the last one hundred years -- like our mastery of the air. With the first walks on the moon a distant memory and a new international space station in orbit, the only time air travel is mentioned is when we complain about how late our flight was! Today, we even take for granted that most of our ordinary first-class mail travels by air.

But in 1938, just seventy-two years ago the story was much different with the world mired in the Great Depression and for most people air travel a novelty. (Remember, the Wright Brothers had taken their first experimental flights at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina only thirty-five years earlier, and that regularly scheduled air service from the United States to Great Britain across the Atlantic Ocean was still a year away.)

In an effort to promote the speed and efficiency of airmail service, and to convince financially-strapped Americans to use airmail at double the 3-cent first class surface letter rate, the U.S. Post Office, under Postmaster General James A. Farley, launched a nation-wide publicity campaign. Dubbed the National Air Mail Week (NAMW), activities were planned to honor twenty years of airmail service in the U.S. (The U.S. Post Office inaugurated airmail service on May 15, 1918, using a Curtis "Jenny" bi-plane between New York City and Washington DC via Philadelphia, a distance of 218 miles.) Held May 15-21, 1938, the goal was to get every patriotic American citizen to mail and/or receive an airmail letter during the week-long celebration. A Post Office slogan reminded the public that "air mail is read first and answered first."

An estimated 9,600 post offices across the United States and its territories in the largest cities to the smallest crossroads, prepared special cachets, giving each locality a chance to boast about its uniqueness -- beauty, history and/or the progressive nature. Cachets, many sponsored by local businesses, civic organizations and individuals, decorated souvenir envelopes that were carried on one-day only NAMW special flights occurring on May 19th.

While a few airports were dedicated during the NAMW celebration, many of the participating localities without air facilities were creative in accommodating these one-time only flights. Back roads were closed and fields cleared to create temporary runways for planes to take off and land carrying their precious NAMW event covers. Pilots were recruited, and local postmasters were responsible for designating appropriate landing areas. A typical flight included four to eight pickups before unloading the mail at a hub location.

Government records show that on May 19th, 1,700 volunteer pilots, including four dozen women, flew an estimated 134,000 air miles in just one day! National Air Mail Week was a success. The Post Office estimated that over 15,000,000 airmail letters were posted May 15-21, 1938!

By National Air Mail Week three Presidential Series stamps had been issued: 1-cent George Washington (April 25); 1.5-cent Martha Washington (May 5); and half-cent Benjamin Franklin (May 19 -- during National Air Mail Week). Examples of NAMW souvenir covers franked with these new stamps paying part of the 6-cent per ounce domestic airmail rate are shown here.



Summer 2010



Whole No. 50

# *The Prexie Era*

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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### Editor's Notes

In response to my article in the last newsletter, "U.S. Mail to Turkey in World War II," in this issue Joe Bock provides another airmail cover to Turkey. Millard Mack and Robert Markovitz also provided illustrations for the study, the latter from his extensive collection of the 30-cent trans-Atlantic Globe stamp. I greatly appreciate this input. Dickson Preston downloaded from ebay the majority of covers from the Luther Fowle correspondence as they were being offered several years ago. This has resulted in 90 airmail covers available for study. The vast majority of this horde is back stamped, providing valuable information on routing and transit times. I am currently examining these scans and will provide an update in the next issue.

Arizona dealer David Grossblat has recently acquired Larry Paige's Prexie collection, amounting to more than 1,000 covers. The collection, organized by denomination, will be available at CHICAGOPEX, which meets November 19-21. As many Prexie collectors know, Paige limited his acquisitions to single frankings and multiple frankings of the same value. His holdings spanned the life of the Prexie series. The collection has extensive coverage of domestic usages and rates, as well as significant foreign usages, both surface and airmail. The covers are mounted on pages where Larry made extensive notes about each item. He was an astute collector. That Larry's collection will be widely dispersed rather than falling into the hands of a single collector bodes well for the vitality of our collecting specialty.

### Air-Surface Combination Route to Turkey

by

Joseph Bock



This cover, illustrating the 70-cent per half-ounce airmail rate to Turkey, was posted January 28, 1943 and received March 19, 1943, 50 days later. Likely it flew the South Atlantic route to Lagos, West Africa, then to Cairo by the trans-Africa route operated by

BOAC. Back stamps confirm the main routing: January 28-Washington D.C; March 3-Cairo; March 16-Izmir (Smyrna, Turkey a port city on the west coast); March 19-Ankara, located 300 miles inland. The balance of the route from Cairo remains unclear, as Germany still controlled much of the Aegean Sea. It may have traveled surface from Cairo (by sea and rail). Egypt and U.S. (New York) censor markings.

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### 3-Cent Airmail Fee to Tunisia

by

Louis Fiset



Airmail service for mail generated in the U.S. was available from Europe to countries in Africa and to the U.S.S.R. in Asia for an airmail fee. This fee, to pay for BOAC service, was assessed in addition to regular postage, such as the 30-cent trans-Atlantic airmail rate or 5-cent international surface rate. The fees ranged from 3 to 30 cents. This service remained in effect until Italy entered the war on June 10, 1940, thereby severing the trans-Mediterranean routes BOAC employed to carry the mail.

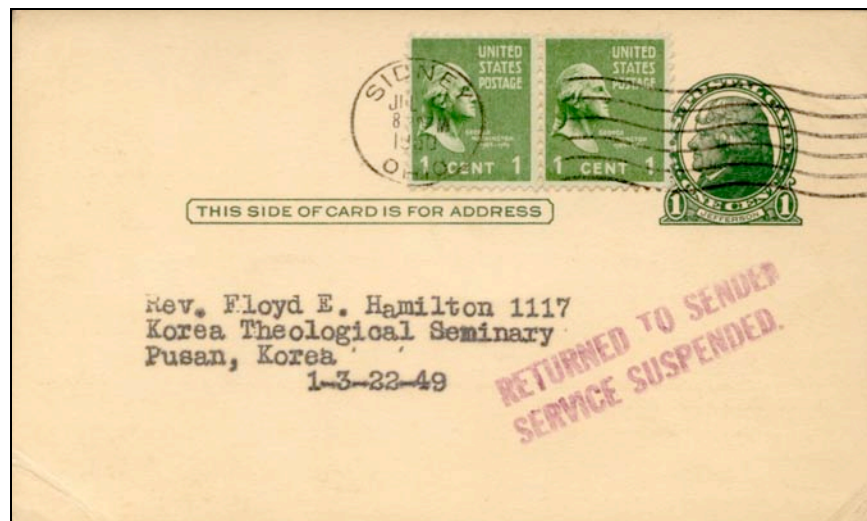
As seen in the illustration, which shows correspondence between International Red Cross officials, the airmail fee from Europe to Tunisia was 3 cents. Unlike most air fees for service beyond Europe, this rate to Tunisia remained in effect from July 1, 1939 until March 27, 1946. In the interim service to Tunisia was suspended from November 7 (?) 1942 until January 6, 1944 due to the North Africa Campaign.

This cover, in addition to showing an interesting rate for airmail beyond Europe, provides an early example of resumed airmail service after a service suspension.

## Returned to Sender: Korean War

by

Bob Hohertz



A bit more to this postcard exists than meets the eye at first glance. It bears an unusual use of the “RETURNED TO SENDER/SERVICE SUSPENDED” auxiliary marking in 1950, in connection with the Korean War. We are accustomed to seeing it on World War II mail.

The postmark is Sidney, Ohio, July 12, 1950. At this time the North Korean Army was advancing southward the length of South Korea, and by September 5 occupied most of the country except for the Pusan perimeter. The Reverend Hamilton luckily was located in Pusan, but his mail was not getting through.

And what was the important message that was not delivered?





## Section 571 ½ P. L. & R.

by

Albert L. “Chip” Briggs

The envelope illustrated below, bearing a single 9-cent Prexie value, contained a product catalogue. The hand stamped “Sec. 571 ½ P. L. & R.” (faint in upper right corner) prompted a search for provisions of this section. While not mentioned or referenced specifically by this section number in Beecher and Wawrukiewicz, *U. S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1999*, it does discuss the rate to which this section pertains (Chapter 34).

§572

POSTAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

INSERT No. 476. Order No. 13098.

JUNE 29, 1939.

The Postal Laws and Regulations are amended, effective July 1, 1939, by addition of the following as section 571½:

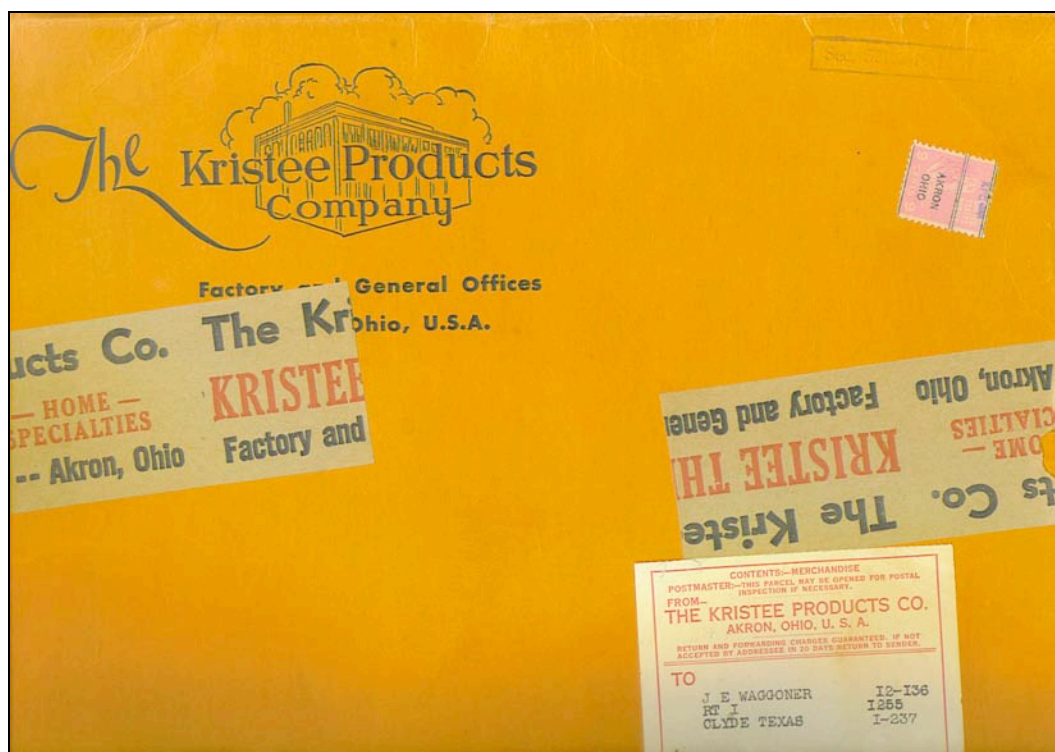
“571½. The rates of postage on individually addressed catalogs and similar printed advertising matter in bound form, consisting of 24 or more pages and not exceeding 10 pounds in weight, shall be as follows:

Zones

Rates	Local	1st	2d	3d	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
First pound.....	4¢	4¢	4¢	5¢	6¢	7¢	8¢	9¢	10¢
Each additional pound...	½	1¢	1¢	2¢	3¢	4¢	5¢	6¢	7¢

(Scan courtesy Len Piskiewicz)

Insert number 476 (Order No. 13098), dated June 29, 1939, and shown above, states that effective July 1, 1939 a special discount rate by zone would apply for individually addressed catalogues and similar printed advertising matter in bound form consisting of more than 24 pages and weighing less than 10 pounds.





Prior to this date, similar matter was subject to parcel post rates. Items mailed at this new rate were to be endorsed with “Sec. 34.77, P. L. & R.” to prevent being assessed postage due. The item in question, however, is endorsed Sec. 571 ½ P. L. & R.

The envelope contained a 40 page catalogue listing products for sale by The Kristee Products Company. The 9-cent stamp paid the special discount catalogue rate postage for Zone 7 from Akron, Ohio to Clyde, Texas. The envelope was endorsed above the stamp with Sec. 571 ½ P. L. & R. While the stamp is a proprietary dated precancel, the date is not legible.

The rate for this particular item was effective from July 1, 1939 until March 26, 1944.

### San Francisco to San Francisco – By Airmail

by

Bob Hohertz



On the surface, this 1944 cover looks like 8 cents domestic rate postage was paid to send a letter airmail from San Francisco to San Francisco. Closer inspection reveals no stamped indication that it did not or could not go by air. Although airmail stamps were invalid to send surface mail, the 2 cents postage would have paid the correct in-city rate.

The letter was also censored at San Francisco (61352). On the back side is the key to the cover, a handstamp reading: “This communication referred to District Postal Censor by U.S. Customs.” It was probably brought into San Francisco by ship or air by the writer or his agent, who thought it would enter the mail stream somewhere else, perhaps Los Angeles or Seattle. It was turned over to Customs at the port of entry. However, instead of censoring it themselves Customs agents sent it on to the District Postal Censor. An odd cover with a reasonable explanation.

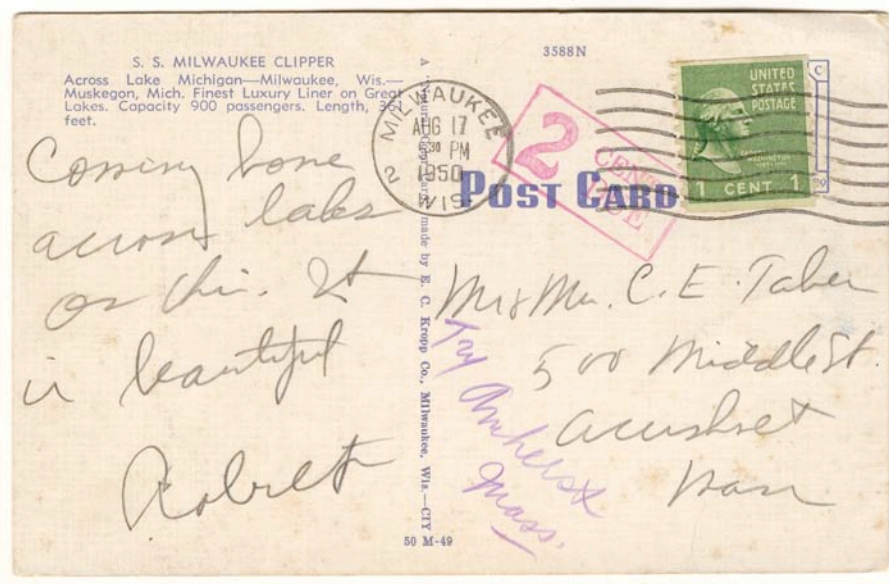
## “2 CENTS DUE” on a Domestic Penny Postcard

by

Leonard Piskiewicz

The illustrated postcard with a 1-cent Prexie horizontal coil stamp shown here, was postmarked August 17, 1950 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It looks like an ordinary domestic penny postcard of the time except for the magenta boxed “2 CENTS DUE” marking. Why was this marking applied? At first glance, there’s no good reason apparent. But one explanation seems plausible by studying the card and the poor handwriting of the sender.

Quickly looking at the city address, “Acushnet, Mass.”, the last word can look like “Man” – the abbreviation for Manitoba (a Canadian province, for our geographically-challenged readers, if we have any.)



The postcard rate to Canada at the time was 2 cents. Since the card was only paid 1 cent, and therefore theoretically underpaid 1 cent, the deficiency was doubled and the clerk marked the card with the boxed “2 CENTS DUE.” The card got sent on its way to wherever mail is sorted in Manitoba. Upon arrival, the receiving clerk recognized it wasn’t addressed to Manitoba at all, but to Massachusetts, and wrote “Try Amherst Mass.”

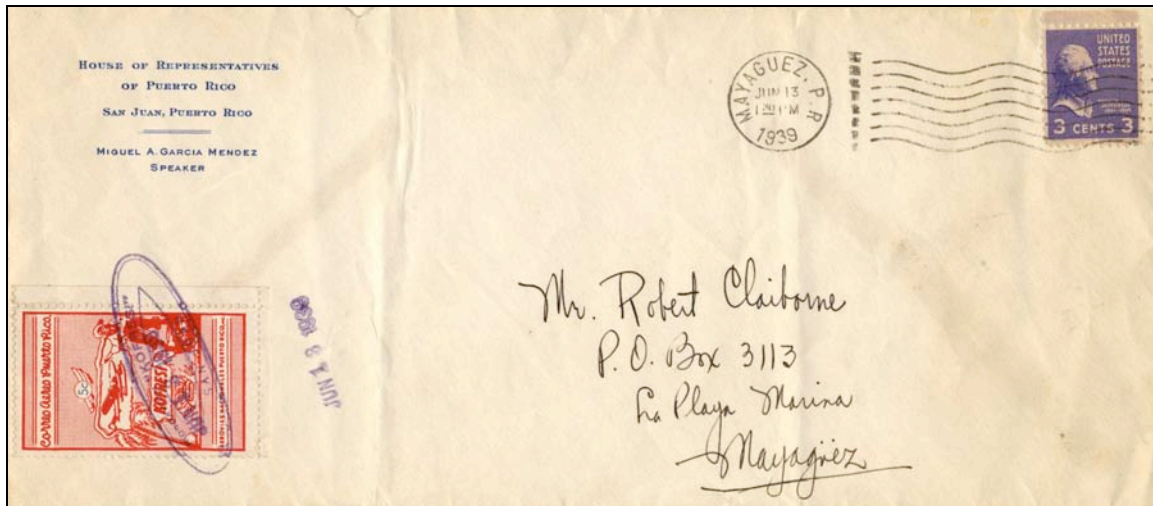
Amherst is about five times the size as Acushnet, and one might conclude the clerk had never heard of Acushnet or tried to look it up. Likely the card was eventually delivered, but it would have been informative to see any auxiliary marking or backstamp that might have been added to document this card’s travel.

In any case, there’s a reasonable explanation for the “2 CENTS DUE” marking.

## Private Airmail Service in Puerto Rico

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



The cover illustrated here shows a 3-cent Prexie stamp used in combination with a 5-cent Aerovias Nacionales Puerto Rico private adhesive to pay for delivery by the U.S. Post Office following air service within Puerto Rico.

Aerovias Nacionales Puerto Rico, Inc, operated a small airline to provide passenger service around Puerto Rico and the neighboring Virgin Islands. In addition, the airline offered private local airmail service; the company issued labels in 1937 to indicate payment of fees.

Post Office regulation initially forbade use of these labels on the front of envelopes because they too closely resembled postage stamps. However, in 1938 the order was rescinded. Even so, the U.S. Post Office never officially recognized the air service.

The Post Office held a series of races between Aerovias Nacionales and its chief rival, Powelson Airlines as part of the National Air Mail Week celebration in May 1938 (see *The Prexie Era* Issue No. 49) to see who would control the coveted air routes within Puerto Rico. Aerovias Nacionales lost the competition.

In the example shown above, a Puerto Rico House of Representative cover was sent via Aerovias Nacionales from San Juan to Mayaguez on June 13, 1939 and then dropped in the mail stream for local delivery by the U.S. Post Office. While 2 cents would have paid for local carrier delivery service, a 3-cent stamp was affixed to pay the domestic first class delivery charge for the letter having been sent across the Island.

## Airmail to Shanghai, Returned from Hawaii

by

Louis Fiset



Questions have arisen as to how long overseas mail generated around the time of Pearl Harbor and processed in Hawaii was held before release by Honolulu based censors (I.C.B.). Except for registered mail, most was not backstamped, leaving the question unanswered. The cover illustrated here is an exception and provides one data point of evidence to answer the question.

This correspondence, addressed to Shanghai, was postmarked New York December 2, 1941. The letter likely reached San Francisco in time to be placed on the Anzac Clipper bound for Honolulu on December 6<sup>th</sup>. Upon arrival Japanese forces were attacking Pearl Harbor and the pilot therefore diverted the plane to Hilo. The mail was off loaded, and the plane returned to the mainland without incident.

This mail, as well as mail with overseas addresses accumulating at Hawaii post offices since the last Clipper flights out of the Islands, was held for an indeterminate time before their release by censors. In this illustration the letter was returned to sender because all trans-Pacific flights, to Hong Kong/Singapore and Auckland, were immediately suspended after the attacks on Hawaii and the Philippines.

The backstamp reveals a July 10, 1942 Honolulu cancellation. Because the mail was being returned, there was no hurry to process the letter. All mail destined for countries where service was suspended may have been processed on this day. This would be in line with return of trans-Atlantic mail in the wake of declarations of war against Germany and Italy. Unlike most returned mail during the period, this cover bears no trace of U.S. censorship.



## Tales from the Other Side: Perforation Slips on a 1-Cent Sheet

by

Francis Ferguson

ferg@FloridaStampShows.com



Collecting EFOs is truly interesting, as one never knows what will turn up in the most unlikely of places. I was at a very small local show in early July and one of the dealers had this interesting piece at a very reasonable price. Sadly the pane of 100 had been broken in half some time before I purchased it, but it is still a great showpiece. The first 8 vertical rows of perforations are off a full 2mm to the right. Row 9 starts the major shift with 3mm and row 10 with a full 4mm offset. The right-most row of vertical perforations closest to the plate number is so far off that the 7mm shift has resulted in a captured plate number --- and a series of progressively odd stamps as the not-so-vertical row of perforations run down the sheet.

How did this occur? I am not really sure -- there are no creases evident anywhere on the sheet of 100, so that pretty much rules out a fold-over. It is easy to see that the adjustment of the perforation wheels was off or experienced some degree of “slip” because of an unsecured mechanical part.

This piece should have been red-lined for removal and discarded, but it escaped such a mark. A lucky break for us collectors.

Fall 2010



Whole No. 51

# *The Prexie Era*

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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**Editor's Notes**  
**2011 Subscriptions Payable Now**

The Fall 2010 issue is the last in the quartet of *The Prexie Era* for 2010. This means it is time for readers to renew your subscriptions. Rates for 2011 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:

Jeff Shapiro  
P.O. Box 3211  
Fayville, MA 01745-0211  
[coverlover@gmail.com](mailto:coverlover@gmail.com)

**If your subscription is not current by the time the next issue comes out this will be the last one you receive.**

**Treatment of Mail Carried On Last Pre-War Flight of *Anzac Clipper***

by

Albert “Chip” Briggs

The cover illustrated in Issue No. 50 and discussed by Louis Fiset is interesting from several viewpoints. Bearing seven copies of the 10-cent Tyler Prexie issue to pay the airmail rate to China, it was undoubtedly carried on the last pre-war flight of Pan-American Airways *Anzac Clipper* from San Francisco with ultimate destination of Singapore. Mail on this particular flight is historic as it represents some of the first mainland-generated mail diverted and interrupted due to the U.S. entry into World War II. Diverted, because the mail was unloaded at Hilo, Hawaii instead of Honolulu due to the plane's arrival during the Japanese attack; interrupted, because all mail addressed to points west of Hawaii was returned to the continental United States as Pan-Am cancelled all west bound flights on December 8, 1941.

The cover bears the common **RETURN TO SENDER/SERVICE SUSPENDED.** violet handstamp and on the reverse a Honolulu, July 10, 1942 machine cancel. Curiously, evidence of censorship is lacking. The Honolulu postal censorship station opened on December 13, 1941 in the Federal Building located next to the main post office. The stated goal was to examine 100% of airmail leaving and transiting Hawaii. Mail processed by this office typically was opened, stamped **RELEASED/BY I.C.B.** on the reverse, and resealed with cellophane tape. The initials stand for Information Control Branch. Clearly, such treatment on this piece of mail was not given. And why it was not processed by the Honolulu post office until July 1942 also remains unclear.

This article shows four additional covers carried on the December 6, 1941 *Anzac Clipper* flight that were handled in slightly different ways.



Figure 1: Front and back of a cover mailed December 4, 1941 from New York to Hong Kong, China. It was censored by I.C.B. and stamped return to sender. This cover was processed by the Honolulu post office on July 10, 1942, the same date as the previously mentioned cover.



Figure 2: Airmail, New York to Hong Kong, December 3rd. This letter shows I.C.B. censorship, but was processed in the Honolulu post office on February 25, 1942. Unusual Return to Sender marking.



Figure 3: San Francisco to Manila on December 4th. This cover shows I.C.B. censorship, but no other postal markings exist to indicate when it was returned to the mainland by the Honolulu post office.





Figure 4: Civilian airmail letter from Portland, Oregon on December 4<sup>th</sup> to a sailor on the U.S.S. *Nevada* moored at Pearl Harbor. Forwarded to U.S.S. *Phoenix*. This letter, instead of receiving Information Control Branch censorship, was censored by naval authorities.

From examples presented here, it appears that mail carried on the last pre-war flight of the *Anzac Clipper* and addressed to points west of Hawaii received return to sender/service suspended handstamps, Information Control Branch censorship, and Honolulu post office machine cancels on the delayed dates processed. Based on currently available information mail appears to have been processed on at least two different dates, February 25 and July 10, 1942. Mail addressed to military personnel received military censorship.

## Excelsior!

By

Bob Hohertz



This cover, apparently containing a Christmas card, was mailed on December 17, 1945 at the third class rate for unsealed cards. It was addressed to a Miss Helen Crawley in New York City with the instruction to “please forward.” Upon receipt at the Lexington Avenue address, the correspondence was sealed, re-franked at the full foreign surface rate of five cents, and re-mailed to Miss Crawley at Prague, Czechoslovakia, on December 20th.

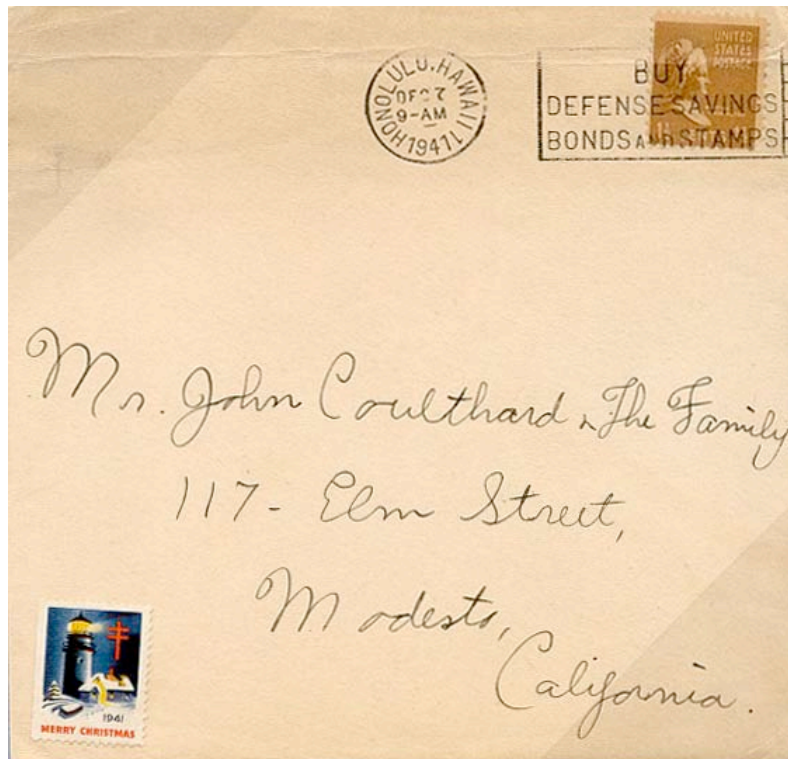
By the time the card reached Prague, apparently Miss Crawley had moved on to Paris. Ever onward and upward, the card was franked with Czechoslovakia stamps to pay the 5.50Kcs within-Europe airmail rate (**LETADLEM** etiquette) and re-mailed on January 11, 1946.

It appears airmail service was not fast enough to catch Miss Crawley in Paris, as the card was again forwarded, to Brussels. The cover provides no indication that additional postage was required for this last journey.

## December 7, 1941 Honolulu Covers, A Follow-Up

by

Lucien Klein  
[lusal@msn.com](mailto:lusal@msn.com)



In the article on 8:00 A.M., December 7, 1941, Honolulu covers, in the spring 2009 issue (Whole No. 45) of *The Prexie Era*, I requested scans and descriptions of other covers processed at the Honolulu post office on December 7, 1941, with the hope of compiling a census of such covers. Bob Hohertz promptly sent a scan of his one-and-one-half-cent Prexie cover, which is shown herewith. It apparently held a Christmas card. The cover is from his one frame exhibit of intended uses of the one-and-one-half-cent Prexie. There were no other responses in the year since the article. That leaves the current verified count of December 7, 1941, Honolulu covers as follows:

- 1) The 8:00 A.M. double rate cover in the National Postal Museum shown in the previous article;
- 2) My 8:00 A.M. surface mail to the U.S. and air mail in the continental U.S. rate cover shown in the previous article;
- 3) The Bob Hohertz 9:00 A.M. one-and-one-half-cent rate cover shown herewith;
- 4) The 9:00 A.M. Mason Shoe Mfg. Co. 3 cents/first oz. first class rate cover formerly owned by Randy Neal;
- 5) The 11:00 A.M. 3 cents/first oz. first class rate cover shown in the Randy Kimes article in *La Posta*, Vol.34, No. 5.

Note that the first three above covers are each (so far) unique in rate usage for a December 7, 1941, Honolulu cover. Only the Hohertz cover bears no visible signs of censorship. Though the



other two covers are each three cents/first oz. first class rate, the Neal cover is franked with a three cent Prexie, and the Kimes cover is franked with a three cent National Defense issue stamp.

Are there other covers out there? In an email to me in 2004, Randy Kimes wrote that all then known December 7, Honolulu postmarks were time-stamped 11A.M. So, there should be more covers bearing that time of day. In his email to me with the scan of his 9:00 A.M. cover, Bob Hohertz stated: “It stands to reason that the sender mailed more than one Christmas card, so there were probably more. If they survive is another matter.” At Westpex this year, two dealers told me that a person was trying to sell a December 7, 1941, Honolulu cover. They could not confirm the time of the postmark, or the stamps on the cover. One of the dealers later told me that the person subsequently told the dealer that he thought he had the cover sold.

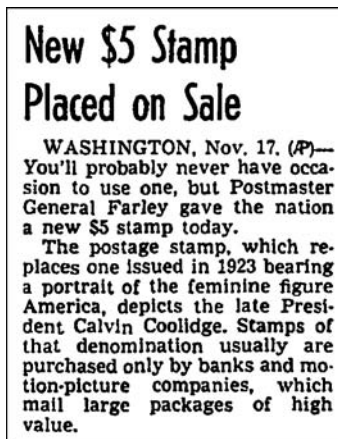
If you have any information that would be helpful on the subject, of Honolulu, December 7, 1941 covers or the operation of the Honolulu post office that day, please email me.

### New \$5 Prexie

by

Leonard Piszkiwicz

Recently, while searching for something else, I came across the following short article on page one of the *Los Angeles Times* of November 18, 1938:



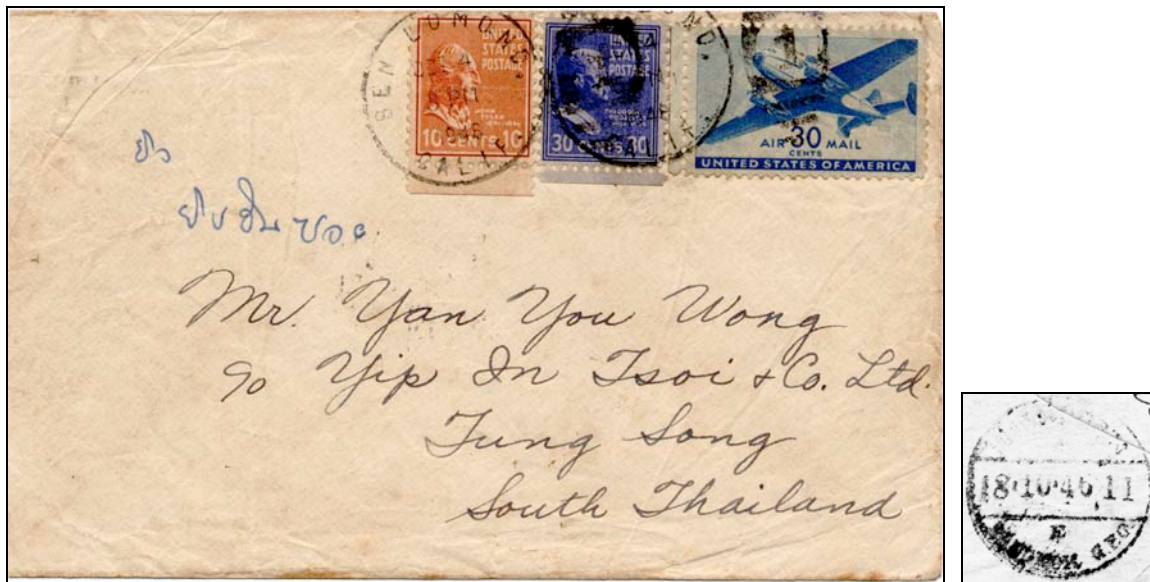
The article states that “Stamps of that denomination usually are purchased only by banks and motion-picture companies, which mail large packages of high value.” We’ve all seen bank covers with large multiples of \$5 Prexies (such as the cover illustrated in Rustad’s *The Prexies*, p. 331), but has anyone ever seen Prexies on a heavy, high value package from a motion picture company?

The census of \$2 and \$5 Prexie covers compiled a few years ago by Steve Roth contains a few bank covers but none have been recorded from mailers of motion picture film. I recall seeing one or two covers or pieces from the late 1920s with large amounts of postage used to mail newsreel film by airmail, but what about during the Prexie era?

## Resumption of Mail Service – Airmail to Thailand

by

Louis Fiset



Collectors of resumed mail service at the end of World War II and beyond have become aware of the difficulty finding this material, especially postal cards, surface letters, and airmail to Asia. Shown here is an example of resumed airmail service to Thailand, the first I have seen.

Postal service to Thailand resumed on October 30, 1945 with non-illustrated post cards and one-ounce surface letter. Registered mail followed on January 28, 1946. Airmail service began again on April 12, 1946.

The cover shown here was postmarked Ben Lomand, California, October 4, 1946. The 70 cents airmail postage paid the prevailing rate on February 16, 1942 when service was suspended. (The rate changed to 25 cents per half-ounce on November 1<sup>st</sup>.) The letter was received at Bangkok October 18, 1946 after just two weeks in transit.

This letter, posted six months after the resumption of airmail service to Thailand, provides the earliest reported date to that country. Collectors should be on the lookout for mail to Asia beginning in 1945 and record their findings in *The Prexie Era*.

## Common Rate, Great Usage

by

Robert Schlesinger

[Robertsles@aol.com](mailto:Robertsles@aol.com)

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID  
PAYMENT OF POSTAGE, \$300

UNITED STATES POSTAGE  
4 CENTS

RETURN TO

REGISTERED NO. 54458

CERTIFIED NO.

INSURED NO.

NAME OF SENDER  
HENRY L. REICH

STREET AND NO. OR P.O. BOX  
P.O. BOX 35

POST OFFICE  
AGANA,

STATE  
GUAM

POD Form 3811  
July 1955

DELIVERING EMPLOYEE

☐ Deliver ONLY to addressee. (Does not apply to Certified mail.)

☐ Show address where delivered.

Received from the Postmaster the Registered, Certified, or Insured Article, the number of which appears on the face of this return receipt.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature or name of addressee)

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of addressee's agent—Agent should enter address on line ONE above)

Date of Delivery \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_

RECEIVED  
AUG 27 1956  
REGISTERED MAIL  
BALTIMORE

As most Prexie collectors know, the special airmail rate for post(al) cards began on January 1, 1949. The new rate was fixed at 4 cents per piece. Prior to that time, post(al) cards could be sent via airmail, but were charged at the airmail letter rate in effect at the time of mailing, whether sent to a domestic or foreign destination. With the change in regulation, post(al) cards could now be sent by airmail, at a rate less than the letter rate.

But in one area, the subject of this article, the matter remained complicated. Was a return receipt considered a postal card that qualified for the new rate? *The Postal Bulletin* dated July 15, 1938 (No. 17482), stated that return receipts could be returned to the sender via airmail, provided that proper postage (6 cents at that time) was affixed, the phrase "Return by Air Mail" was written on the return receipt form (Postal Form 3811), and it was sent to a domestic address. This practice occurred under the 'old' system.

So far this is a simple situation; return receipts could be sent via airmail. The airmail post(al) card regulation of January 1, 1949, however, provided no indication whether the new service applied to return receipts. And Part I of the July 1949 *U.S. Official Postal Guide* contained no new information on the subject. More than ten months elapsed after the new service was introduced before *The Postal Bulletin* of November 15, 1949 (No. 19284) confirmed that, yes, return receipts could still be sent via airmail with appropriate postage affixed. The figure accompanying this article shows this usage, the return receipt having been sent airmail to Guam.



## Ship Mail to Sweden Via Egypt

by

Louis Fiset



During the German invasion of Norway, April-May 1940, ship mail from the U.S. direct to Sweden was temporarily suspended. Mail was routed through the Mediterranean Sea to Cairo, then land routed north across Iran and the U.S.S.R., and sent by ship from one of the Soviet controlled Baltic ports, to Stockholm for onward domestic transport.

The cover shown here was postmarked April 30, 1940, in the midst of the invasion. Clear evidence of Egypt (Cairo) censorship may be seen here.

Surface mail service to Sweden resumed after the invasion, but in 1942 was suspended again. Airmail service to Sweden, (via England effective March 27, 1942), continued without interruption throughout the war.

Winter 2011



Whole No. 52

# *The Prexie Era*

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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### Editor's Notes

#### Complete Run of *The Prexie Era* Now Available on CD

Thanks to Steve Roth, former editor/publisher of *The Prexie Era*, a complete run of the newsletter, from Whole Nos. 1-51, is now available on CD as pdf files. Subscribers may purchase disks for \$12 postpaid, or non-subscribers, \$22 postpaid. Checks should be made out to Jeff Shapiro and mailed to him at:

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

Accompanying this issue of *The Prexie Era*, Supplement 1 contains an article on an analysis of color of the Van Buren Prexie based on research by Diane DeBlois and Robert Dalton Harris recently conducted on a reflectance spectrophotometer at the National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C. Below, Lyman Caswell provides an introduction to this article. A first time contributor, Lyman has recently examined Hungary overprints using the same technology at the Postal Museum. He is a retired chemistry professor and a long-time stamp collector.

#### Identification of Colors of Stamps

by

Lyman R. Caswell, Ph.D.

The identification of the color of a stamp can often mean distinguishing between a rare stamp and a common one, or between a genuine stamp and a counterfeit one. In some cases, the differences are very subtle, distinguishable only under special conditions. The problem is complicated by the fact that inks with different spectral components in their reflected colors can appear to be the same color to the human optical system, which synthesizes a single color out of the combination.

The article accompanying this issue of the newsletter, "The Colors of Martin Van Buren: An Engraved Postage Stamp (1938-1959)," by Diane DeBlois and Robert Dalton Harris, is an excellent example of what can be done with modern technology to investigate and identify the colors of stamps. The authors used an instrument called a "reflectance spectrophotometer," to produce the spectrum of the visible light reflected from the surface of a stamp. This instrument was the Foster & Freeman Video Spectral Comparator 6000 (VSC 6000) at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum (NPM). It records the reflectance spectral curve of a surface in both analog form (Figures 2, 4, 9, and 10 in the accompanying article), and in digital form at one-nanometer intervals from 400 to 1000 nanometers. This covers the visible range of the spectrum (400-780 nm) and a short distance into the near infrared (780-1000 nm.). If the reflectance curves of two stamps are congruent, that is, have the same shape, the stamps have been printed with the same ink. If they are not congruent, the inks used for the two stamps have different compositions, even if the stamps have the same color to the eye.

Procedures for interpretation of reflectance spectra of surfaces were developed by the *Commission Internationale de l'Éclairage* (CIE, International Commission for Illumination) in 1931, and revised in 1960 and in 1976.<sup>1</sup> From a spectrum are derived the "tristimulus values," X, Y, and Z, which correspond to the estimated response to the spectrum by the visual pigments of the human eye in, respectively, red, green, and blue. The green value, Y, also is a measure of the



“luminance,” or intensity of the reflected light. From these values are computed the “chromaticity coordinates,”  $x$  and  $y$ . A plot of  $y$  against  $x$ , such as Figure 8 in the article by DeBlois and Harris, clearly shows by the grouping of the points the similarities and relationships among the inks used for similar stamps.

These measurements were originally used for the comparison of painted surfaces. Before the development of modern computer technology, they required time-consuming and tedious computations, and had never been used to evaluate the colors of stamps. Today, with NPM’s VSC 6000, the entire process of measurement and computation requires only a few minutes per stamp. Data for many stamps can be collected, processed and stored for comparison in a short time. It takes about an hour to learn to use the VSC 6000. No special technical or mathematical skills by the user are needed.

The VSC 6000 includes a combination of 14 integrated illumination systems, sophisticated optics, high magnification, and specialized software. Five of the key features are

1. A magnification range extending to x140 optical magnification, allowing stamps and surcharges to be examined in greater detail without the need for an external microscope.
2. A dedicated light source that allows for reflectance and absorption examination with a 100 W filtered spot light using a band-pass filter allowing greater discrimination between surcharge and stamp inks.
3. A variety of image enhancement functions for comparison purposes, such as side light to study grills or embossing.
4. A high intensity tungsten halogen 250 W light with a variety of high-pass and low-pass filters, providing a total of 80 different wavebands of available illumination to remove colors to determine if a surcharge is over or under a cancellation.
5. A multi-lens system to provide either broad-beam or focused light.

I have recently had the opportunity to use NPM’s VSC 6000 to examine the 1919 “Szeged” overprints on stamps of Hungary, some of which are red, and some green. This is only the second time this technique has been used to study colored overprints. The first, on surcharges of the 1881-1888 Spanish Philippine Issues, will soon appear in print.<sup>2</sup>

I am now evaluating the results of my study in terms of differences between the overprints applied by two different printers, and the differences between genuine and counterfeit overprints. In addition to measuring colors, I also used the VSC 6000 to measure distances between parts of the overprints, factors relevant for identifying counterfeits. Publication of the results will follow when I have completed the analysis of all the data.

The work of DeBlois and Harris was supported by a grant from the National Postal Museum. Information about grants for research at NPM can be found on the Museum’s website, [www.postalmuseum.sci.edu](http://www.postalmuseum.sci.edu). My studies with the VSC 6000 were supported by a grant from the Institute for Analytical Philately, Inc. (IAP), a nonprofit corporation. The IAP has arrangements for grantees to use the VSC 6000 at NPM. The IAP’s “Centers of Excellence” where other types of research can be done are the Center for Ink and Printability Research at Western Michigan University, the Munsell Color Science Laboratory at Rochester Institute of Technology, and the X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy laboratory at Rutgers University, where inks can be analyzed for elemental content. Information about the IAP can be found at the website.

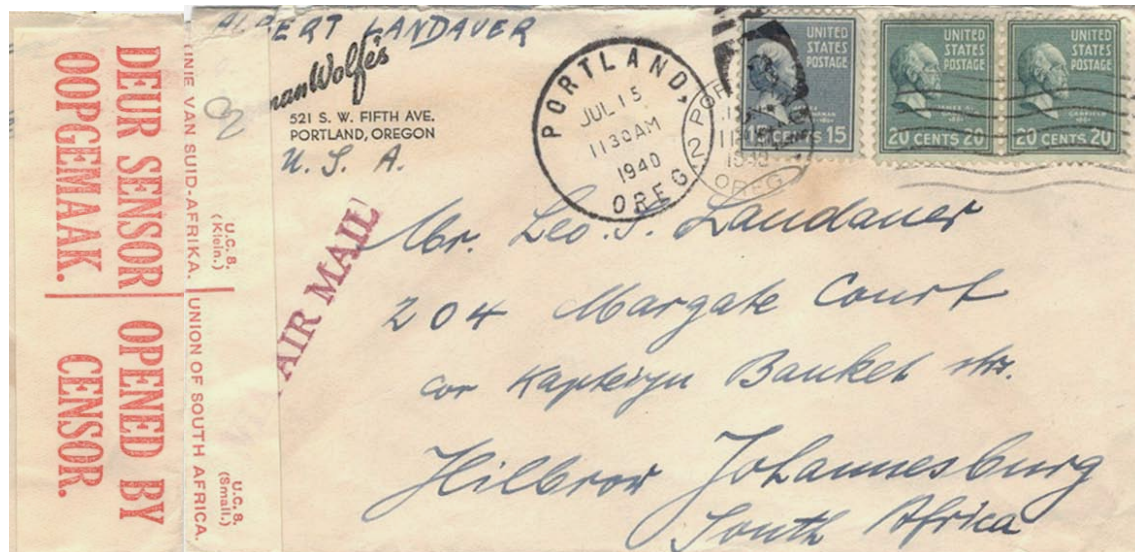
<sup>1</sup> Fred W. Billmeyer, Jr., and Max Saltzman, *Principles of Color Technology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1981; pp. 34-58.

<sup>2</sup> Don Peterson and Thomas Lera, “Illustrated Guide to Genuine Surcharge Types of the 1881-1888 Spanish Philippine Issues,” in press.

## End of Airmail Service Beyond Europe To Africa In 1940

by

Louis Fiset



Following initiation of trans-Atlantic airmail service from the U.S. (FAM-18), mail addressed to Africa destinations could be sent from Europe if patrons prepaid an air fee, varying from 3 cents to 30 cents, depending on distance. Airmail all the way to Egypt, for example, would require 36 cents postage (30¢ + 6¢ air fee), whereas to distant Union of South Africa, the postage was 55¢ (30¢ + 25¢ air fee). Bob Schlesinger cites a 15¢ air fee to Tanganyika in his article below.

Italy's entry into World War II brought an end to this service. Flights from Europe to Africa had to cross Mediterranean air space, which was closed after June 10, 1940. Airmail to Africa destinations went via trans-Pacific routes until December 6, 1941 when FAM-22 service began.

The cover illustrated here, bearing 55¢ postage to pay for air service to South Africa, was postmarked July 13, 1940 nearly a month after the air space was closed. Thus, the letter went by ship. On August 6, 1940, airmail service to South Africa resumed via San Francisco, Hong Kong (or Singapore), and onward by air via Cairo. Postage was 95¢ per half-ounce. The table below, reflecting air fees in effect to June 1940, was reproduced from the July 1939 Postal Guide Part II.

### FOREIGN AIR MAIL RATES

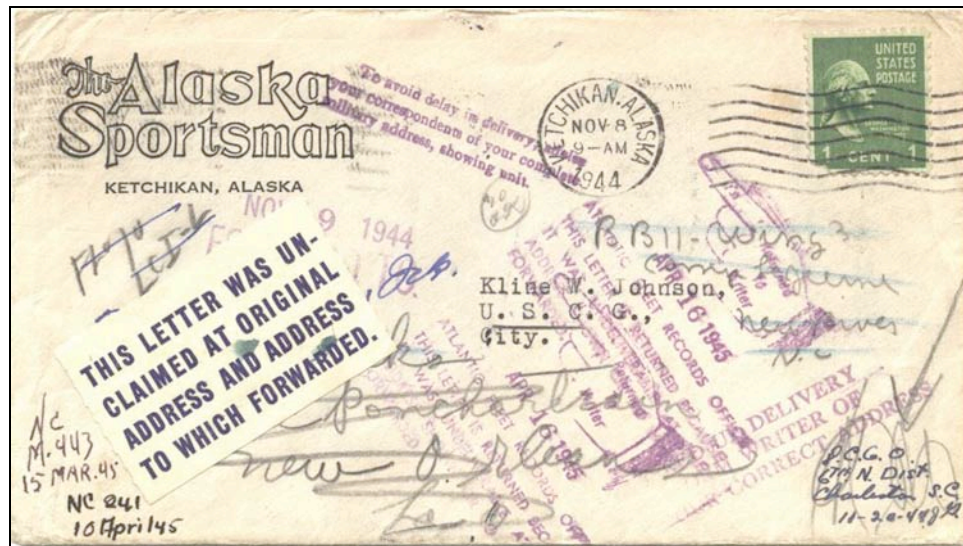
The air mail fees for conveyance of articles by the available air service from Europe to the countries indicated in Africa and to U. S. S. R. in Asia, where such articles are carried to Europe by steamship, are as follows:

	<i>Air fee in addition to regular postage (cents per ½ ounce)</i>		<i>Air fee in addition to regular postage (cents per ½ ounce)</i>
Algeria.....	3	French Guinea.....	20
Libya.....	3	French Sudan.....	20
Morocco.....	3	Gold Coast Colony.....	20
Tunisia.....	3	Italian Somaliland.....	20
Egypt.....	6	Ivory Coast.....	20
Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.....	10	Liberia.....	20
Dahomey.....	15	Northern Rhodesia.....	20
Kenya.....	15	Nyasaland.....	20
Mauritania.....	15	Portuguese East Africa.....	20
Niger.....	15	Southern Rhodesia.....	20
Nigeria.....	15	Gambia.....	25
Senegal.....	15	Portuguese Guinea.....	25
Tanganyika Territory.....	15	Southwest Africa.....	25
Togoland.....	15	Union of South Africa.....	25
Tanzania.....	15	Angola.....	30
Zanzibar.....	15	French Somaliland.....	30
Belgian Congo.....	20	Madagascar.....	30
Cameroon.....	20	Mauritius.....	20
Eritrea.....	20	Reunion.....	30
Ethiopia.....	20	Sierra Leone.....	30
French Equatorial Africa.....	20	U. S. S. R. in Asia.....	15

## A Long Distance Drop Letter

by

Dickson Preston



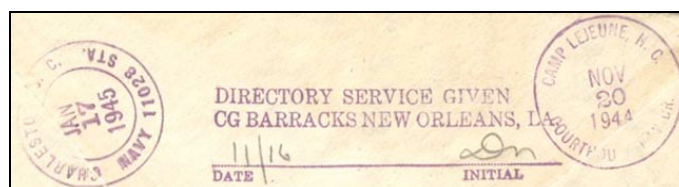
The idea of lower postage for a drop letter is that less service is involved, because the letter normally never leaves the post office in which it was mailed. The illustrated letter, sent by the *Alaska Sportsman* magazine to a Coast Guard serviceman within Ketchikan, is franked at the 1-cent drop letter rate. Since Ketchikan had no carrier service, the letter should have been delivered within the post office at which it was mailed. However, the intended receiver, Kline Johnson, proved hard to find. Even though a drop letter, this item was redirected twice, travelled several thousand miles, and finally was returned after a futile five-month search for the addressee.

The original address was **Kline W. Johnson/ U. S. C. G./City**. The letter, postmarked in Ketchikan on November 8, 1944, was redirected in pencil below a purple hand stamp,

NOV 9 1944  
FORWARDED TO.  
CG Barracks  
Lake Ponchartrain  
New Orleans  
La.

At the new address we see "DIRECTORY SERVICE GIVEN/ CG BARRACKS NEW ORLEANS, LA." on November 16th. The letter was again redirected, with a New Orleans back stamp applied as the letter continued on its way on the same day. Its next destination was,

BB11 - Wing 3  
Camp Lejeune  
New River  
N.C.





BB11 was a building number (not a battleship!) at a Marine barracks and amphibious training facility on the North Carolina coast. There never was a post office called "New River" in North Carolina, the name being the original one for Camp Lejeune. Presumably the directory service used both names, just to be sure. On arrival the letter was back stamped "Camp Lejeune, N.C./Courthouse Bay Br." on November 20th. Courthouse Bay is an outlying facility of the camp.

From here the trail gets murkier. A manuscript annotation "P.C.G.O./6th Naval Dist./Charleston S.C/ 11-20-44 JG" was added the same date as the marking from Camp Lejeune. A back stamp from the Charleston, S.C. Navy Station 11028 shows the letter was still there on January 17th of the next year. Two other handwritten markings, "NC/M443/15 MAR. 45" and "NC 241 10 April 45," show unsuccessful attempt to find the elusive Kline Johnson. If any reader can decipher these abbreviations, please contact the editor or the author. Finally, the letter was "Returned to writer" with pointing hand and a great purple wail of despair,

APR 16 1945  
ATLANTIC FLEET RECORDS OFFICE  
THIS LETTER IS RETURNED BECAUSE  
IT WAS UNDELIVERABLE AT EITHER  
ADDRESS SHOWN OR TO WHICH  
FORWARDED.

The substance of this message is repeated on a paste-on sticker. Two other markings offer some good advice,

SPEED UP DELIVERY  
INFORM WRITER OF  
YOUR CORRECT ADDRESS

To avoid delay in delivery, advise  
your correspondents of your complete  
military address, showing unit.

There is no doubt that delivery of this letter could have been speeded up by more information about the addressee. But would he have wanted to receive it? The contents are a printed circular advertising that a subscription to the *Alaska Sportsman* would make a perfect Christmas gift. Perhaps not, if the addressee had been transferred to New Orleans or Camp Lejeune.



This kind of printed matter would normally have been sent at the 1.5-cent single piece third class rate; the publisher of the *Alaska Sportsman* saved one-half cent by sending it as a one cent drop letter within Ketchikan. Since drop letters are first class mail, the letter was forwarded free, although two cents additional postage would have been due for delivery at another post office. But since the letter was never delivered, it was returned to the sender at no extra charge. Indeed, this letter travelled a long way and got a lot of service for the cost of a 1-cent drop letter.

## Surface-Air Combination To Tanganyika

by

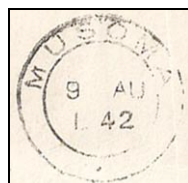
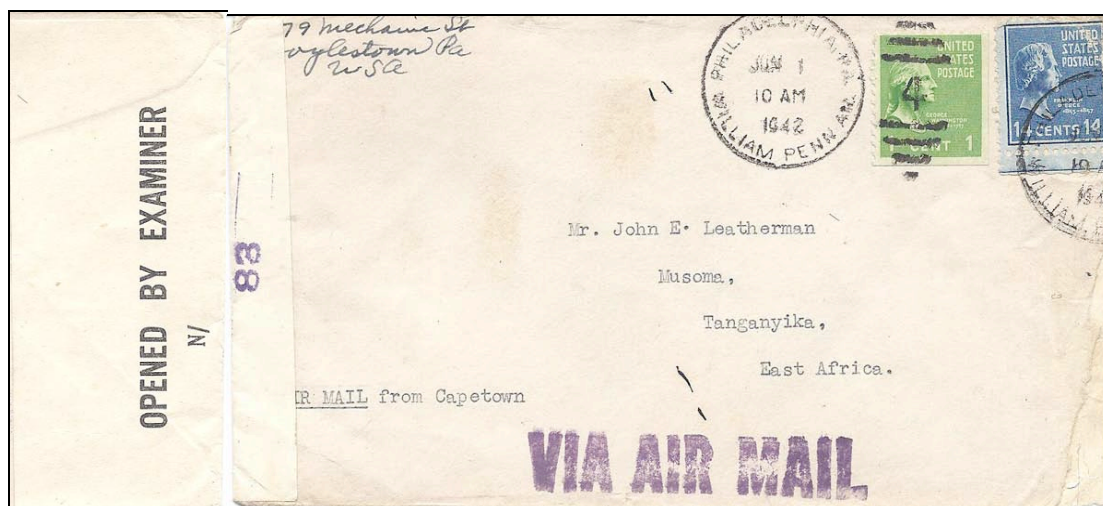
Robert Schlesinger

[Robertsles@aol.com](mailto:Robertsles@aol.com)

At various points during the World War II era, the Post Office Department (POD) had to tailor delivery of U.S. mail addressed to foreign destinations, sent via surface mail or airmail. In some cases the mail would be carried by both surface route (ship) and air.

After the fall of France in June 1940 and Italy's entry into the war, POD had to reroute airmail matter crossing the Mediterranean to various parts of Africa from trans-Atlantic routes to trans-Pacific. This increased distances the mail had to travel to reach destinations, also increased costs in postage. Previous to this change, the rate to Tanganyika, for example, was 45 cents per half-ounce, including 30¢ for the trans-Atlantic (FAM-18) flight plus 15¢ air fee for service beyond Europe. The change in routing brought an 85¢ per half-ounce price tag, representing an almost 100% postage rate increase.

The Postal Bulletin of November 1, 1940 (PB18065) presented a cost effective alternative to the price increase. Effective on that date, a letter addressed to Tanganyika could be sent by steamship from New York to Capetown, South Africa, a voyage estimated at 29 days. From there, onward to Durban by train then airmail to Dar es Salam (Tanganyika), totaling another three days. The cost for this surface/air combination mail would be 25¢ per half-ounce – 5¢ regular surface rate plus 20¢ per half-ounce for airmail postage from Capetown to Tanganyika's capitol. The illustration shows such a usage that was 70 days in transit, the last leg by train to Musoma on Lake Victoria in the British colony's far north, no doubt consuming much of the transit time. The 1939 published estimate for airmail all the way from the U.S. to Dar es Salam was 10-11 days, roughly one-third the time as the combined surface/air routing. As the old saying goes, "Time is money!", certainly applied in this case.



## Special Handling Of A Book Rate Package To An Italian POW

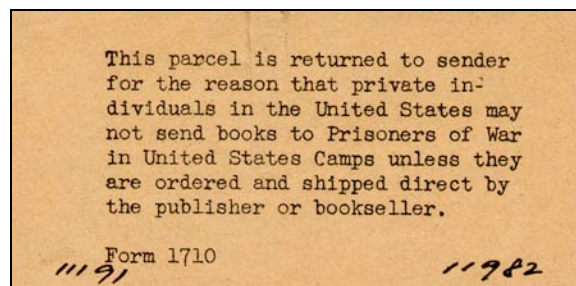
by

Louis Fiset



Shown here is a partial wrapper used to send a package of books from Cleveland, July 11, 1944 to an Italian POW brought to the USA for internment earlier in the war. The book rate was 1 cent per pound, so the package, containing one or more books, weighed less than five pounds. The sender added 10 cents postage so the package would receive special handling as first class mail.

Unfortunately for the POW, the package was returned to the sender by a POW Unit censor (11191) at the New York censor station. An enclosure slip was placed inside the returned package providing details on why the book(s) could not be delivered.



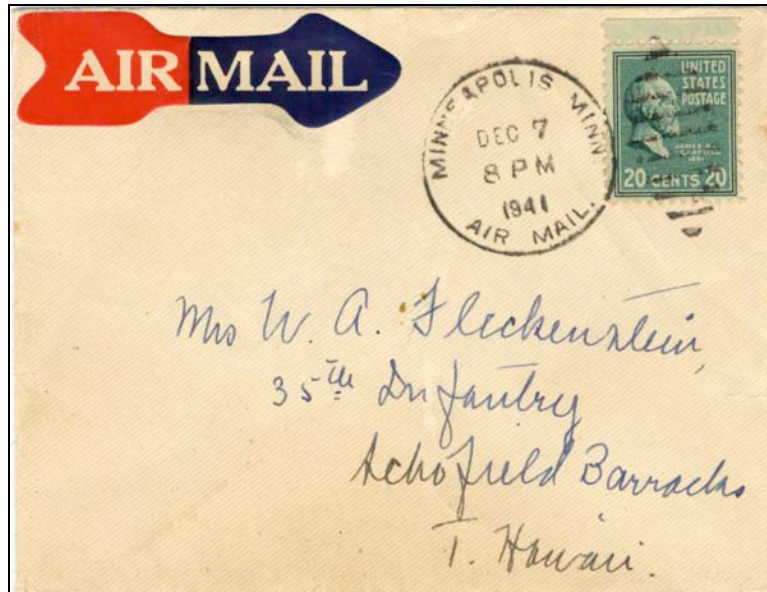
Special Handling stamps used on POW mail are uncommon. For readers interested in learning more about Special Handling stamps and their usages before, during, and after the Prexie era, Bob Rufe has posted his five frame exhibit, "U.S. Special Handling 1925-1959 - The Stamps and the Service," on the internet. This reserve grand award exhibit may be found on the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors (AAPE) website at: <http://www.aaape.org/exhibits.asp>.



## A Follow-Up To A Follow-Up: A December 7, 1941 Cover To Hawaii

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



December 7, 1941 began as a quiet Sunday across America, but the surprise attack on the Territory of Hawaii by the Empire of Japan against the United States, created "a date which (would) live in infamy" and unify America.

Timeline: December 7, 1941:

- 1:23 PM EST (7:53 AM Hawaii) The first waves Japanese bombs fall on Pearl Harbor Hawaii
- 1:28 PM EST (7:58 AM Hawaii) Message received from Oahu at Mere Island Naval Station, CA "Air Raid Pearl Harbor. This Is No Drill"
- 1:47 PM EST (8:17 AM Hawaii) Navy Secretary Frank Knox informed Franklin Roosevelt of the Japanese attack
- 2:10 PM EST (8:40 AM Hawaii) Second wave of Japanese attack planes reaches Oahu
- 2:22 PM EST (8:52 AM Hawaii) Press Secretary Steve Early holds press hookup with Associated Press, United Press and International News Service to announce Japanese attack.
- 2:26 PM EST (8:56 AM Hawaii) First announcement to the public regarding attack interrupts New York Giants vs. Brooklyn Dodgers football game made on WOR radio.
- 2:29 PM EST (8:59 AM Hawaii) NBC Red Network makes first national announcement of the attack, interrupting the end of Sammy Kaye's "Sunday Serenade."

For the rest of the afternoon and evening, radio programming was interrupted to bring in further bulletins from around the world, including a false report that Manila had been bombed.

Friends and families across the country heard these broadcasts and began to worry about loved ones in harm's way. A writer in Minnesota composed a letter to a member of the 35th Infantry Regiment, stationed at Schofield Barracks in the Territory of Hawaii, which was strafed by



Japanese planes as a secondary target. The letter was posted and cancelled 8 PM Central Standard Time (9PM EST --- 2:30 PM Hawaii) on December 7th. --- a 20-cent Prexie paying the half-ounce airmail Clipper rate to Hawaii.

Once the bombing ended, Regiment personnel evacuated the wounded and relocated family and civilians caught in the calamity. Pre-planned positions were occupied around Oahu in anticipation of an expected follow-up attack. The 35th Infantry Regiment departed Hawaii on November 25, 1942 as part of the 25th Infantry Division to defend Guadalcanal. There it earned its name the "Lightning Division."

\* \* \* \* \*

### Mail On *Anzac Clipper's* Emergency Return Flight December 7, 1941

by

Louis Fiset



In the last issue (No. 51), Albert "Chip" Briggs discussed treatment of mail carried on the last pre-war FAM-14 flight of *Anzac Clipper*, diverted from Honolulu to a river landing at Hilo on the island of Hawaii during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The flying boat offloaded its mail, freight, and 32 passengers, and returned immediately to San Francisco, arriving December 8th.

But did *Anzac Clipper* also carry mail on this return flight? The commercial cover illustrated here suggests it did. Under ordinary circumstances, mail generated in cities and towns on Hawaii destined for the U.S. mainland and other points east of the islands was forwarded by inter island air service to the Honolulu post office and loaded on the next eastbound Clipper. Any mail accompanying the *Anzac Clipper* emergency return flight would therefore have been outbound correspondence not yet forwarded to Honolulu. Nor would any of this mail bear censor markings.

This cover was postmarked, Hilo, on Sunday, December 7, 1941 and bears no censor markings. Only a back stamp is missing to confirm date of delivery. While carriage on *Anzac Clipper* cannot be certain because of this, I have never seen an outbound Hawaii cover postmarked on or after December 7th that did not bear a censor marking. Can a reader provide a second example?

Spring 2011



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## Editor's Notes

### Richard W. "Bill" Helbock 1938 – 2011



I recently received word from Bill Helbock's wife, Cath, that on 15 May 2011 Bill died of a heart attack at his home in Australia. Collectors of 20th century U.S. postal history will know him as publisher of the bi-monthly journal, *La Posta*, in continuous publication since 1969. He authored over twenty postal history books and monographs, and served as editor of the *American Philatelic Congress Book* from 1999-2005. In 1991 he was granted the Distinguished Philatelists Award by the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society. Later, in 2003 the Northwest Federation of Stamp Clubs selected him as Distinguished Philatelist.

Bill was a frequent contributor to *The Prexie Era*, both as author and behind-the-scenes advisor. Often your editor sought him out for fact checking, consultation on an individual cover, or more broadly, on an area of airmail philately or military postal history. His responses were frequently publishable. As a memoriam, this issue contains one such response, to a query on airmail service to Australia after the trans-Pacific airmail routes were shut down following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. It appears verbatim, edited only for spelling and formatting.

On a personal note, last fall the Collectors Club of Chicago published my book on World War II postal history. I dedicated the book to Bill because, a mentor, he inspired me to write down my philatelic thoughts. Earlier, I had asked him to serve as co-author because of my uncertainty in pulling off a major philatelic project on my own. Later, when that confidence came, Bill graciously stepped aside, supporting me throughout the long process with guidance, illustrations, and enough content to warrant his name on one of the chapters.

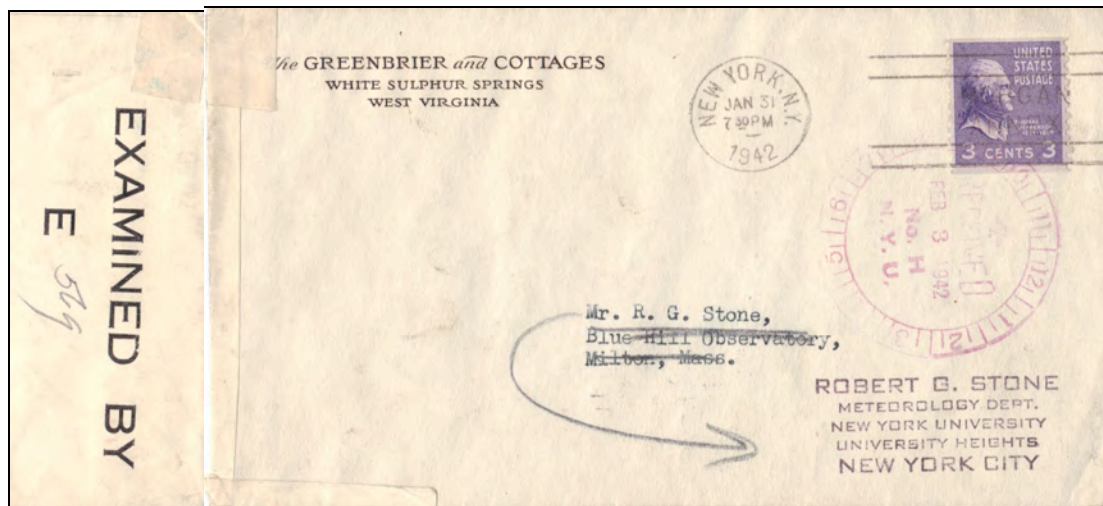
Bill's quiet graciousness of spirit and uninflated ego will outlive him, for they reside between the lines in his writing and editing, as well as in the writing of many whom he touched and who early on needed a guiding hand as we ventured into territory he knew so well.

## Censorship of Axis Diplomats' Mail in World War II

by

Albert “Chip” Briggs

Shortly after war was declared between the United States and Germany, Japan, and their allies, the Federal Bureau of Investigation closed the embassies of the warring parties. At first, the occupants who included diplomats as well as their staffs were restricted to their residences. After several days into the war, however, two luxurious east coast hotels were appropriated for the purpose of housing affected personnel. Eventually, ten hotels held diplomats and their families prior to repatriation.



The Greenbrier Hotel, located at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia was the first to receive detainees when on 19 December 1941 the diplomats of the German embassy, their families, and support staff were moved there. The initial group contained 435 people. Soon, similar personnel from the Italian, Bulgarian, and Romanian embassies in Washington, D.C. were relocated to the Greenbrier. The number detained at the Greenbrier eventually swelled to 672 individuals.

On 29 December 1941 409 personnel from the Japanese embassy were moved to The Homestead, a sprawling resort hotel at Hot Springs, Virginia.

Few postal artifacts of the detention period have survived. One example of censored diplomatic mail from the Greenbrier Hotel is shown here. This cover with *The GREENBRIER and COTTAGES* corner card was carried by pouch to New York where it was examined at the Office of Censorship's field station. Following censorship the envelope was resealed with censor tape preprinted with "EXAMINED BY E" and manuscript 569. It was placed in the mails on 21 January 1942 receiving a New York machine cancel and sent to Milton, Massachusetts where it was forwarded back to New York City.

The addressee, Robert G. Stone, was an influential meteorologist and editor of the *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* from 1934 until 1955. Unfortunately, nothing is known about the political status of the Greenbrier detainee, whether diplomat, staff, or family.

More information about the detained diplomatic corps of Axis nations may be found in Louis Fiset's new book, *Detained, Interned, Incarcerated: U.S. Enemy Noncombatant Mail in World War II*, available from the editor.



## Quintuple Rate Prexies to the Dornier Airplane Manufacturer

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



The 3-cent Jefferson adhesive was the workhorse during the Prexie era, with 130 billion sheet, coil and pane stamps printed, from 1938 through 1955. Fifty sheet stamps were plastered on the front and back of the overstuffed October 28, 1939 cover shown here that was sent from an aircraft publication in New York City to the arms manufacturer, Dornier in Germany. (Note: Germany invaded Poland September 1, 1939, but this correspondence was uncensored)

The stamps paid five times the 30 cents per half-ounce rate on the recently established trans-Atlantic air route to Europe (FAM-18). This rate to Germany was in effect from April 1939 until service was suspended December 12, 1941.

The addressee, Dornier, was a leader in airplane manufacturing. The German company circumvented Treaty of Versailles' regulations by building many of its aircraft outside of German borders. Production included the Do-X (1929), the largest, most powerful long distance flying boat made prior to introduction of the Pan Am Clippers.

Other notable aircraft manufactured by Dornier included the Do-17, a passenger airplane turned bomber, used with great success in the Spanish Civil War. A prototype, the Do-217, was used extensively by the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain and was refined to defend Germany from Royal Air Force night bombings during World War II.



## “Undeliverable” to Dutch New Guinea

by

Louis Fiset



The bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 brought immediate suspension of airmail service to countries in the Pacific region served by FAM-14 and FAM-19. Throughout the war, airmail letters from North America bound for New Zealand, Australia, and beyond, were sent by ship, or military transport (Air Transport Command, Navy Air Transport Command) on a space available basis. Some POD patrons, however, continued to frank their mail with 70-cent airmail postage in hope this would expedite service to locations so far away.

The cover shown here, addressed to Madang on the northwest coast of Dutch New Guinea, was postmarked 30 March 1942 long after suspension of airmail service. It went by ship, likely from San Francisco, to Australia where it was censored at Sidney -- from there, by ship to Port Moresby, located on the southeast coast of Papua. A faint Australia Field Post Office receiving mark dated 10 August 1942 visible on the back confirms the latter. A member of the New Guinea Forces has written “Undeliverable” in red ink, with the same date. The letter got no farther than Port Moresby where it began a slow return voyage to the U.S. as low priority mail.

Why was this letter undeliverable? Japanese forces had been encroaching on the region since January 1942 with their attack on Rabaul, and by May had secured beachheads on the northwest coast of New Guinea as far west as Lae and Salamaua. Port Moresby, Papua, remained under Allied control thanks to a hard fought victory in the week-long Battle of the Coral Sea, in May. This enabled the letter to get as far as Papua. Although Madang was not yet occupied, the Japanese presence blocked mail between Port Moresby and post offices on the northwest coast of New Guinea west of Salamaua.

The addressee, Lutheran missionary Walter Krebs, did not survive the war. By December 1942 Madang was under occupation. At first, members of the Madang Mission were allowed to continue their work. However, soon they were ill-treated, forced to perform manual labor, and several times moved to more western locations. In February 1944, the 19 missionaries from Madang, accompanied by a large contingent of other detained westerners, boarded the *Dorish Maru* bound for Wewak, further west. En route the ship was repeatedly strafed by U.S. planes. After limping into port, one hundred dead and dying were taken ashore, including Walter Krebs.

## Airmail To and From Australia After 8 December 1941

by

Bill Helbock

June 9, 2010

Good morning Louis:

You ask tough questions, mate. This subject of airmail to and from Australia after 8 December 1941 is quite vague.

There was a brief period when airmail addressed to Australia from the U.S. appears to have been routed through Miami and onward to Africa in order to link up with the Horseshoe route. But that connection was terminated after the bombing raid on Broome in northwestern Australia on 3 March 1942. Fifteen flying boats were in Roebuck Bay and completely destroyed. Some were loaded with passengers ready to depart. After that, the Horseshoe route extended only from Durban to Calcutta. Any onward mail to Australia would have travelled by ship.



Figure 1

Figure 1, above, shows a cover that could have traveled via the FAM 22-Horseshoe Route link to Australia, but my guess is that it did not. The circular PASSED BY/CENSOR marking was applied in San Francisco suggesting that the cover went from New York to California and then onward either by ship or on a space available basis with Navy air. (See my *La Posta* article on trans-Pacific airmail carried by the army and navy.)

Figure 2 shows a cover to Port Moresby mailed from Santa Barbara on 23 March 1942. Too late for the FAM 22-Horseshoe connection, it too made the trans-Pacific trip by sea or courtesy of the Army/Navy.



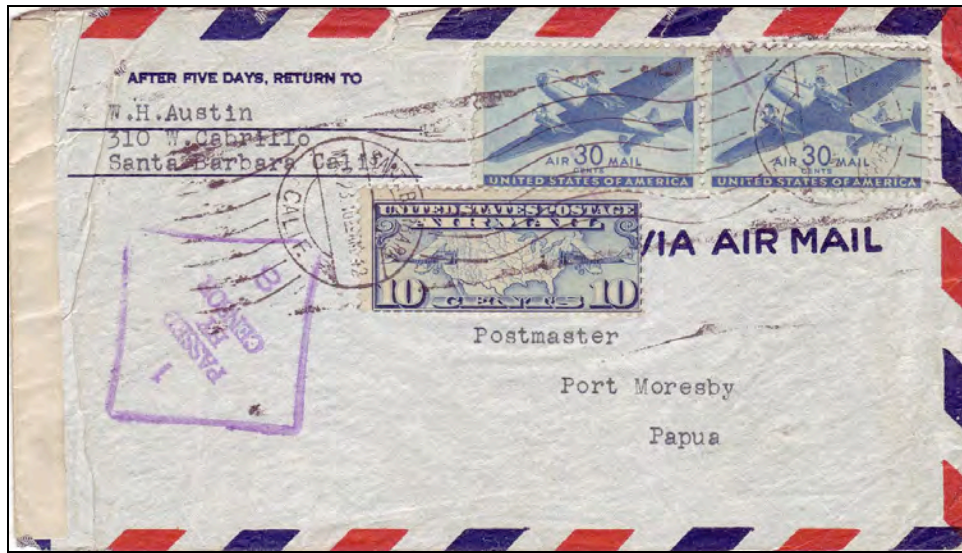


Figure 2

Figure 3, illustrated both front and back, shows a cover that definitely traveled by air from the US (Hawaii) to Brisbane by military air. [Ed. Note: Postmarked 11 June 1943; received 22 June 1943. Transit time: 12 days.]



Figure 3



In short, I believe that unless there is evidence of a Miami censor tape/handstamp, it's impossible to tell if a cover was carried by the FAM 22-Horseshoe connection during the brief, December 1941-February 1942 window.

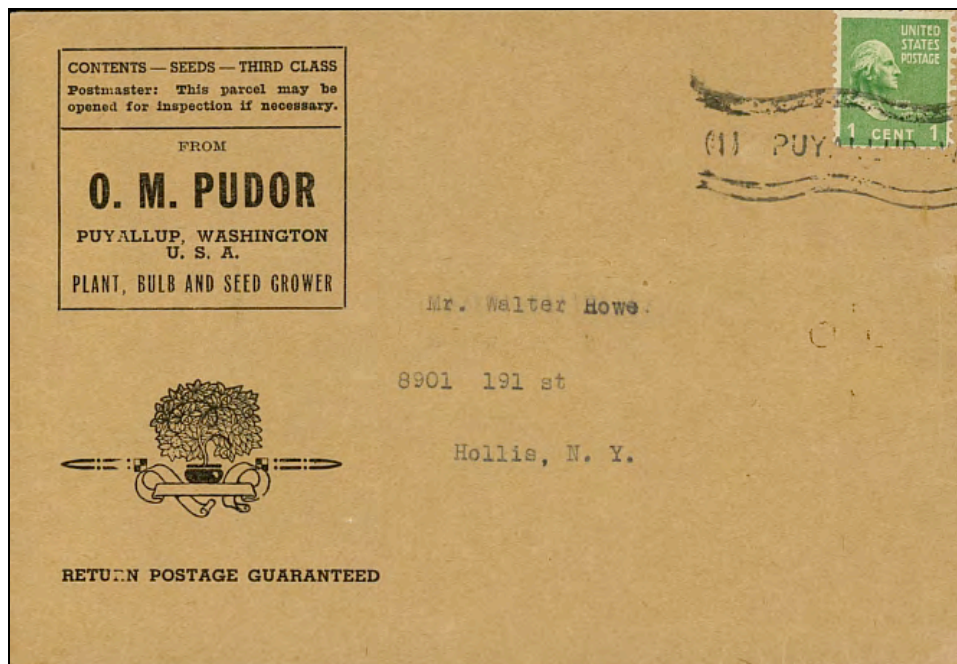
For your 1944 piece, I think it pretty well suggests ship or space-available air by the Army or Navy.

Hope this is of assistance, Bill.

### Third Class One-Cent Rate for Seeds

by

Bob Hohertz



In the Fall 2008 issue (No. 43) I asked subscribers if anyone had knowledge of a solo 1.5-cent Prexie stamp used on a 2-ounce mailer conveying seeds, cuttings, or other planting material. I received no response. Since then I've found a cover of the right type, but early enough to have proper use of a 1-cent stamp.

From the beginning of the Prexie period until January 1, 1949 the single-piece third class rate was 1.5 cents for each two ounces or fraction thereof, up to and including eight ounces. Exceptions were provided for books, catalogs, seeds, cuttings, bulbs, roots, scions and plants, which were charged 1 cent per two ounces or fraction thereof. This cover could not have been sent third class for one cent without falling into the group of exceptions.

I am still on the hunt for a 1.5-cent Prexie used for mailing seeds.

## Circular AIR TRANSIT Marking, Hong Kong

by

Louis Fiset



The cover shown here has at least two points of interest to collectors, three for collectors of the Famous American series on cover. First, it was addressed to a Jewish refugee living in Shanghai at the outbreak of the war. Shanghai was an important safe-haven for Jewish refugees during the Holocaust, since it was one of the few places in the world where one did not need a visa to enter. The Japanese, who controlled the city, refused to submit to the demands of the Third Reich to exterminate them. By 1941, nearly 20,000 European Jews had found shelter there, and many would eventually find their way to Israel.

Of philatelic interest is the green **AIR TRANSIT** circular marking with the boxed **21** of the same color tying the Hong Kong resealing tape. All known markings were applied at Hong Kong, and most will be found on mail to and from Shanghai. The earliest reported date is 9 September 1940 and the latest, 4 December 1941 shortly before the occupation of Hong Kong by Japanese forces. Also notable is a missing Hong Kong receiving postmark.

These two-circle markings, all with a number in the center ranging from 1 to 10, and variable in color, remain scarce and, to date are not entirely understood. Originally the marking was thought to be an OAT forerunner applied at the Hong Kong exchange office to indicate onward transmissions by air. It is now believed to be related to censorship of transit mail and not a marking applied by postal authorities. The color of ink used to strike the Air Transit marking usually matches the boxed censor number often tying the Hong Kong resealing tape, as shown in the example. Some speculation exists that the marks were used by senior censors handling mail referred to them and that they brought attention that the item should be treated as airmail in transit. Covers bearing these markings rarely have Hong Kong receiving (transit) dates, typical of most transit mail arriving in the colony.

Of the 164 covers recorded with the Air Transit marking, only 14 bear the number “5”, making it one of the scarcer numbers.

- Source: Murray Heifetz. *O.A.T. and A.V. 2 Markings*. (Mineola, NY: AAPS, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.)

## Japanese American Farm Workers At Seabrook Farms

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



This September 1944 postcard, addressed to Bridgeton, New Jersey, has a story to tell. It was sent from a Japanese American on his way to Chicago, to another, at “Seabrook Dorm.”

Charles Seabrook and his three sons built Seabrook Farms into one of the major frozen food producers in the country and helped established a Japanese American community there that still exists today. Located in Bridgeton, Cumberland County, New Jersey, Seabrook Farms covered nine square miles and was the largest farm in New Jersey. Radishes, squashes, peppers, peas, beans, and asparagus were grown there. Dozens of greenhouses on the property grew cucumbers, lettuce, and tomatoes. The property included 6000 cultivated acres, 30 miles of improved roads, a canning and freezing plant, and a railroad and truck loading facility.

While the business prospered because of pioneering methods of irrigation and quick-freezing of fresh vegetables, success of the operation depended on the availability of a large, inexpensive labor force. The needs of the nation meant large demands for vegetables, but with labor shortages caused by the War, Seabrook found it difficult to recruit the approximately 2,000 farm hands and packing plant workers needed to keep the huge agribusiness operating.

Seeking relief, late in 1943 Seabrook Farm's management approached the War Relocation Authority to see if incarcerated Japanese residents at the ten relocation centers established in the aftermath of President Roosevelt's 1942 Executive Order 9066 could be "paroled" to work at the Seabrook Farms' facilities. Within a year, nearly 1000 internees relocated to Seabrook as farm hands, a number that grew to 2,800 by war's end. Workers lived in concrete block barracks with communal sanitary facilities. They worked 12-hour days (with one day off every two weeks) at wages ranging from 35 to 50 cents per hour.

In 1949 1,200 Japanese Americans were still working at Seabrook Farms. Today, 500 still call Bridgeton, New Jersey home.

Summer 2011



Whole No. 54

# *The Prexie Era*

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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**Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter:  
August 5, 1944 – February 4, 1946**

by

Louis Fiset



The postcard shown here, from Bob Hohertz' collection, illustrates mail generated during a little known operation in the United States that occurred throughout the last year of World War II and beyond – the sheltering of displaced persons from Europe. It is postmarked Oswego, New York. Dated October 30, 1945, months after conclusion of the war, it bears no censorship markings. Properly franked with 10 cents postage paying the airmail letter rate to Cuba, the German language correspondence was addressed to what may have been a fellow refugee.

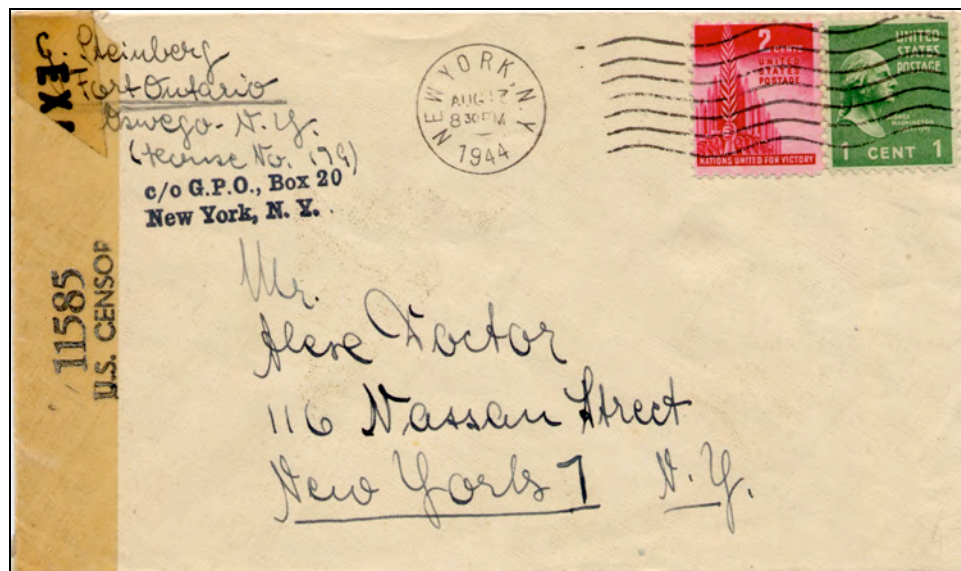
In early spring of 1944, the U.S. War Refugee Board was yet to make a concerted move in offering asylum to refugees. By now displaced persons were streaming through the Allied lines in Italy, seriously taxing supply lines. As a result, with approval of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 982 refugees were selected in Italy by U.S. officials and designated for shelter in the U.S. They embarked on a troopship at Naples in mid-July. The group arrived in the U.S. during the first week of August. Their destination was Fort Ontario, at Oswego, New York, an army facility turned over to the War Refugee Board as an emergency shelter.

The 982 residents at the shelter were predominantly Jewish, with small contingents of Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, and Protestants. The group represented 18 nationalities, with 90 percent of them Yugoslavs, Austrians, Poles, and Germans. Ages ranged from an Austrian infant born two days before the ship sailed to America, to an 80-year old Spanish citizen. Nearly 100 had endured life at Dachau and Buchenwald.

The agency assigned to administer the shelter was the War Relocation Authority, the same organization then running the 10 relocation centers for Japanese Americans in the western states. The WRA attempted to make the lives of the refugees as comfortable as possible while living behind barbed wire. They permitted residents to maintain their own households, and most able bodied residents were employed in essential project duties at the rate of \$18 per month. The refugees staffed the mess halls and hospital and took responsibility for upkeep of the grounds and similar arduous tasks. They even elected an advisory council.

Nevertheless, under President Roosevelt's orders, the refugees were to remain "under appropriate security restrictions for the duration of the war." Because they were not actually living legally in the United States, the refugees were not permitted to live normal lives in the surrounding communities. In fact, liberty would elude them until nearly a half year beyond the end of the war.

Among other restrictions imposed on the refugees was censorship of their mail, both domestic and international. The relevant domestic cover below shows a Fort Ontario, Owego, NY return address and bears a August 17, 1944 postmark. The contents were examined by a POW Unit censor at the New York field station. The **c/o G.P.O. BOX 20** rubber stamp marking indicates the mail was routed through POW channels. The censor placed the letter into the mail stream subsequent to examination, thus bearing a New York, NY postmark.



Sixty-nine from the original group voluntarily left the U.S. before the period of resettlement began in January 1946. Fourteen others died, while twenty-three were born at the shelter and automatically became U.S. citizens. This left more than 900 persons in need of resettlement.

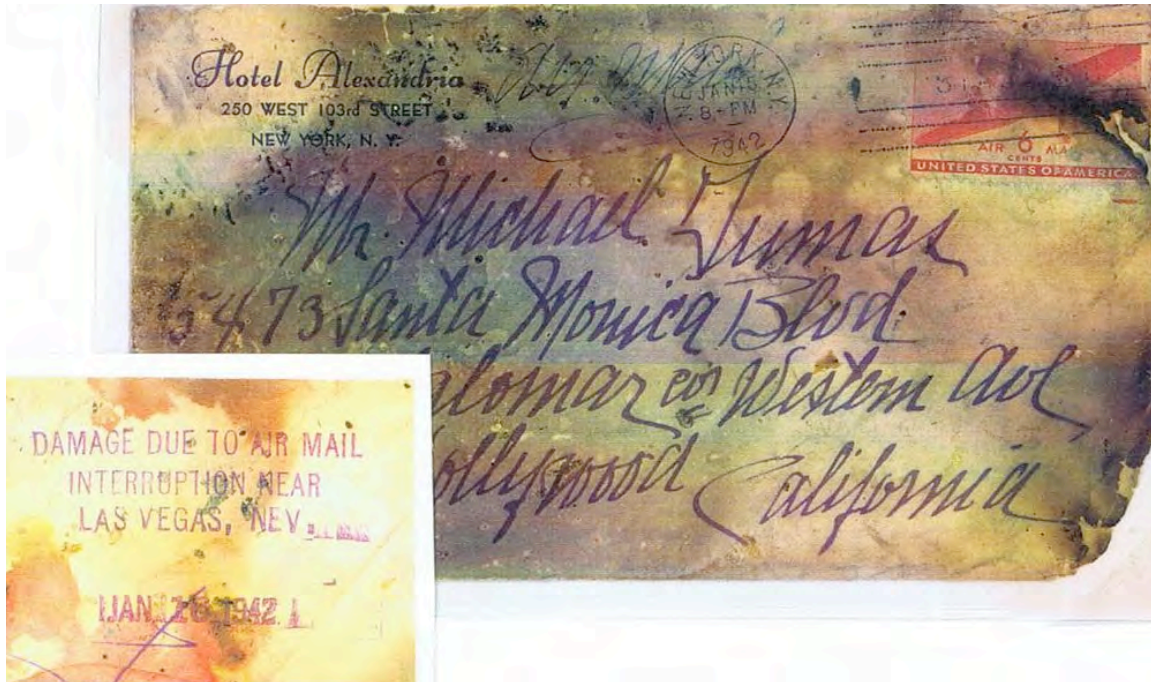
The first 100 refugees left the shelter for resettlement on January 17, 1946. The last refugee departed three weeks later, on February 4. Those admitted as permanent immigrants were dispersed to 20 states and the District of Columbia. The remainder either repatriated or emigrated to other countries. The fort was returned to the Army on February 28, 1946.

Because of the small number of refugees at Fort Ontario and the relatively brief time they were there, the opportunity to generate correspondence was limited. Nevertheless, the current scarcity of covers may be due, in part, to unfamiliarity with the historical event. The search may prove to be worthwhile.

### Carole Lombard Flight Crash Cover

By

Joseph Bock



On January 16, 1942 a TWA flight from New York to Los Angeles struck Spring Mountain in Wyoming, crashed, burned, and was totally demolished. Hollywood actress, Carole Lombard, was a passenger and was killed. She had boarded the plane at Winslow, Arizona. Pilot Wayne Williams also was killed.

As a result of her participation in an early World War II war bond drive, Lombard is regarded as the first American woman killed during World War II.

Philatelically, only 67 of 632 pounds of mail were salvaged, all in bad condition. The cover shown here represents just one of five known covers in collectors' hands.

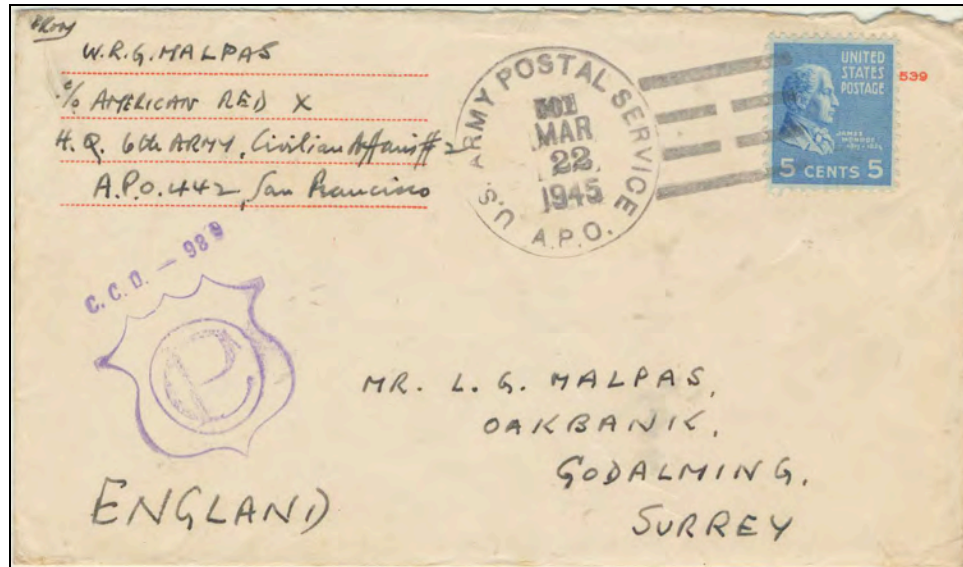
(Source: *American Air Mail Catalog*.)



## APO 442 Mail from A Liberated Santo Tomas Camp Internee

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



Following the successful January 1945 landing of the U.S. Sixth Army at the Lingayen Gulf in Luzon, General Douglas MacArthur became increasingly concerned over the Japanese military's reaction regarding the plight of the thousands of civilian internees and military prisoners of war held in and around Manila. As the Japanese war effort deteriorated, conditions in these camps also deteriorated, with disease and starvation rampant. Rumors also abounded that the Japanese would kill their hostages rather than have them liberated.

As a result, the General and his staff organized the "Flying Column," a small group of volunteers from the U.S. First Cavalry troops, to raid and rescue military and civilian prisoners held at four locations in Japanese occupied territory on the island of Luzon.

The first objective was to liberate 3,700 foreign civilians in "protective custody" by Japanese forces on the campus of the University of Santo Tomas, located on the northern outskirts of Manila. The majority of detainees were U.S. citizens. However, 1,275 others were citizens of the United Kingdom who had been living in pre-war Manila or arrived on ships that put into Manila Harbor in November 1941 to await the outcome of diplomatic efforts to allow entry into Australia.

With the help of Filipino nationals and their guerrilla army, and after three days of fierce hit and run combat, the "Flying Column" entered the Santo Tomas Camp on the evening of February 3, 1945. After several days of artillery and small arms fire, which resulted in the deaths of 17 internees and several First Cavalry troops, the Camp was liberated. The freed internees were transferred to the American Red Cross at the US Sixth Army Headquarters (APO 442).

The censored March 1945 cover shown here, franked with a 5-cent Prexie to pay the one ounce international surface rate, was sent through the Army Post Office system by a former Santo Tomas internee to a relative in England as he was being processed by the Red Cross for release. The letter was examined by an Allied censor assigned to the Civil Censorship Detachment



**Certificate of Mailing: First Day of Prexie Series Use**

by

Bob Hohertz

**Post Office Department**  
 Received from: S. Yulkin

One piece of ordinary first class  
 mail addressed to—  
F.T. Perpoint  
Mt. Carmel, Conn.

**THIS RECEIPT DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR INDEMNIFICATION**

Form 3817. U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1929 5-10325 **POSTMASTER.**

This certificate of mailing, Form 3817, was used to record the sending of a piece of first class mail on April 25, 1938 from the Benjamin Franklin Station in Washington, D.C. to Mount Carmel, Connecticut. A one-cent Prexie was used to pay the fee. Since that date was the first day of use for the one-cent Prexie - actually the first day of use for any of the Prexies - the certificate is an unofficial first day cover for the entire series.

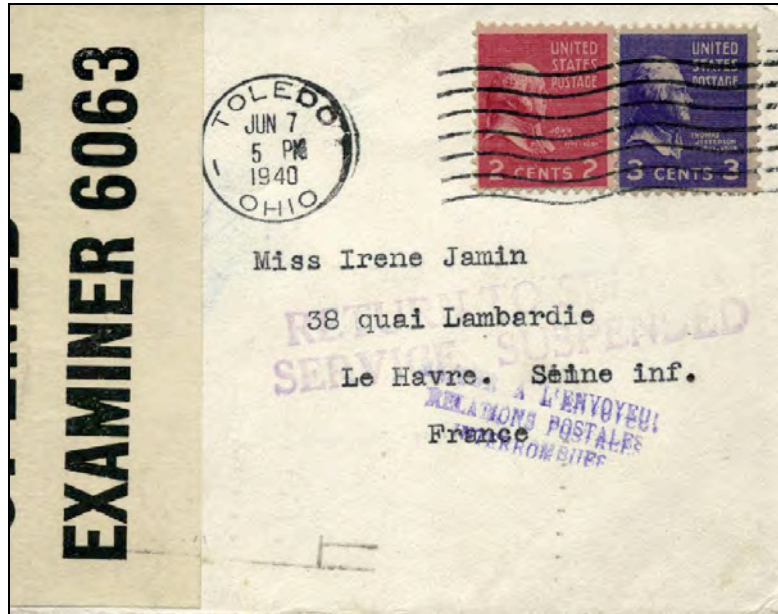
Interestingly, most small certificates of mailing currently in collectors' hands are Form 3817, Rev. 9-37. The one shown here is the original 1929 version.

This item was purchased at Stampshow 2011 out of the wonderful collection of the late Larry Paige. Many of us who collect Prexie covers had gone through Larry's material once or twice before, undoubtedly looking at this certificate without really noticing it. Larry certainly knew what it was, as he had clearly labeled it as "First Day of use of the First Prexie or Presidential Issued during 1938."

## World War II Adventures of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson: A Thwarted Mission to France

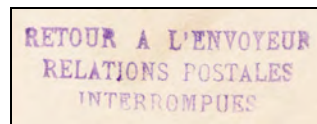
by

Lawrence Sherman



In August 1784 Thomas Jefferson, newly appointed minister plenipotentiary to France, arrived in Le Havre, then traveled to Paris to join John Adams and Benjamin Franklin. Their mission: to negotiate treaties of amity and commerce with European nations. More than a century and a half later, as Prexies paying the 5-cent international surface mail rate from the United States, Adams and Jefferson were re-united on another mission: to carry a letter to Le Havre. The time was not propitious. On June 7, 1940, the date of mailing, the invading German army was at Rouen, only 20 miles from the Seine river. Two weeks later, on June 22, France signed armistice terms demanded by Germany. Early in August France was officially divided into occupied and unoccupied zones.

As one historian noted, the meandering course of the line of demarcation between the zones “marked a frontier as absolute as any dividing foreign countries: a major barrier to the movement of people, the ordinary business of communication and the operations of commerce . . . . Indeed, in the early days after the armistice was signed it amounted to a virtually impenetrable barrier.”<sup>1</sup> For personal mail from the U.S. to Occupied France, the barrier became literally impenetrable.



By August 1940 both surface letters and airmail addressed to the occupied zone, upon reaching Marseille, were marked with a three line cachet “RETOUR A L’ENVOYEUR / RELATIONS POSTALES / INTERROMPUES” or similarly phrased markings, and returned to the sender. This was the first nail in the coffin of U.S. postal relations with Occupied France.

Although no mail from the U.S. was deliverable (except via the International Red Cross), this fact was not published in Post Office Department Postal Bulletins until Germany officially suspended mail between the U.S. and Occupied France in September 1941, one year later.

Albert Goldman, Postmaster of the New York, NY Post Office during the war, later recalled that as a result of the September 9, 1941 official suspension of mail service by the occupation (German army) authorities, “this office had to return to senders approximately 180,000 letters, 250 sacks of prints, and 1,500 registered articles. They were endorsed ‘Return to Sender’ — ‘Service Suspended.’”<sup>2</sup>

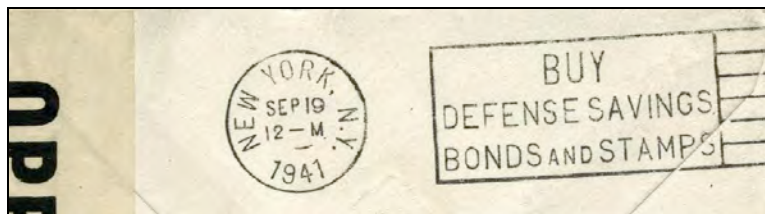
Mail from the U.S. to the occupied zone had been undeliverable since June 1940; it could not cross the frontier between “zone O” and “zone Nono,” as the French had facetiously labeled their disarticulated country. But now mail was officially suspended. News first appeared in *The Postal Bulletin* No. 18278, September 9, 1941, under the heading, “Suspension of Mail Service to Occupied France.” The entry carefully noted that the action was “by order of the occupation authorities.” Since postal relations with occupied France were now suspended, “postmasters will decline to accept for mailing, effective immediately and until further notice, mail articles addressed for delivery in the occupied zone of France, except when addressed to civilian internees.” This was the second nail in the postal relations coffin.

Postal patrons in the U.S. were shocked by the news. It was a page one story in at least one philatelic newspaper, *Western Stamp Collector*, which headlined the story, “Mail to Occupied France Returned to U.S. Senders:”

Letters mailed to persons in the occupied zone of France as long ago as last November, some by air mail at a cost of 30 cents, have been received back by the senders the last few days stamped “Retour a l’Envoyeur, Relations Postales Interrompues,” and, in English, “Return to Sender, Postal Service Suspended.”

According to New York postal officials, 100,000 letters had been returned a few days ago by the postal authorities of France. They apparently had been held there in the hope there would be lifting of the German restrictions.

Some of the letters sent by clipper had been opened by the French censor and resealed with the notation “Controle.” [“Mail to Occupied France returned to U.S. senders.”]<sup>3</sup>



The formal suspension caused the New York, NY, Post Office to be flooded with mail that had been addressed to the occupied zone, processed in Marseille, then held by Vichy postal authorities. Many of the approximately 100,000 [or, depending on the source, 180,000] letters returned to sender, both surface and airmail, were backstamped with machine-cancelled receiving postmarks dated between September 17 and October 2, 1941. Illustrated here is one example, showing the backstamp on the Adams-Jefferson Prexie cover illustrated above.

Before September 1941, postal relations between neutral U.S. and Occupied France were simply impossible to implement; now they were formally suspended. Why? What had tried Germany's patience sufficiently to cause their army to take this official step? Perhaps issuance of the Atlantic Charter on August 12 was the precipitant. This joint declaration of President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill promulgated at sea (Placentia Bay, Newfoundland), spoke of the "common principles" of the two countries, and offered hope for a peaceful world after "the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny."

A possible immediate precipitant was "the *Greer* incident." On September 4, 1941 the destroyer USS *Greer*, steaming independently toward Iceland, was involved in an unfriendly encounter with German submarine *U-652*. After an exchange of depth charges and torpedoes, all missing their targets, the ships broke off the encounter. The incident enabled President Roosevelt to order U.S. warships to "shoot on sight" in waters "the protection of which is necessary for American defense."

Germany and Italy eagerly joined Japan against the United States, declaring war on December 11, 1941 four days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The U.S. Post Office Department had mail suspension plans already in place. "On the very date of our declaration of war on Germany and Italy," wrote the Postmaster General in a post-war report, "all mail service whatsoever was discontinued to those nations and places under their control, which included all of continental Europe except Gibraltar, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Russia, and unoccupied France."<sup>4</sup> Now the already suspended mail service to Occupied France was "discontinued" because that unhappy land was an enemy-occupied country. Labels attached by U.S. censors to the back of returned-to-sender mail posted after December 11, 1941, made that clear. This was the third nail in the coffin of deceased U.S.-Occupied France postal relations.

In 1940 the French authorities had said, your mail *may not* cross the border into Occupied France; in September 1941 Germany had said, your mail *will not* cross the border; in December 1941 the U.S. government said, your mail *must not* cross that border into enemy-occupied territory. Not until September 1944, three tempestuous years after the United States entered the war, did limited mail service from the United States resume to liberated areas of once-occupied France. Postcard mail service to Normandy began on September 4, 1944, and on September 23 service resumed to Le Havre and Paris. By then the missive carried by Prexies Adams and Jefferson had long since been returned to the keep of its sender in Toledo, Ohio.

<sup>1</sup>Ian Ousby. *Occupation: The Ordeal of France 1940-1944*. (London: John Murray, 1997), pp. 68-69.

<sup>2</sup>Albert Goldman. *The New York, N.Y. Post Office During the War Years 1941 – 1945*. (New York: Albert Goldman, 1949), p. 350.

<sup>3</sup>*Western Stamp Collector*, Vol. XVI (Whole #1075, Oct 1, 1941), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>The Postmaster General (J.M. Donaldson). *A Wartime History of the Post Office Department: World War II 1939-1945*. (Washington, DC: United States Post Office Department, 1951), p. 41.

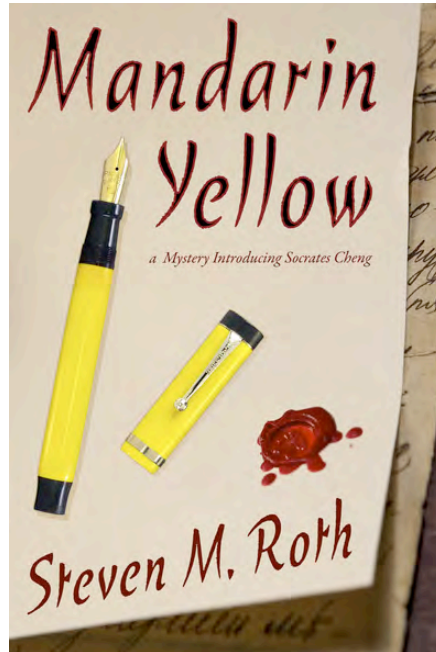


## ***Mandarin Yellow: A Novel***

by

Steve Roth

[stevenmroth.author@gmail.com](mailto:stevenmroth.author@gmail.com)



[*Editor's Note:* Steve Roth is the former editor/publisher of the Prexie Era Newsletter.]

I am pleased to let you know that my new mystery novel, *MANDARIN YELLOW*, is now available online as an eBook (at \$2.99) and as a trade paperback (at \$14.95), from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Smashwords, and Apple's iTunes. You can search for it under: **Roth Mandarin Yellow**.

Set in a suspenseful and idiosyncratic environment, *Mandarin Yellow* involves ethnic and cultural conflict, twisted history, and the immutable law of unintended consequences. *Mandarin Yellow* will appeal to readers of modern noir and sleuth mysteries, to people interested in China's art and its vintage collectibles (such as historic fountain pens), and to readers interested in the history of early twentieth century China and in the Chinese experience in America, all as shown by my series character, Socrates Cheng.

I currently am at work on the sequel to *Mandarin Yellow*, a mystery (tentatively titled *The Mourning Woman*) also set in Washington, DC. In this book Socrates explores the Greek side of his heritage as he investigates a series of crimes that occur in Washington's Greek community, all as predicted by an elderly immigrant woman reputed to be the descendant of the ancient Oracle at Delphi.

Feel free to contact me at the email address noted above as I would love to hear your thoughts about my book. You also can reach me at PO Box 57160, Washington, DC 20037- 0160.

Fall 2011



Whole No. 55

# *The Prexie Era*

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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## Editor's Notes

### 2012 Subscriptions Payable Now

The Fall 2011 issue is the last in the quartet of *The Prexie Era* for 2011. This means it is time for readers to renew your subscriptions. Rates for 2012 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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[coverlover@gmail.com](mailto:coverlover@gmail.com)

**If your subscription is not current by the time the next issue comes out this will be the last one you receive.**

\* \* \* \*

In the article on the Fort Ontario emergency refugee shelter (Issue No. 54) I erroneously listed the airmail letter rate to Cuba as 10 cents. The rate changed to 8 cents on June 29, 1945. Since the postcard was mailed the following October, the franking was therefore two cents overpaid. Thanks to Bob Hohertz for pointing this out.

\* \* \* \*

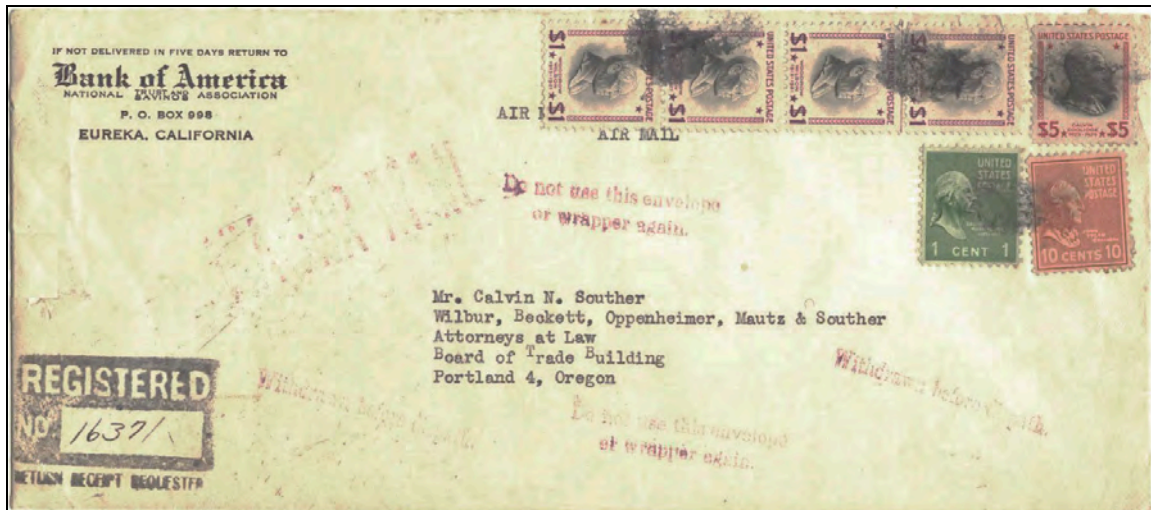


Airmail letter to Finland, postmarked July 12, 1941, censored at the destination. During the Winter War against the U.S.S.R. (Nov. 30, 1939 – Mar. 13, 1940), U.S. mail service to Finland was suspended, then resumed following the end of hostilities. When the U.S. entered World War II, mail was again suspended, this time for the duration of the War. Having gone to war against an Allied nation, albeit to preserve its autonomy, Finland became an enemy country of the U.S.

## \$5.00 Prexie Registered Letter Withdrawn Before Dispatch

by

Dickson Preston



On 12 January 1948, some hapless individual from the Eureka, California branch of the Bank of America presented a high-value letter at the local post office. The registered letter was intended to go by air to Portland, Oregon, and a return receipt was requested. The total postage of \$9.11 may be broken down as follows:

Airmail postage, 2 x 5 cents per ounce	.10
Registration fee, minimum with indemnity	.20
Return receipt fee, showing where and to whom delivered	.31
Supplementary fee, 1st \$1,000	.10
Supplementary fee, next \$56,000	
@ 15 cents per \$1,000 for Zone 4	8.40
	-----
Total	\$ 9.11

Note that the 31-cent return receipt fee has been inferred. Since all the other fees are multiples of 5 cents, the normal 4-cent return receipt fee cannot produce the total of \$9.11, but the 31-cent fee can.

Later the same day the Bank elected to withdraw the letter from the mails before it had been dispatched from the Eureka post office. The procedure for doing so, as stated in Section 59.68 of the 1948 PL&R was followed, in part, by the postal clerk processing the request.

(1) **Before dispatch:** The sender shall write on his registry receipt "Withdrawn before dispatch," sign his name thereto, and surrender the receipt. The postal employee shall write or stamp "Withdrawn before dispatch" on the counterpart of the receipt in the registration book . . . and shall write or stamp the same words and imprint the postmark on the face of the article.



In the case at hand the clerk did stamp the words "Withdrawn before dispatch" on the face of the envelope, but he did not place a postmark there. He also added "Do not use this envelope or wrapper again," a marking normally appearing on articles returned because of an invalid address.

All was not perfect at the Eureka post office that day. For one thing the purple stamp pad was badly in need of fresh ink, so all the markings, including "VIA AIR MAIL" and the registry postmark on the back, are very feebly struck. For another, the "Withdrawn" marking was misspelled, so that it actually reads **Withdrawn before dispath.**



Figure 2. Date of Posting

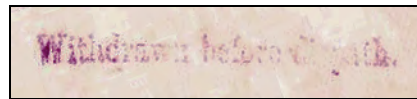


Figure 3. "Withdrawn before dispath"

Did the bank get its \$9.11 postage back? According to the PL&R, "Application for postage paid on registered mail withdrawn before dispatch should be made to the Third Assistant Postmaster General, Division of Registered Mails." Section 35.9 explains the process of making such an application. Note that the passage reads "postage," that is, the 10 cents paid for airmail. The 1949 Postal Guide is less encouraging about the rest of the amount paid. Per Ch. XIII Art. 18,

After a registration receipt has been issued for a letter or parcel, the article is considered as having been registered and if withdrawn before dispatch no refund of registry fee, restricted delivery fee, or return receipt fee is ordinarily permissible.

So the Bank of America could have recovered its 10 cents postage by applying to the Third Assistant Postmaster General's Office, but they were out of luck for the remaining \$9.01. That amount is substantial -- \$104 in 2011 dollars (see Bureau of Labor and Statistics CPI Inflation Calculator at <http://www.bls.gov/bls/inflation.htm>.) Perhaps another section of the Postal Guide describing who may request a withdrawal is relevant here. "Mail deposited by a person adjudicated of unsound mind may be withdrawn by a duly appointed guardian." I leave it to the reader to judge for himself whether this provision applies to whomever may have made the decisions which cost his employer, a bank at that, such a substantial amount of money.

## 5-Cent DC-4 Skymaster Crash Cover

by

Steve B. Davis



This cover, postmarked New York and addressed to Bogota, Colombia, appeared on eBay. The bidding got too pricey for my budget, so I lost out on it. However, I researched the cover before I bid, which turned out to be an interesting exercise. I knew the dates from the markings on the cover. Using them, I searched for plane crashes and here's what I discovered.

### Accident Details

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 nose dive, inverted, and crashed. Possible problems with the elevator. The official cause was never determined.

Source: [www.planecrashinfo.com](http://www.planecrashinfo.com)

## No Service/Return to Sender

by

Louis Fiset



The cover illustrated here, courtesy of Jeffrey Shapiro, was postmarked August 29, 1939, two months after trans-Atlantic airmail service from New York to Europe was inaugurated on the FAM-18 route. At this time flights on the northern route began in New York, proceeding to Southampton, England, via Foynes, Ireland. The northern route flights would end on September 30th with the oncoming of a change in season.

The letter, addressed to Czechoslovakia, was in transit when World War II officially began on 3 September 1939. Up until the time the U.S. entered the War, most air and regular mail to Czechoslovakia and other countries occupied by the Axis was allowed to pass by the belligerent nations, although all of it was subject to censorship. But this cover, to Slesko, located in the border region where Hitler amassed troops for the invasion of Poland, was returned to the sender by the British post office, likely because of inevitable confusion surrounding the start of the war. Service from the U.S. to Czechoslovakia was soon restored, and collectors will find numerous examples in dealers' stocks.

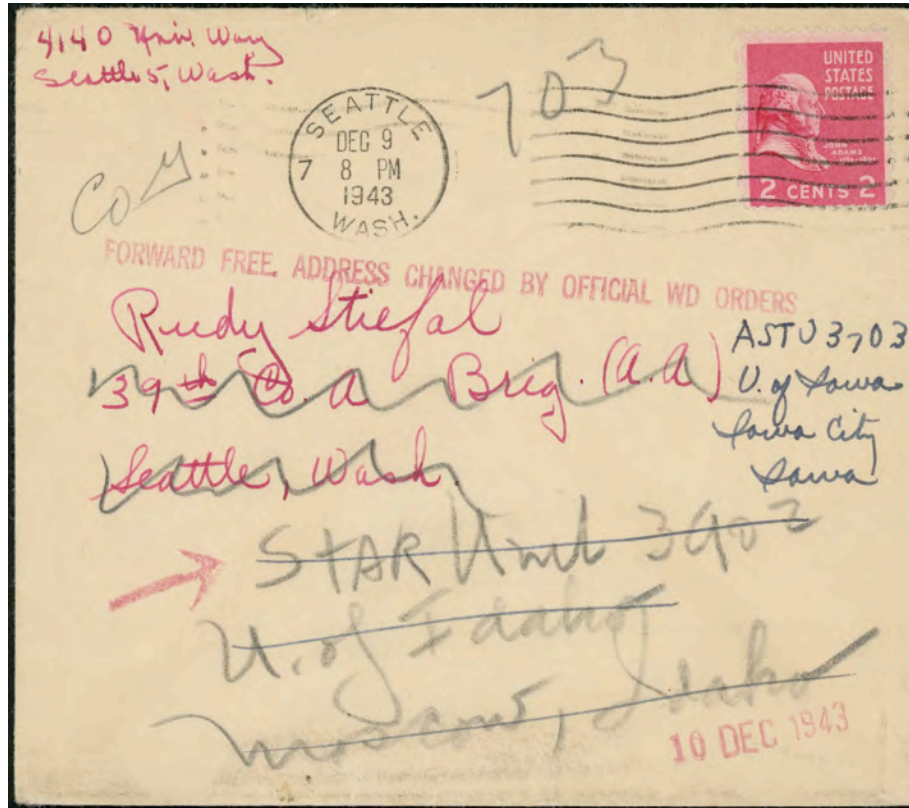
The **NO SERVICE/RETURN TO SENDER** boxed censor marking is British in origin. The most common of the UK service suspended markings, it was in use between 1939 and 1941 and most frequently seen on mail to Axis and Axis occupied countries. Although the marking was applied in Great Britain, details on exactly where are currently lacking.

Source: Michael Deery. *RETURN TO SENDER Devices Used to Identify Service Suspended Mails During WWII*. (Ontario, Canada: Michael Deery, 2011), pp. 57-63.

## Free Forwarding Due to Official Orders

by

Bob Hohertz



Paragraph 10, Section 769 of Postal Laws and Regulations, 1932, provided for forwarding of third and fourth class mail without charge when a change of address resulted from official government orders.

While such covers aren't exactly common, most of us own or have seen greeting cards that were forwarded free to people whose addresses had changed due to official orders. The bulk of these involved military personnel, but the one shown below did not. The addressee was relocated as a member of the Soil Conservation Service.

The card above was sent sealed; the sender paid the carrier drop rate of two cents rather than mailing it by third class. By the time it arrived the addressee had been transferred to Moscow, Idaho, and ultimately on to Iowa City. The card was stamped **FORWARD FREE. ADDRESS CHANGED BY OFFICIAL WD ORDERS** and forwarded without payment of the additional one cent otherwise required for forwarding a drop rate cover out of the original delivery area. The **WD** likely indicates War Department.

This example of free forwarding represents a somewhat unusual use of the rule.



## Re-routing of Airmail to Rhodesia in World War II

by

Louis Fiset

World War II exerted a major impact on transmission of U.S. intercontinental airmail by forcing changes to several well established prewar routes. Closure of major routes across Europe to Africa and transpacific routes to Asia provide two examples known to students of aerophilately and World War II postal history. These changes resulted in inevitable delays and in some cases led to new airmail rates. The two covers here, posted in 1940 and 1943 to south central Africa, in the geographic region known as Rhodesia, illustrate these deviations from the norm.



The first cover was postmarked January 17, 1940 when the war was less than five months old, with the U.S. standing on the sidelines. Italy had not yet entered the war; thus air routes across the Mediterranean were still open. A 50-cent Clipper stamp pays the 30-cent transatlantic airmail rate to Europe plus the 20-cent surcharge for air transmission from Europe to Northern and Southern Rhodesia. A manuscript directive calls attention to the Europe-to-Africa leg. No receiving mark appears on the cover, but the 1939 *U.S. Official Postal Guide* indicates a 9 to 10 day ordinary transmission time from New York.

Interestingly, January 17th marks the day censors at the Bermuda censor station began opening mail on eastbound Clipper flights. However, given that only two censors were active at the time, the **PASSED BY CENSOR** marking was likely applied in Great Britain, possibly Liverpool.

Following closure of the Mediterranean route, mail to Northern and Southern Rhodesia was dispatched from the U.S. on the transpacific route and onward from Hong Kong. The rate was 90 cents per half-ounce.

The second cover, postmarked almost exactly two years after the first, is franked with Transport airmail stamps from the 1941 series that replaced the Clipper series and pays the 60-cent transatlantic rate from Miami to Lagos with connecting airmail service across Africa. The route became effective December 6, 1941. This letter was censored at the New York censor station (5848) and passed by a UK censor stationed in Northern Rhodesia. A March 3, 1943 Leopoldville transit marking on the back indicates a significant delay in transmission.



Together these two covers reflect a re-routing of mail, a change in postal rate, and delay in transmission. They also call to mind the changing face of the world's maps after World War II. In 1953 the territories of Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were united as the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In 1964 Northern Rhodesia became the Republic of Zambia, and the next year Southern Rhodesia declared itself independent as Rhodesia. In 1980 Rhodesia gained international recognition as the Republic of Zimbabwe.

\* \* \* \*

### **“Plum” Mail Returned to Sender**

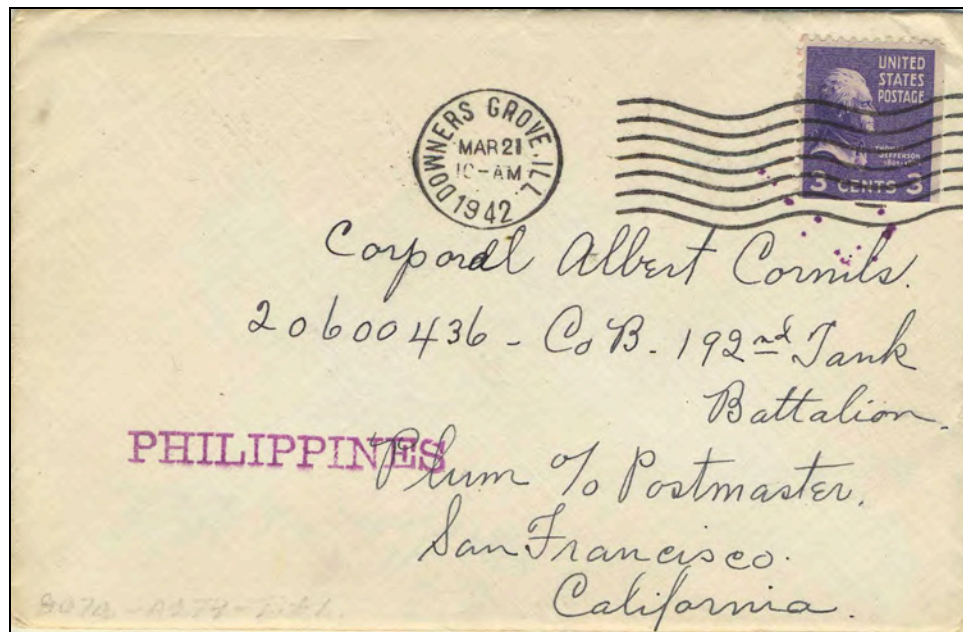
by

Jeffrey Shapiro

Illustrated below is a cover sent by a family member in Illinois to Cpl. Albert Cornlis, Company B of the 192nd Tank Battalion in the Philippines. The letter, postmarked March 21, 1942, was franked with a 3-cent Prexie booklet stamp to pay first class postage to a U.S. territory. It received a **"RETURN TO SENDER SERVICE SUSPENDED"** marking on the back.

The address line contains the word “Plum”, a military code name for Philippine Islands. A code system was established for advance bases in the Pacific after the attack on Pearl Harbor, designed to keep the locations of these shore facilities secret from the enemy. Two among the 18 known examples are “Bobcat” (Bora Bora, Society Islands) and “Cactus” (Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.) These code names would eventually be replaced by a system of Navy mailing numbers, similar to the APO system.

By the time this letter was posted, the Battalion was in retreat - and 18 days later had surrendered to the Japanese Army. The 192nd Tank Battalion was a mobilized Army National Guard Unit of combined tank companies from Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio and Wisconsin, activated by the U.S. Army in November 1940 and sent to Fort Knox, Kentucky for training. The Battalion was equipped with 54 of the Army's new M3 Stuart tanks, just rolling off the assembly lines and shipped to the Philippines in October 1941.



On December 21, 1941, the Battalion was ordered north from Manila to engage the Japanese invaders on the Bataan Peninsula. When the Battalion confronted the Imperial Japanese Army's 4th Regiment on December 22, 1941 near the town of Damortis, the 192nd became the first American armor to engage the enemy in tank to tank combat during World War II. The 192nd tanks, lacking adequate fuel supplies, were badly mangled. Skirmishes continued as the Battalion joined the general retreat towards Bataan and provided support defending the airfield and the beaches during the final struggle, until April 9, 1942 when U.S. forces and their allies surrendered to the Japanese. Some of the remnants of the 192nd escaped to the jungles, while most participated in the Bataan Death March. While some languished at the Cabanatuan POW Camp (liberated by U.S. Army Rangers December 30, 1944), other survivors were sent throughout the Japanese Empire to serve as slave laborers.

Of the 593 officers and men of the 192nd Tank Battalion who initially went to the Philippines, only 265 survived the War. Cpl. Albert Cornils was one of them. Cornils was born in 1916 and joined the Illinois National Guard after graduating high school, receiving training as a radio operator and a tank driver. In September 1940, his unit was sent to Fort Knox, KY for further training. In October 1941, Cornils was sent to the Philippines as part of the 192nd Battalion. When the American Forces surrendered in April 1942, Cornils barely survived what would become known as the Bataan Death March. After languishing at various POW camps in the Philippines, Cornils was sent to Formosa in November 1944 where he worked as a farm laborer, then on to northern Japan (Honshu) in January 1945 where he worked in an open-pit copper mine. In September 1945, Cornils was liberated by the US Navy.

After discharge from the Army in May 1946, Cornils eventually moved to Colorado, married and had two children. He died on December 7, 1995, at age 79, 54 years to the day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Sources: Wikipedia and the Proviso East High (Illinois) School Bataan Commemorative Research Project.

Winter 2012



Whole No. 56

# *The Prexie Era*

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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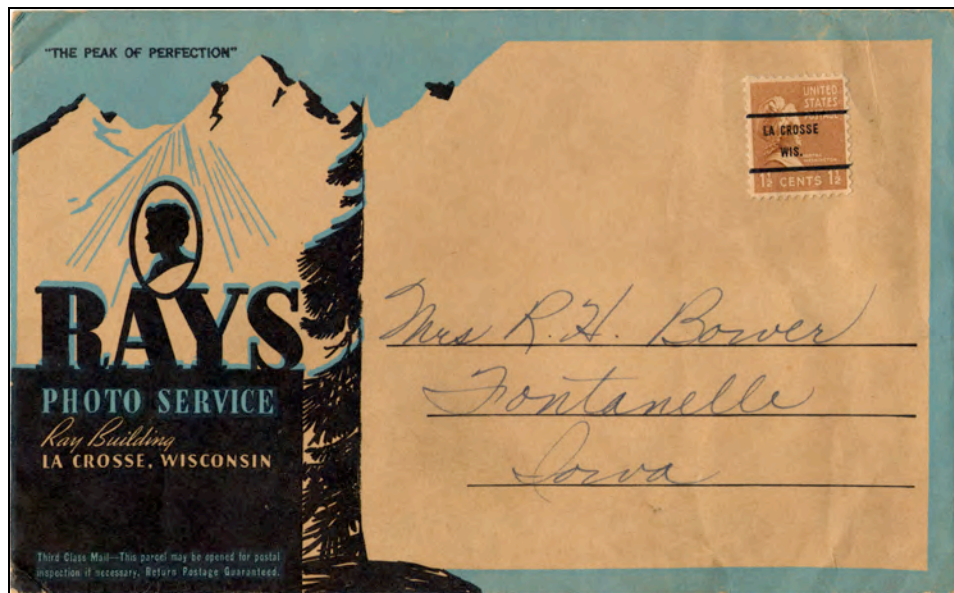
### Editor's Notes

- The remainder of Bill Helbock's Prexie collection, which includes two well known high value oversize pieces, will be auctioned by Harmer & Schau at the 2012 StampShow being held in Sacramento, August 16-19. The online catalog should appear some time in July.
- Tony Wawrukiewicz has recently completed digitization of the *U.S. Postal Bulletin* from 1880 to 1971. It is currently up and running on the internet. The web site has been designed to be user friendly, with a series of "frequently asked questions" to help navigate the site and bring users up to speed. Wawrukiewicz provides appropriate screen shots from the web site's PDF Search page to aid with the learning curve. Tony has written about the project in detail in numerous publications, most recently the Spring 2012 issue of *Military Postal History Society Bulletin* and the May 2012 issue of *The United States Specialist*. Access to the site is universal, making affiliation with sponsoring organizations unnecessary. The complete run may be found at: <http://www.uspostalbulletins.com/>

### Photo Order Cancelled – Paper Rationing

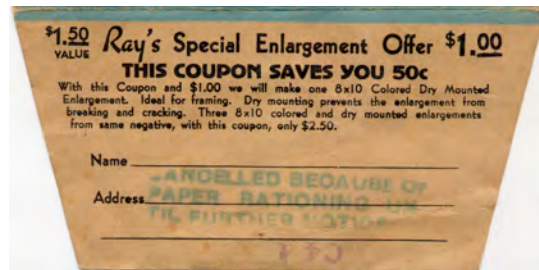
by

Louis Fiset



During World War II the home front suffered many deprivations as war raged continents away. Nearly all food products were rationed. Cloth, wood and metal, as well as rubber and leather, were all rationed so that the armed forces would have enough materiel to meet their needs. Gasoline, oil and grease, kerosene, industrial alcohol, and ink. Paper, carbon paper, pencils, pens and typewriter ribbons, erasers, paperclips, and envelopes were also in short supply. New automobiles, tires for any cars, and most auto parts were all unavailable as factories converted production to meet the needs of the War Department. Nylon and silk were used for parachutes, not women's stockings.

The undated cover shown here provides empirical evidence on its flap that photographic paper was also rationed or unavailable, probably due to its silver content. It reads, **CANCELLED BECAUSE OF PAPER RATIONING UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**. Likely the La Crosse, Wisconsin photo lab mailer contained the negatives being returned to the patron by third class.



This cover provides an additional story. Rays Photo Service was in fact Helen Mae Hoeft, who used the shop name as a pseudonym to avoid sex-discrimination in the photo field. She feared customers would not buy photographic services from a woman when she started up in 1924. The name of the business has changed since her time, but as of 1978 was still in operation in La Crosse.

The contemporaneous photograph shown below bears Hoeft's oval stamp with the slogan "Nationally Known Guaranteed Prints." It remains unclear whether Hoeft took the photograph, herself, or merely developed it at the studio for another photographer.



## Free Forwarding of Mail Due to Official Orders

by

Bob Hohertz

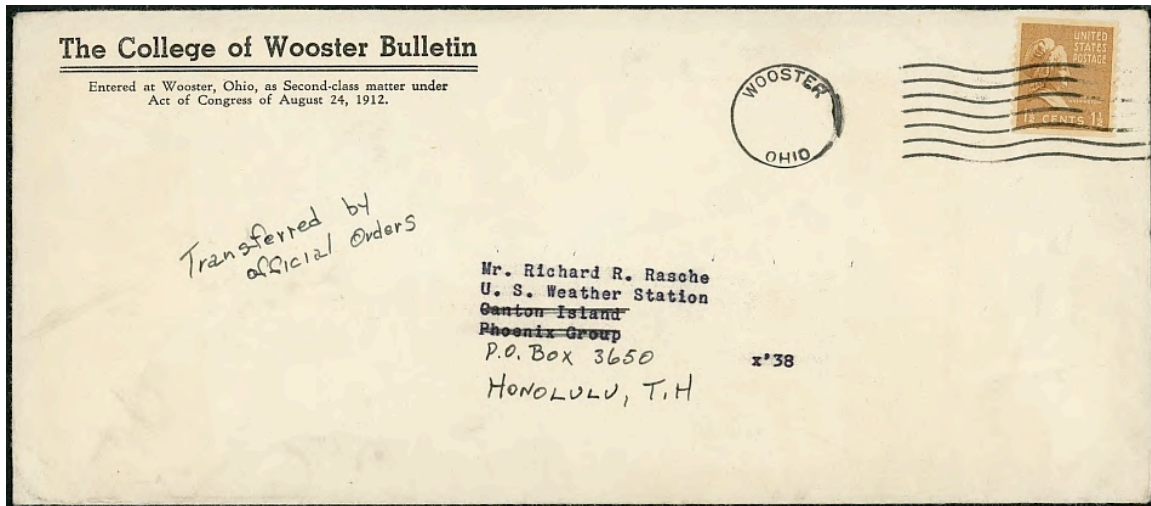


In the last issue of *The Prexie Era* (No. 55) I showed the free forwarding of a 2-cent carrier drop rate letter addressed to a member of the military in Seattle in December 1943. Another unusual use of the free forwarding service is shown here, an October 1941 registered cover posted to Camp Grant, Illinois and forwarded to Fort Worden, Washington.

Since first class postage had been paid, any additional charge for forwarding would not have been required. And had the letter not been properly delivered, there would not have been a second registration fee payable upon forwarding. However, since by regulation the U.S. Post Office Department did not deliver mail directly to a serviceman at a military installation, likely the post office considered the letter properly delivered once it was handed over to Camp Grant's mail unit for further handling. To avoid a second charge for re-registration, the cover was stamped "**CHANGE OF ADDRESS DUE TO OFFICIAL ORDERS**" before a postal clerk returned it to the mail stream.

The backstamps show the letter was registered at Lindsay, California on October 15, 1941; received at Rockford, Illinois October 19; registered again at Camp Grant, Illinois October 22; and received at Fort Worden, Washington on October 25.

Another interesting cover that was forwarded free due to the addressee being transferred by official orders is the one illustrated below, originally sent by the College of Wooster to an alumnus serving at the U.S. Weather Station on Canton Island.



The corner card indicates it was entered as second-class matter. It has a receiving mark on the back indicating it reached Canton Island on July 4, 1952 so, assuming it didn't take more than three months getting there, it was mailed during the period when second-class transient mail cost two cents for the first two ounces. At the time, Canton Island was under joint jurisdiction of the United States and Great Britain, and it may not have been clear whether this mailing was U.S. second-class or foreign printed matter. Whatever the logic, it was mailed at the foreign printed matter rate of one-and-one-half cents.

When it reached Canton Island the addressee had moved on to Honolulu. It was then treated as internal U.S. mail and forwarded to him free of charge due to his having been "Transferred by official orders."

This cover was in Larry Paige's collection. He had written it up as an example of the one-and-one-half-cent non-profit third-class books and catalogs rate in effect from January 1, 1952 through July 31, 1958. There are several problems with this classification, at least in my mind. First and foremost, the corner card saying that it was entered as second-class matter should have defined how it would have been treated as a domestic mailing.

Second, a footnote in Beecher & Wawrukiewicz says that a regular non-profit mailing should have "Sec. 34.65(d) PL&R" printed on it, and this one has nothing of the sort, not even a "non-profit" indication.

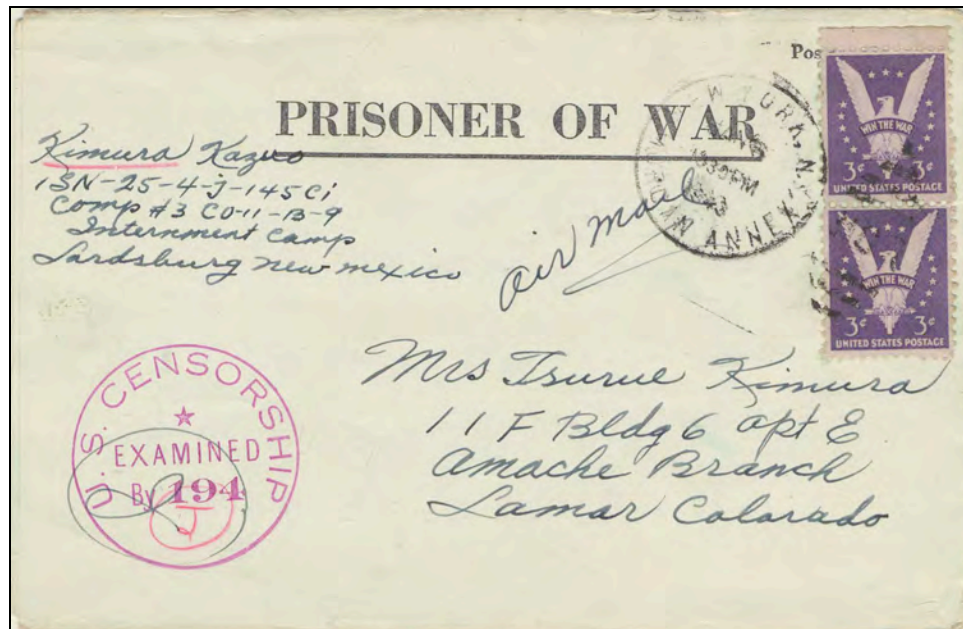
Finally, there is another footnote in B&W to the effect that books and catalogs were defined elsewhere as having at least twenty-four pages. This cover doesn't look like it could have held anything that bulky, though I suppose it is possible. At any rate, while I would love to have it be an example of that elusive rate, I doubt it is.



## A Patriotic Cover --- Internment Camp to Relocation Center

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



The censored, **PRISONER OF WAR** lettersheet shown here originated at Lordsburg, New Mexico bearing two patriotic 3c "Win the War" stamps, to pay the prevailing 6 cents per ounce domestic airmail rate. It was written by a Japanese enemy alien interned at the Lordsburg Internment Camp to his wife at the Granada Relocation Center (Amache) in southeastern Colorado. Since the letter was written in Japanese ("J") the Army censor at Lordsburg forwarded the lettersheet to the New York censor station's POW Unit where it was censored by a Japanese fluent civilian employee, then placed into the mail stream on January 6, 1943.

Released on Independence Day, July 4, 1942, the 3c "Win The War" stamp featured the American Eagle with wings spread in a "V" for victory shape, surrounded by thirteen stars. The eagle's talons are grasping arrows, but ironically, no olive branches are visible. With twenty billion printed, postal patrons could add a bit of patriotism to their World War II era correspondence rather than go with the common 3-cent Jefferson Prexie definitive. The irony on the lettersheet here should not be overlooked.

As a result of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and entry of the U.S. into World War II, the US Department of Justice detained German, Italian, and Japanese nationals declared by presidential proclamation to be enemy aliens. Later, after undergoing loyalty hearings, detainees declared threats to national security were transferred into Army custody and held at half a dozen Army facilities located around the western U.S., including Camp Lordsburg, in southwest New Mexico. The first detainees began to arrive at Camp Lordsburg in June 1942, and eventually more than 1,500 Japanese nationals were interned there. In the spring of 1943 all civilian internees held by the War Department were returned to Department of Justice jurisdiction and moved to camps run by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Once emptied, the Army internment camps became POW camps for German and Italian soldiers captured in North Africa and Europe.

In the meantime, on February 19, 1942 President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 authorizing the War Department to expel more than 100,000 residents of Japanese ancestry living in the west coast states and incarcerate them in ten relocation centers located in the high desert country of the arid west and the swamplands of Arkansas. These centers were operated by a civilian agency, the War Relocation Authority.

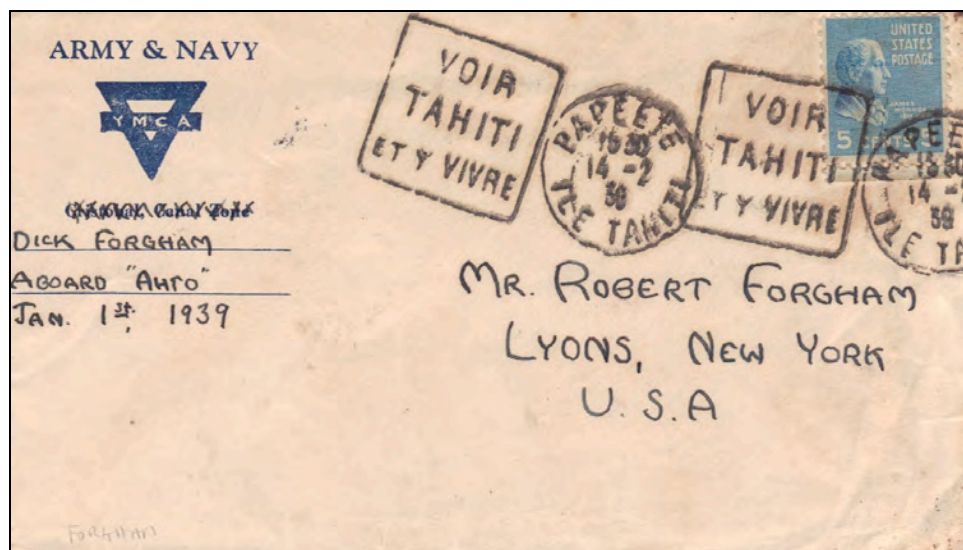
The correspondence between a Japanese alien couple shown here originated under Army jurisdiction, was censored under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Office of Censorship, and delivered to the addressee being held by the War Relocation Authority.

### A Paquebot Cover Back to the United States

by

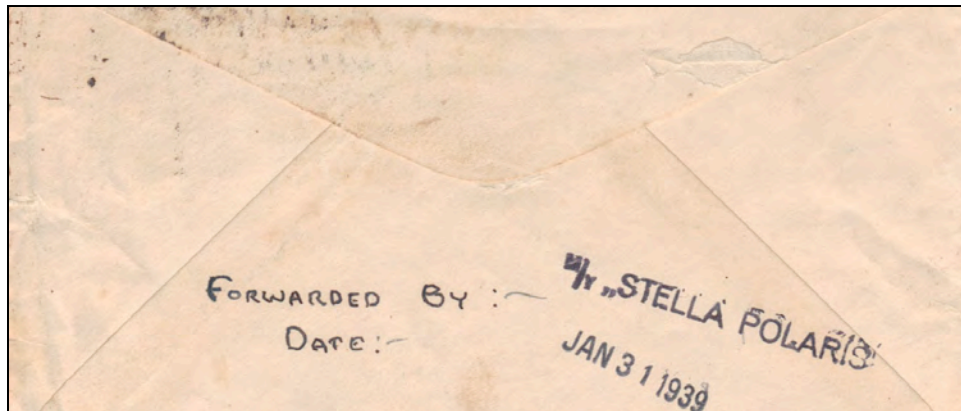
Albert “Chip” Briggs

Mail posted on vessels on the high seas has been governed by international regulations since 1891. In July of that year the Universal Postal Union convention agreed that articles mailed on ships could be prepaid by stamps and in accordance with the postal rates of the nation to which the vessel belonged. The UPU convention of 1897 required the word “paquebot” be applied to the article. The translation from the official French is: “The post office which receives correspondence posted on board, provides same with its common datestamp, adding handwritten or by a stamp the word Paquebot.” The 1924 UPU convention specified further that while postage may be prepaid according to the rates of the country under which flag the vessel sails; if the mailing occurred during the stay at one of the two terminal ports of the voyage or at a port of call prepayment is valid only if the postage stamps and rates of the country in whose waters the vessel lies are used.



The cover illustrated here was posted on board a vessel in the South Pacific identified in the return address as “Ahro” on New Years Day, 1939. The letter was then handed for forwarding to another ship, the M/V *Stella Polaris*. This transpired on January 31, 1939 as reflected by hand

stamps on the cover's reverse. The envelope was franked with a 5-cent James Monroe stamp. It was then placed in the mails on Valentines Day, 1939 in Papeete, Tahiti, headed for New York.



This letter seems to conform to some rules and not others. The *Ahro* was presumably a yacht or sailing vessel registered in the United States (no specific information has been found). The passing of the letter from the *Ahro* to the *Stella Polaris* occurred somewhere in international waters in the South Pacific. The 5-cent stamp would prepay the UPU international surface rate then in effect. U.S. postage was valid since the *Ahro* was not in Tahitian waters, which would otherwise require Tahiti franking. The 14/2/39 Papeete datestamp was applied as required; however there was no application of the word paquebot.

The M/V *Stella Polaris*, shown below, launched in 1927, was one of the first custom built cruise ships. She was frequently called the "Royal Yacht" of cruising. Capable of housing 200 passengers in lavish accommodations, the ship also boasted a crew of 130. Owned by the Bergen Line of Norway, she was seized by the German government in 1940 and until 1943 used as a recreational vessel for U-boat crews.



After the war the ship was refurbished and until 1969 plied the world's oceans. The letter illustrated here was undoubtedly handled by the *Stella Polaris* while on a 1939 world cruise. Of particular interest it was handled by two vessels, franked by a 5 cent Prexie stamp, and sent back to the United States as a paquebot letter.



**55-cent Rate to South Africa, Returned UNKNOWN**

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



With war spreading through Europe in 1940, mail destined for South Africa was sent from North America by the trans-Pacific route via Hong Kong at 70 cents per half ounce. However postal officials may have acted on the manuscript instruction of "Trans Atlantic via London" and sent the cover across the Atlantic at the rate of 55c per half ounce. (The official 55-cent rate via the Atlantic ended June 14, 1940 and this letter was mailed June 24th) With most airmail from London reserved for official and military mail, this letter was probably carried onwards by boat to South Africa, arriving 6 weeks later. The letter was censored, marked unknown and returned to sender, arriving almost 8 months later.



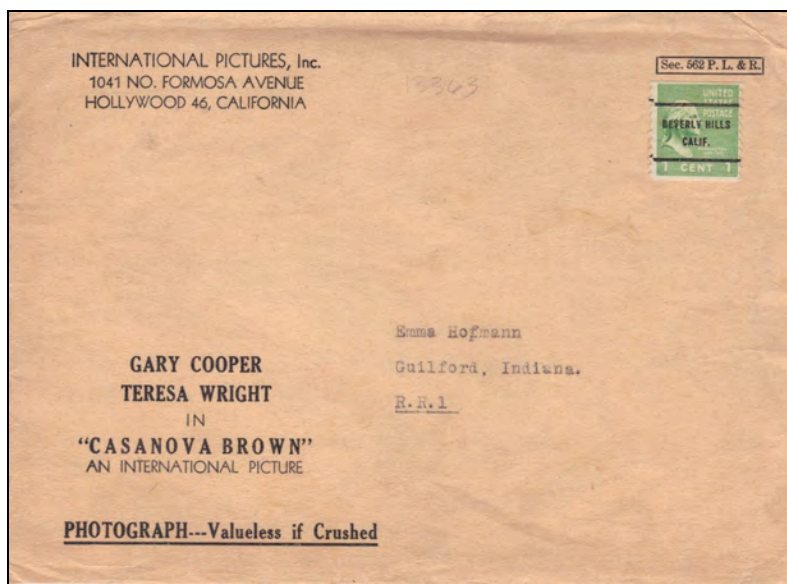


## Sometimes the Fun Is on the Inside

by

Albert “Chip” Briggs

Postal historians are frequently so preoccupied with the outside of a cover that we fail to appreciate its contents, if still available. The object of my desire the day I bought this was a clean, complete, smallish brown envelope with a 1-cent horizontal coil bearing a Beverly Hills, Calif. pre-cancel. It just looked nice. It was sent from International Pictures in Hollywood, California to Emma Hoffman on Rural Route 1, Guilford, Indiana. The upper right had the familiar printed endorsement, Sec. 562 P. L. & R. The bottom left corner mentioned a movie titled “Casanova Brown” starring Gary Cooper and Teresa Wright.



While there is certainly nothing wrong with the cover, it was the contents along with the cover which I have come to appreciate and display both in my homemade cover album. Inside was a photograph of Gary Cooper, sent as publicity for the movie mentioned on the envelope. It has a facsimile signature as well.

In this film, Gary Cooper plays Casanova Q. Brown, a young man notified at his wedding rehearsal in Chicago that he is the father of a brand new baby in New York. This lighthearted romantic comedy directed by Sam Wood was released in 1944 and actually had its world premiere in the liberated territories of France on August 5, 1944. The film opened in the states in San Francisco on August 23. The critical reviews were mixed but the movie did make some money and was nominated for three Oscars, art direction, sound recording and scoring.

Although not a rarity or a gem by any means in the postal history sense, it appeals both to my fascination with the Prexies and my love of old movies.

Spring 2012



Whole No. 57

# *The Prexie Era*

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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## Usage of the 30-Cent Winged Globe

by

Stephen L. Suffet

The United States Post Office Department (USPOD) issued the 30-cent Winged Globe airmail stamp (Scott No. C24) on May 16, 1939 in anticipation of regular trans-Atlantic service to Europe via Foreign Air Mail Route 18 (FAM-18) at a rate of 30 cents per half ounce. Although inscribed **TRANS-ATLANTIC**, the stamp was valid for postage and fees on any United States airmail route. USPOD records indicate that 63,634 first day covers were canceled in New York, the official first day city. Specialists also collect 30-cent Winged Globe covers canceled in Washington, DC, on May 17, 1939, the first day of sale at the Philatelic Agency. While these may be ten times or more scarcer than true first day covers, they invariably sell for much less.



**Fig. 1:** 30 cents per half ounce rate to Portugal via FAM-18. Portuguese stamps accounted for the 30 centavos Poste Restante (General Delivery) fee. 1941.

FAM-18 was actually two routes, both originating initially at New York City. Southern FAM-18 service, via the Azores and terminating at Marseilles, France, began on May 20, 1939. Northern FAM-18 service, via Newfoundland and terminating at Southampton, England, began on June 24, 1939. First flight covers from both the southern and northern routes are readily available.

Mail arriving from the United States on either FAM-18 route received onward airmail service within Europe, when available, at no additional charge (**Figs. 1, 2**).





**Fig. 2:** Cuba to UK via US. Cuban stamps paid 13 centavos airmail postage for service from Havana to Miami via FAM 5. The 30-cent Winged Globe, canceled in Miami, paid the US airmail postage to the UK via FAM-18. 1940.

Onward air transport was also available to many destinations in the Mideast and Africa for fees ranging from 3 to 30 cents per half ounce paid in addition to the 30-cent rate to Europe (**Fig. 3**). And a combined rate inclusive of both the trans-Atlantic rate and airmail to destinations beyond was also in effect (**Fig. 4**).



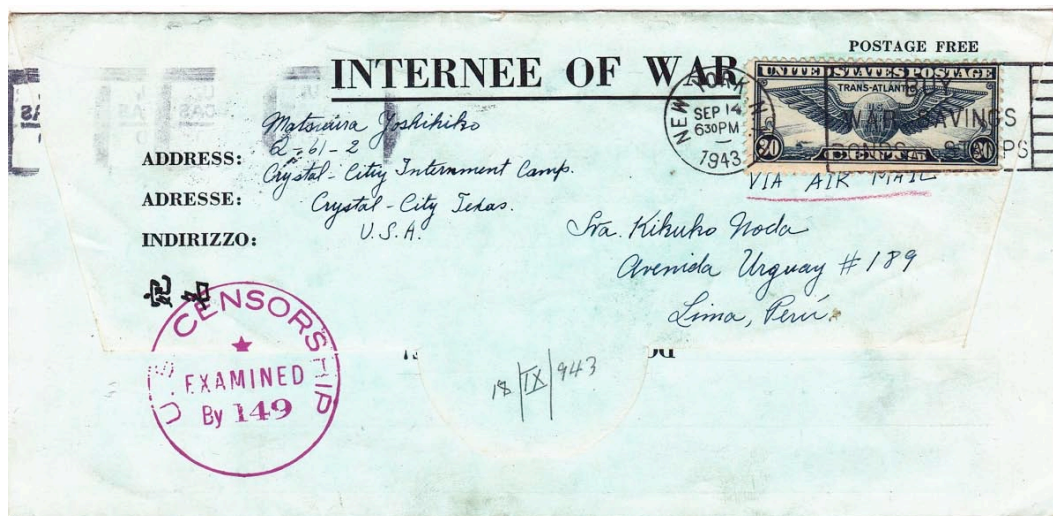
**Fig. 3:** 72 cents postage paid double 30-cent per half ounce FAM-18 airmail rate plus double 6-cent per half ounce air fee to Lebanon. Service was suspended while article en route, so it was returned to the US from Italy and re-dispatched via trans-Pacific airmail at no additional charge. Remnant of Italian suspension of service label is just visible beneath address. Postmarked in Kalamazoo, Michigan, on June 6, 1940. February 19, 1941, Victoria, Hong Kong, and March 12, 1941, Baghdad, Iraq, transit postmarks on reverse. Docketed by addressee upon arrival in Beirut March 18, 1941.



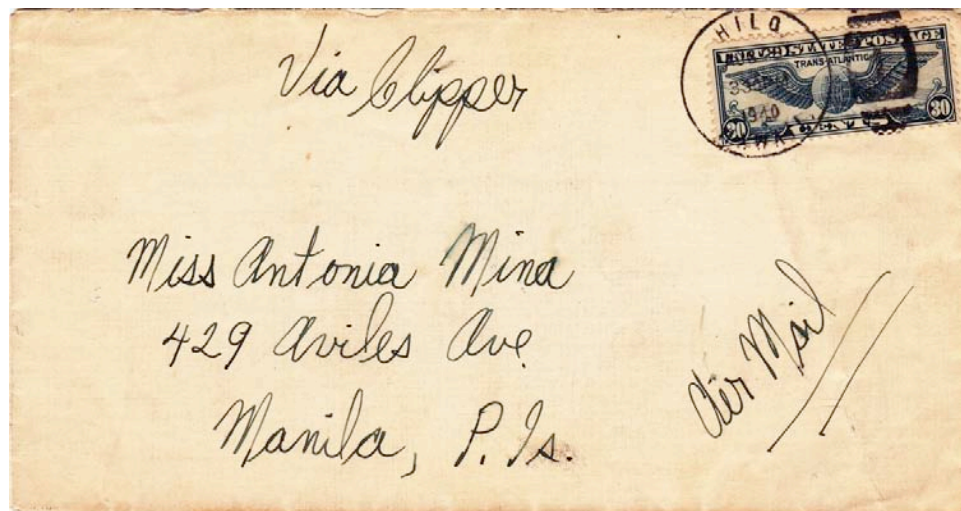


**Fig. 4:** 45 cents per half ounce combined airmail rate to Iran, including trans-Atlantic service via FAM-18 at 30-cent per half ounce and onward air transportation from Europe at 15 cents per half ounce. Initially 15 cents underpaid, article was returned to sender for additional postage and re-mailed with a 15-cent Presidential series stamp added. 1940.

During the winter months, FAM-18 flights on both routes originated from Baltimore or elsewhere rather than New York when the weather was poor. Effective 9 September 1939, the terminus of the southern route was moved from Marseilles to Lisbon, in neutral Portugal, while the terminus of the northern route became Foynes in neutral Ireland rather than Southampton. There would be additional changes as the war progressed.



**Fig. 5:** 30 cents per half ounce airmail rate to Peru. Internee of War lettersheet from a Japanese national held in Crystal City, Texas, was sent to New York City where it was examined by a censor. Postage would have been free had the internee sent the lettersheet by surface means. Air mail postage, however, had to be paid. 1943.



**Fig. 6:** 30 cents per half ounce air mail rate from Hawaii to the Philippine Islands via FAM 14, 1940.

The FAM-18 rate to Europe was not the only airmail rate that could be paid by a solo 30-cent Winged Globe stamp. An interconnecting network of FAMs developed in the 1920s and 1930s provided service to the Western Hemisphere south of the United States. At the time of issue in 1939, the airmail rate to British Guiana, Ecuador, or Peru via that network was 30 cents per half ounce. So was the rate from Hawaii to the Philippine Islands, or from Guam to the Asian mainland, via trans-Pacific FAM 14 (**Figs. 5, 6**).



**Fig. 7:** Unpublished 30 cents per half ounce airmail rate from Midway Island to Canada. Sent from a US Marine Corps postal facility, the 30-cent Winged Globe stamp paid for service to the US mainland via FAM 14, with additional onward air transportation to Canada at no additional charge. 1941.

Perhaps the most sought after solo use of the 30-cent Winged Globe is one paying the unpublished air mail rate between Midway Island and the US mainland on FAM 14. Although the trans-Pacific Pan American clippers stopped there, there was no post office on Midway until a Marine Corps postal facility opened on November 1, 1940. Prior to that time, mail originating on Midway received either a US Engineers or a Pan American Airways cachet and was postmarked at Honolulu. At least one cover is known from Midway Island to Canada with a 30-cent Winged Globe stamp paying the airmail rate, which was the same as to the U.S. mainland (**Fig. 7**).



With the opening of southern trans-Pacific FAM 19 in July 1940, two additional 30-cent per half ounce airmail rates came into existence. One was for service between Canton Island and the US mainland, and the other was for service from Hawaii to New Zealand. Solo 30-cent Winged Globes are known paying both rates on first flight covers, and such solo uses may exist on non-philatelic covers as well (Fig. 8).



**Fig. 8:** 30 cents per half ounce air mail rate from Canton Island to the US mainland via FAM 19. First flight cover from Canton Island to Los Angeles. July 22, 1940. Non-philatelic covers with the 30-cent Winged Globe stamp paying this rate presumably exist.

The 30-cent stamp from the Twin Motor Transport airmail series, issued on September 25, 1941, superseded the 30-cent Winged Globe definitive. While it is possible to find many non-philatelic uses of the 30-cent Winged Globe well into 1942, the stamp all but disappears in 1943. The effective life of the stamp was thus only three to four years. During that time, one of the scarcest uses of all was on airmail within North America. The rate within the continental United States (including Alaska) and the rate from the US to Canada, were both 6 cents per ounce. A solo 30-cent Winged Globe stamp, therefore, could have been used to pay five times either of those rates. Good luck trying to find an example!

FIRST ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL, Washington, May 29, 1939.			
AIR MAIL SERVICE F. A. M. 18			
The schedule for regular trans-Atlantic service which was issued on May 19, 1939, in mimeographed form was published in the POSTAL BULLETIN of May 23, 1939, but appeared in a very inconspicuous place. It is being republished below with a change of trip numbers.			
It is desired that postmasters give wide publicity to this schedule through the medium of their local newspapers, if possible. The notices should also furnish the most advantageous schedule from the local post office to New York which would be in time to make connection with trips on the trans-Atlantic route. Patrons, however, should be urged to dispatch their mail promptly and not hold it for the last plane on the domestic line which will make the connection, because weather and other providential causes might delay the domestic plane enough to miss the trans-Atlantic plane which operates only once a week at the present time.			
Properly used this new service should be of material advantage to individuals and business concerns of this country in the prompt transmission of both personal and business correspondence, not only with business concerns in Europe but in all other parts of the world by means of connections with foreign lines.			
F. A. M. 18, Trans-Atlantic Air Mail Route, 4,708 miles <sup>1</sup>			
[Contractor, Pan American Airways Co.]			
Effective May 20, 1939			
Trip 2			Trip 1
Saturday 7:00 p.m.	Lv. New York, N. Y. (E. S. T.)	Ar. (Port Washington)	7:00 a.m. Saturday.
Sunday 7:00 a.m.	Ar. Horta, Azores (L. C. T.) <sup>2</sup>	Lv. 2:00 p.m.	
8:00 a.m.	Lv. Lisbon, Portugal (L. C. T.)	Ar. 1:00 p.m.	
4:00 p.m.	Ar. Marseilles, France (L. C. T.)	Lv. 8:00 a.m. Friday.	
Monday 7:00 a.m.	Lv. Marseilles, France (L. C. T.)	Ar. 3:00 p.m.	
2:00 p.m.	Ar. Marseilles, France (L. C. T.)	Lv. 7:00 a.m. Thursday.	

<sup>1</sup> Approximate mileage. <sup>2</sup> On May 20 only, the date of inauguration of service, departure from Port Washington will be at 12 noon; subsequent departures are scheduled for each Saturday at 2 p. m. (E. S. T.). <sup>3</sup> Local civil time.

Corrected for office purposes only to change trip number designations.

## Not Your Average One-Cent Drop Letter

by

Dickson Preston

On October 31, 1944 the Alaska Sportsman magazine composed a letter to one Klein Johnson suggesting he renew a gift subscription he had ordered the previous year. As an enticement, the letter offered to send a "beautiful, informative" book, *100 Events that Built Alaska*, as a Christmas gift to the person receiving the gift renewal. This offer was good for subscriptions received between November 10, 1944 and January 10, 1945. The letter is more than a form letter, being typed and signed by their representative, Alice Johnson, and is thus first class rather than third class mail. The envelope was addressed to Klein W. Johnson, U. S. C. G., City, properly franked at the 1¢ non-carrier drop letter rate, and postmarked Ketchikan Nov 8 1944. And then the fun of tracking down Klein Johnson began.



First the letter was forwarded on Nov 9 1944 (purple hand stamp) to the CG Barracks, Lake Ponchartrain, New Orleans, La (grey pencil), where it was given Directory Service on 11/16 (purple hand stamp on back) and back stamped on its way out of New Orleans on the same day. It had been readdressed to BB11 - Wing 3, Camp Lejeune, N.C. (grey pencil) where it was postmarked Nov 20 1944 (purple back stamp). On the same date it was docketed "D. C. G. O., 6th N. District, Charleston, S.C." (black ink) by the District Coast Guard Officer in the 6th Naval District. Eight weeks later it was still in Charleston, where it was postmarked by Navy Station 11028 on Jan 17 1945 (purple back stamp). Since January 10, 1945 had now passed, Klein Johnson had missed his opportunity to send his friend *100 Events that Built Alaska* as a free gift.

The next two dated markings are dockets "NC, M. 443, 15 Mar. 45" (grey ink) and "NC 241, 10 April 45" (black ink). My Glossary of U.S. Naval Abbreviations, at <http://www.history.navy.mil/books/opnav20-p1000/N.htm>, suggests North Carolina and Naval Correspondence as possibilities for "NC." Any help in interpreting these markings would be appreciated.





At this point the delivering postal service became instructive. On Apr 16 1945 the Atlantic Fleet Records Office advised "This letter is returned because it was undeliverable at the address shown or to which forwarded." (purple hand stamp, struck twice). Further the sender was told that "This letter was unclaimed at original address and address to which forwarded" (label printed in dark blue ink). Finally we have a bit of an understatement, "To avoid delay in delivery, advise your correspondents of your complete military address, showing unit." (purple hand stamp).

At an unspecified date the letter was "Returned to Writer" (purple pointing hand). On its extensive tour of the Deep South, it had traveled to three cities and had received at least eighteen manuscript and hand struck postal markings plus a label. Yet, because the letter ended up back in its original non-carrier post office, it was never charged any forwarding postage. Now that's a lot of service for one cent!

## Civil and Military Censorship of the News During World War II

by

Robert Schlesinger

Censorship of outgoing and incoming mails during World War II was an important activity undertaken by many governments. The British went so far as to set up an elaborate network of censors, based in Bermuda, originally begun during World War I, with the express purpose of censoring all transatlantic mail, both east and west bound. A little known aspect of postal censorship during World War II involved news articles published both in the U.S. and abroad that passed through the mails rather than by the more common cable route.

How this censorship was handled depended on where the mail originated. The cover below shows a half ounce air mail cover originating at the University of Maine, Orono and sent to Switzerland. It was addressed to *Neue Zeuricher Zeitung*, a German language newspaper in Zurich. It may have been carried by pouch to New York City for its initial censorship. Press Censor labels had been prepared for this purpose, and censor 15004 did the initial work on this piece of mail. Censor numbers 15001 -15100 were assigned to New York as cable censors. The cover was then placed in the mail stream in New York on August 24, 1942 and routinely flown

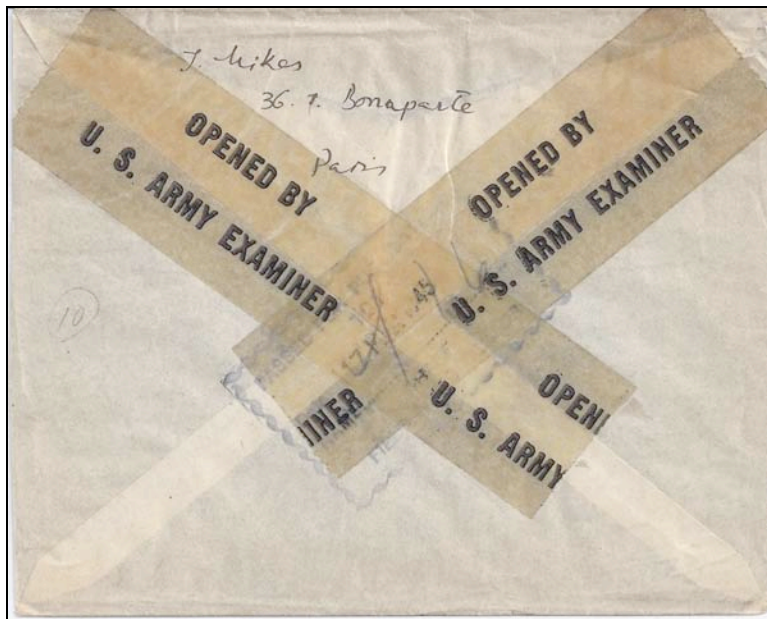
to Bermuda where it was censored (Examiner 6163). After examination there, the cover went on to its destination.



Incoming news dispatches were normally handled by military censorship. Figures 2 and 3 show the front and back of one such cover. It contained a news article for a Hungarian language newspaper in New York. The cover was opened then resealed by U.S. Army examiners. Marked “Passed for Publication” on 17 March 1945, it was carried by bomber pouch to the U.S. with airmail concession rate franking. Note the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) ‘clock dial’ hand stamp in red reading Pro Air Dispatch, located under the Washington, D.C. 21 March 1945 postmark. It was applied when the cover entered the civilian mail stream for delivery to the newspaper. Because of military handling, all such mail was put into the mail stream in Washington, D.C. The manuscript ADLS marking refers to American Diplomatic Letter Service.

The type of censorship applied depended on how particular correspondence entered the mail stream. It appears from these examples that civilian mails were censored by civilian censors, while press related mails sent through military post offices were censored by the military.

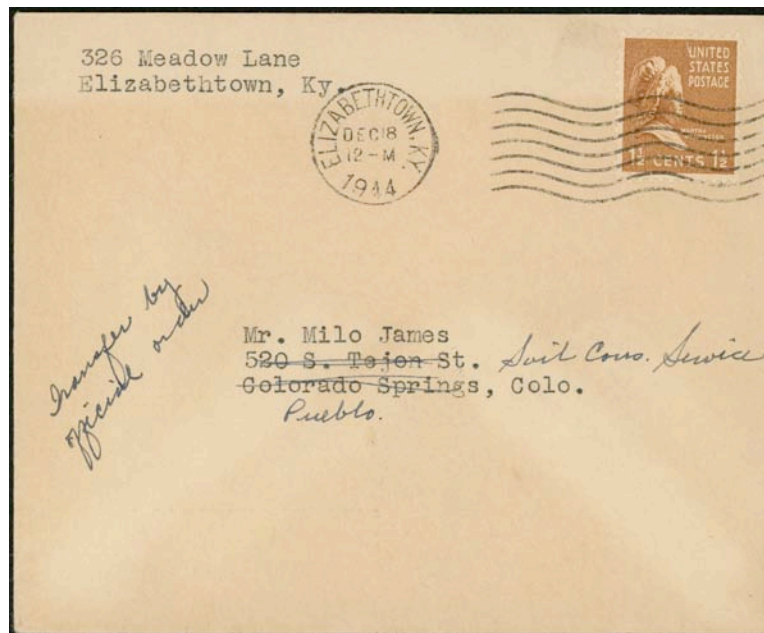




### Free Forwarding

By

Bob Hohertz



In general, during the Prexie Era, most forwarded third-class mail required additional payment of full third-class postage. One exception, usually seen in connection with unsealed Christmas cards sent at third-class rates, was when the addressee had been transferred due to official orders. One such cover is shown above. The recipient had moved from Colorado Springs to Pueblo on Soil Conservation Service orders, so the card was forwarded without additional postage.

Summer 2012



Whole No. 58

# *The Prexie Era*

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Committee

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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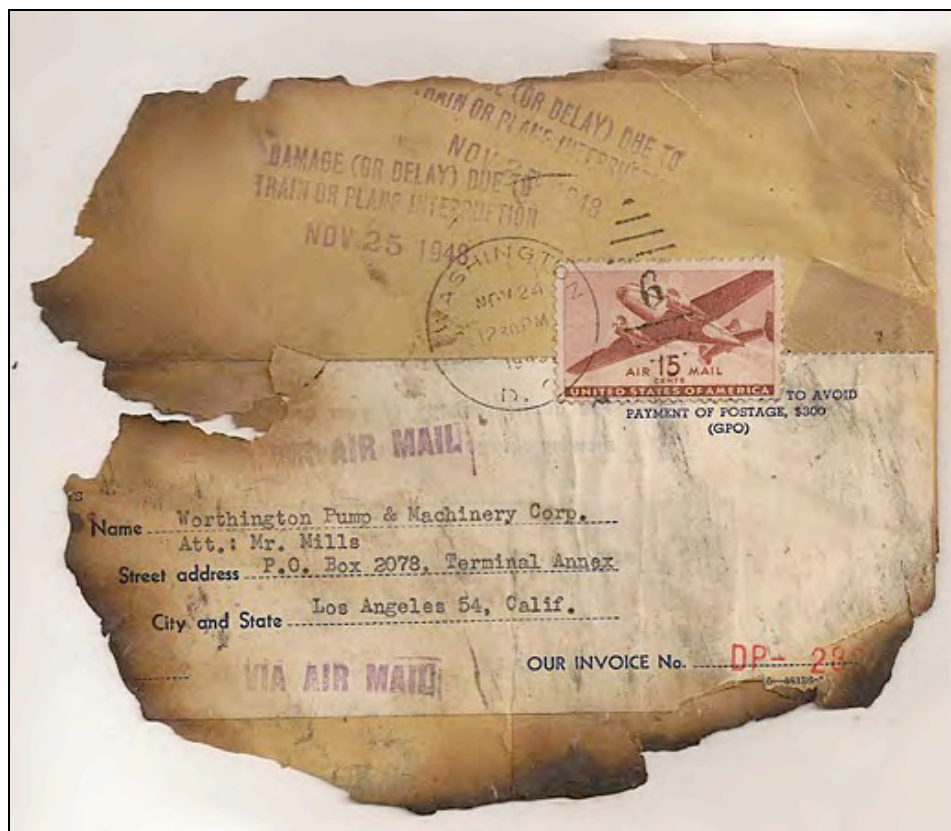
### Editor's Note

Subscribers to the electronic version of *The Prexie Era* are in for a treat with this issue. Albert Briggs has acquired Walt Cole's "1938 United States Definitive 3 Cent Stamp" and has graciously given us permission to share it with readers in electronic format. This seven frame national (Gold) and international (Large Vermeil) award winning traditional exhibit was last shown at CAPEX 1996. Hard copy subscribers wishing an electronic copy on CD should send \$5 to me by mail to cover expenses, and I will get a copy out to you.

If you like having access to this Prexie era exhibit, you might consider donating a formatted copy of your own exhibit to USSS for its on-line Exhibition Photocopy Service. It is currently soliciting new exhibits.

### Transport Series Crash Cover

Joe Bock

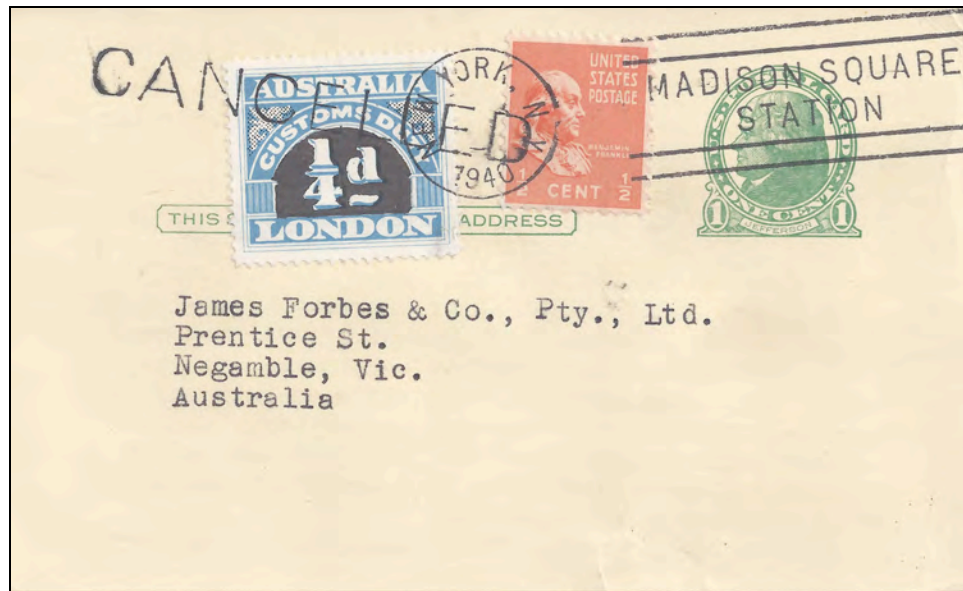


On November 24, 1948, a Trans World Airlines plane en route from Washington D.C. to Los Angeles, California crashed on landing, breaking up and catching fire. Reportedly, approximately one thousand pieces of mail were recovered and forwarded as original covers. An additional 2,000 items with damaged contents were forwarded to addressees in penalty (ambulance) envelopes. The 15-cent Transport Series stamp shown in the accompanying illustration, likely delivered in an ambulance envelope, paid three times the 5-cent per ounce domestic airmail rate, effective October 1, 1946.

### A Common Usage, but Uncommon Cover

Robert Schlesinger

[Robertsles@aol.com](mailto:Robertsles@aol.com)



The international printed matter rate is as old as the UPU itself; the General Postal Convention in 1874 itself authorized a rate of 1 cent per 2 ounces. This rate would increase to 1.5 cents per 2 ounces on April 1, 1932. Newspapers and commercial papers were included in this category, including bulk advertising printed on the back of postal cards. Normally, a half-cent stamp would be added to a 1-cent domestic rate postal card, and the 1.5-cent rate would be prepaid. Many postal rate collections have examples of this rate going to various destinations throughout the world. However, Australia posed a particular problem for this type of usage as may be seen in the illustration above.

The cost of printing, especially advertising, was expensive in Australia. Many advertisers found it cheaper to have their printing done off shore and having it shipped back for distribution to the advertisers' customers. As a result, Australia imposed a customs duty on ALL advertising printed outside the Commonwealth. This duty also applied to printed matter postal cards with printed advertising on the back. Such was the case with the postal card shown here.

Australia had customs stamps printed and distributed to its consulates throughout the world. Initially, the customs stamps were inscribed **LONDON**. Various rates would apply. If prepaid, the postal card advertising rate would be ¼ d per piece. Otherwise, each piece would be assessed ½ d postage due. The fear of advertisers was that addressees would not pay the postage due for 'junk mail' and thus not receive the advertising directed to them. As a solution, advertisers went to the Australian consulate to purchase enough stamps for that portion of their mailings addressed to Australia.

Despite **LONDON** being prominently displayed on the customs stamps, these adhesives would become available in Australian consulates throughout the world. As can be seen on the card shown here, this stamp was purchased and applied in New York City before the card was mailed. The New York City post office then machine postmarked the card that inadvertently 'tied' the customs stamp to the cover. The CANCELLED mark on the stamp was applied when the stamp was affixed and prior to placement into the mail stream.

## **Presidential Series Postal History Prices in Scott's 2013 Specialized Catalogue**

by

Albert Briggs

The first mention of a proposed listing of Prexie postal history in the Scott's Specialized Catalogue occurred in the Summer 1992 edition of this newsletter. Twenty years later, coinciding by chance with the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their issue, that goal has finally been realized. The 2013 Specialized Catalogue, just released in October, contains prices for each stamp on cover or tag and for many values separate listings for single franking uses. Some of the pioneer collectors and writers in this field are no longer with us and several others no longer actively collect this area. The information from the sale of their collections, however, has contributed to the prices in the new catalogue.

The genesis of this project lay in a message on a chat board posted by Scott's editor Chad Snee in the summer of 2011. In that post he mentioned engaging new collectors and collectors of more modern material with the new edition. Reading between the lines of that post led a member of the Prexie Era Study Group to question Chad on whether he meant to pursue the pricing of Prexie postal history. Mr. Snee's positive response to that inquiry led to a flurry of e-mails followed by informal meetings and exhibit tours at some national stamp shows. Positive interest on the part of Scott's editorial staff and willingness to help on the part of the study group led to the creation of a group of active collectors and exhibitors to provide the information.

A group of five individuals, including Albert Briggs, Dickson Preston, Robert Hohertz, Jeff Shapiro, and Bob Schlesinger was put together to hash out the information and come up with values. Collectively, this group has over 50 years of Prexie postal history collecting experience, is currently active in the field, and each member is an exhibitor of the series or a stamp of the series on cover.

The first task was deciding exactly what postal history of the series to list. This was no easy task. So many considerations come in to play when valuing a cover. The rate, the route, the destination, auxiliary markings, solo use, as well as other factors play major roles in determining an items value. After numerous electronic conversations and exchange of spread sheet after spread sheet a focus began to emerge. The final appearance was clearly up to the editorial staff of Scott's Catalogue but the study group committee decided to assign to each denomination and major printing format variety an "on cover" value, and where appropriate and significant, clearly defined single stamp use cover values. Values were also assigned to the dollar values on registry tags since they are commonly seen used this way.

The "on cover" value is intended to represent the price one could expect to pay for the most common way that value was used on a cover. For some stamps this represents a single stamp use, for others it represents use in combination with other stamps. For example, the 19 cent stamp, when found, is most frequently seen used with other values and this was priced at \$20.00. The 18 cent stamp is most frequently seen used by itself to pay first class plus registration and is priced at \$5.00.

Where it seemed appropriate to do so, dictated by the realization of such items, specific single franking uses were also listed and priced. For example, the 22 cent stamp, used on cover (with other values) was valued at \$20.00 while a single franking on an insured third class cover was valued at \$300.00 and a single franking on a registered local letter with return receipt was valued \$1000.00. The detail of all the listings can of course be seen in the catalogue.

The information used for the valuation process came from a variety of sources. Prices realized from the sale of the Suffet, Piskiewicz and Neil collections as well as the dispersal of the Larry Paige collection were incorporated into the process. Realizations of scarce items sold on Ebay as well as informal surveys of retail dealer stocks was also used in the several months long process of arriving at the valuations.

Hopefully this will provide some framework and guidance when buying, selling and appraising Prexie postal history.

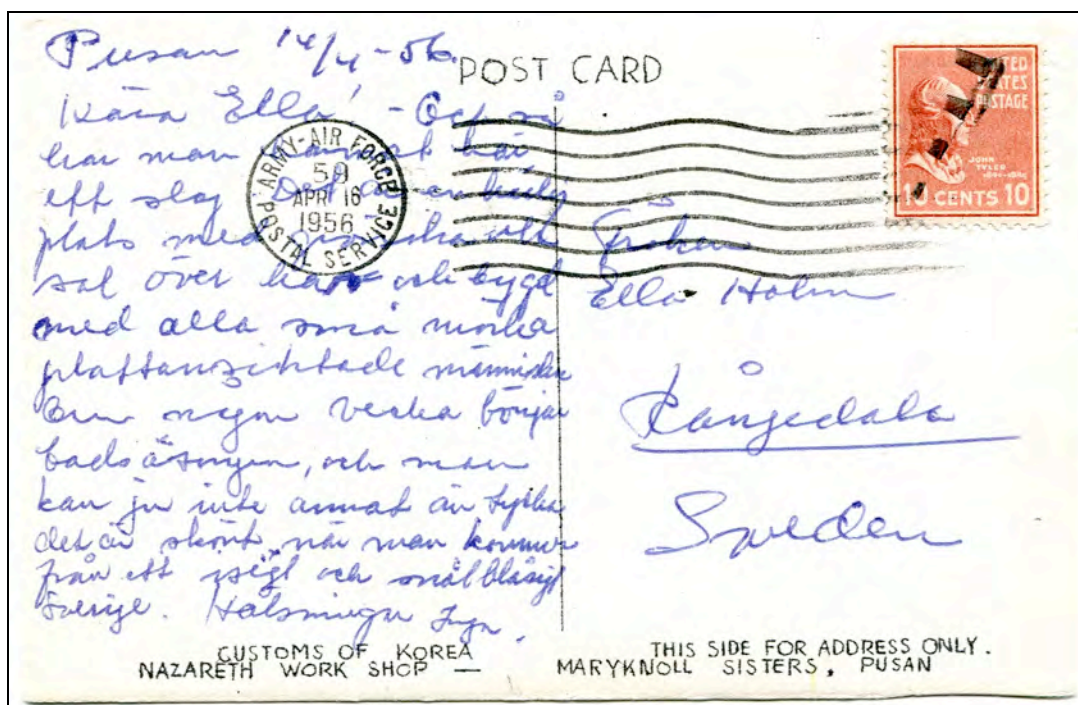
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### A Swedish Use of the U. S. APO Service in the Korean War

by

Dickson Preston

In Steve Suffet's chapter "Collecting and Exhibiting Strategies" in the 1988 Helbock book *Prexie Postal History*, he showed a solo use of the 4 cent Prexie at U.S. APO 72 in Korea, mailed by a Swedish member of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission.<sup>1</sup> Steve cited this card as an example of how to enhance a Prexie exhibit by showing the most interesting examples possible.



This short article will present another use of the U.S. APO service by a person from Sweden in connection with the Korean War. The card shown here was written 14 April 1956 by a woman who had recently arrived from Sweden. It was postmarked two days later at APO 59, located at Pusan.<sup>2</sup> It was sent at the 10-cent international airmail post card rate in effect in the U. S. and its foreign post offices, including APOs. The message reads:



Dear Ella,

And so I have landed here for a while. It is a wonderful place with [illegible] sun over the land with all the short flat-faced people. In about a week the bathing season will start, and I cannot but think that it's wonderful to come here from Sweden that's icy and has cold winds. Regards, Inga.<sup>3</sup>

Sweden's contribution to the United Nations action to support South Korea against aggression from North Korea was to establish an Evacuation Hospital in Pusan. The hospital opened 23 September 1950 and was staffed by a contingent of 174 Swedish doctors and nurses at any one time. During the conflict a total of 1,124 Swedish men and women served at the hospital. It continued to operate after the 1953 ceasefire and closed in April 1957, a year after this card was sent.<sup>4</sup>

It is not clear from the message on the card whether the writer had come to work at the hospital or was simply there for a visit. Most likely she had some connection with the hospital or knew someone who did, since she mailed her card through the U. S. APO.

In either case this card shows an unusual use of a 10-cent solo franking paying the international airmail post card rate. Because Korean War uses of Prexies are much in demand, and because examples sent by the small Swedish contingent are quite scarce, this card is a good example of the kind of unusual item that Steve Suffet suggested could be used to enhance an exhibit.

<sup>1</sup> Richard W. Helbock, ed. *Prexie Postal History*, Lake Oswego, OR: La Posta Publications, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> APO 59 opened at Pusan in July 1950 and was changed to APO 96259 on 1 January 1965.

<sup>3</sup> Translation provided by the APS Translation Service, 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte, PA 16823 [apstranslations@gmail.com](mailto:apstranslations@gmail.com).

<sup>4</sup> "Sweden in the Korean War," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweden\\_in\\_the\\_Korean\\_War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweden_in_the_Korean_War)

\* \* \* \*

### **Postal Patron Confusion over Resumed U.S. International Mail Service At the End of World War II**

by

Louis Fiset

Allied advances following the invasion of Italy in July 1943 and the landings at Normandy on June 6, 1944 had a direct impact on the resumption of mail service to the European, Mediterranean, and Balkan regions in the closing days of World War II and beyond. Until then, service was suspended to all of continental Europe under the control of Germany or Italy, with service only to the Allied countries of USSR, Great Britain, Malta, and Gibraltar; and neutral Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey.



Figure 1

The incremental resumption of mail service to the occupied countries began in January 1944 with airmail service to French colonies in North and West Africa and ended with resumption of special delivery service to Germany on 4 August 1948. During this four-plus year period, which began while fighting still dominated in parts of Europe, confusion reigned on the part of postal patrons over the type of service authorized and the regions where correspondence could be sent. This article illustrates some of the confusion.

The primary causes of postal patron confusion included the following postal regulations:

- Postal service was resumed in stages beginning with nonillustrated post cards, with only personal messages allowed
- Service was initiated country-by-country
- Initial service within some countries (e.g., Italy, France, Netherlands) was by region following expulsion of Axis forces
- Surface mail to a given country was usually introduced before air mail
- Special fee services (e.g., registration, special delivery) were the last services to be introduced.

Figure 1 illustrates a typical piece of mail returned to the sender for violation of some aspect of postal regulations. In this case, the nonillustrated postcard was returned from the New York exchange office after censorship because resumption of postal service to Denmark was still a week away from when the postcard was postmarked. Figure 2, a highlight from the Walt Cole 3-cent Prexie exhibit, shows correspondence to Germany in 1946 that was returned because the message was written on an illustrated postcard in violation of postal regulations.

The two examples, in Figures 3a and 3b, show nonillustrated postcards to France documenting how service to some countries prior to the end of the war occurred on a regional basis. Paris was liberated on 19 August 1944, with postcard service restored the next month. However, the postcard to Bar-le-Duc, capital of the department of Meuse in northeast France, was returned because fighting still raged in that area. In fact, the so-called Battle of the Bulge, last major Axis offensive in the European Theater, remained two weeks away with much of it to be fought in the region of the Meuse River.

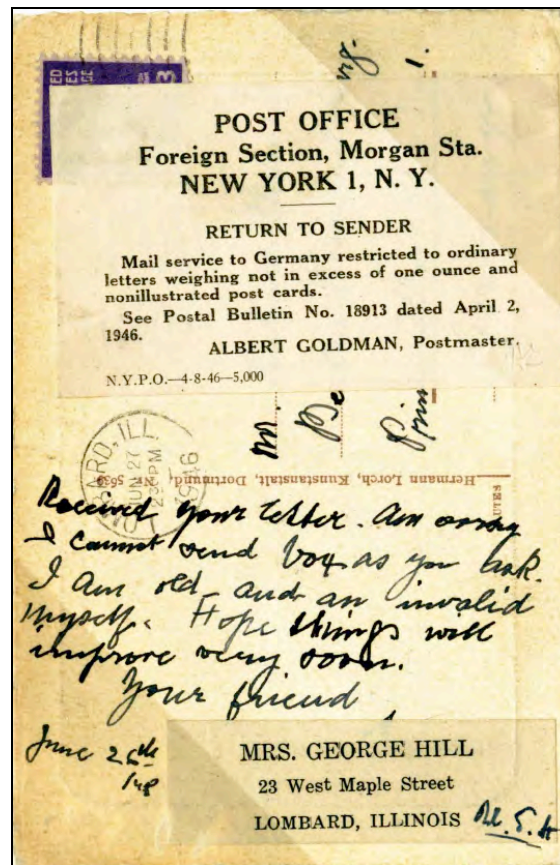


Figure 2 (Courtesy Albert Briggs)



Figure 3a





Figure 3b

The airmail letter to Rome in Figure 4, postmarked 29 July 1944, should have been returned to the sender because airmail service would not resume for more than a year (3 October 1945). However, because surface letter mail had been authorized on 16 February 1944, the letter was dispatched by surface route. Similarly, the postcard to Paris shown above, for which letter rate airmail postage to Europe had been affixed, was also forwarded by surface. However, the 28 May 1945 airmail letter to Norway, shown in Figure 5, was returned to the sender because only nonillustrated postcards were permitted at that time.



Figure 4

Finally, Figure 6 shows a combined registered airmail letter to Czechoslovakia that was returned for violation of postal regulations regarding registered mail. Airmail service had been resumed on 27 August 1945. However, registration service would not begin until the following 29 October. The **RETURN TO SENDER** label affixed by the New York exchange office, clearly spells out the violation, citing a specific postal bulletin as its authority. The relevant section of Postal Bulletin 18858 that documents availability of airmail but not registration service, may be seen below.



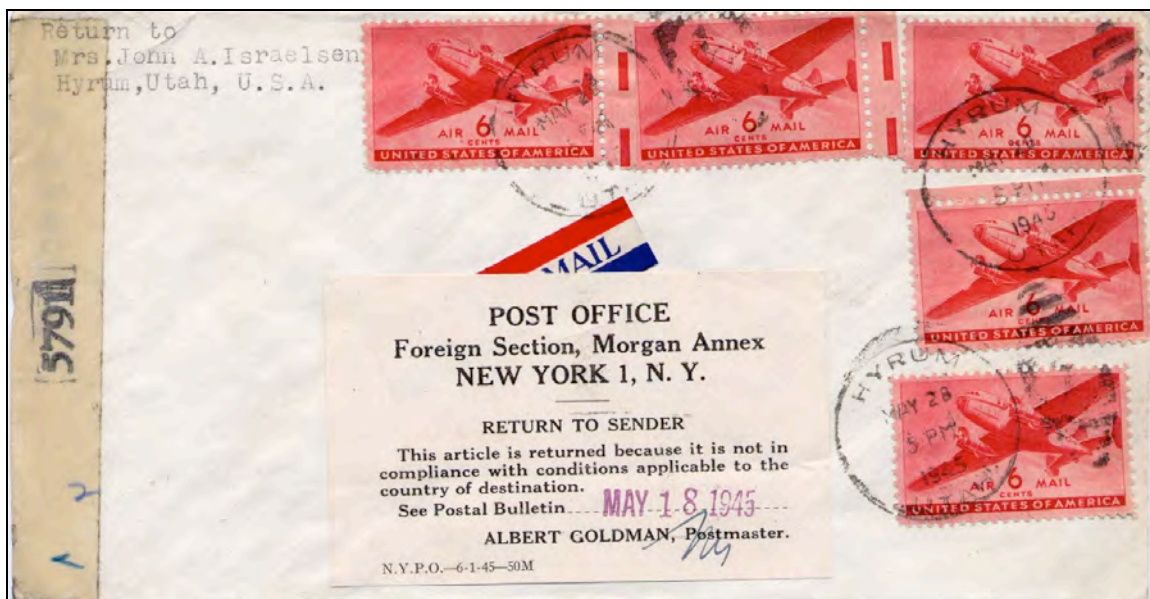


Figure 5

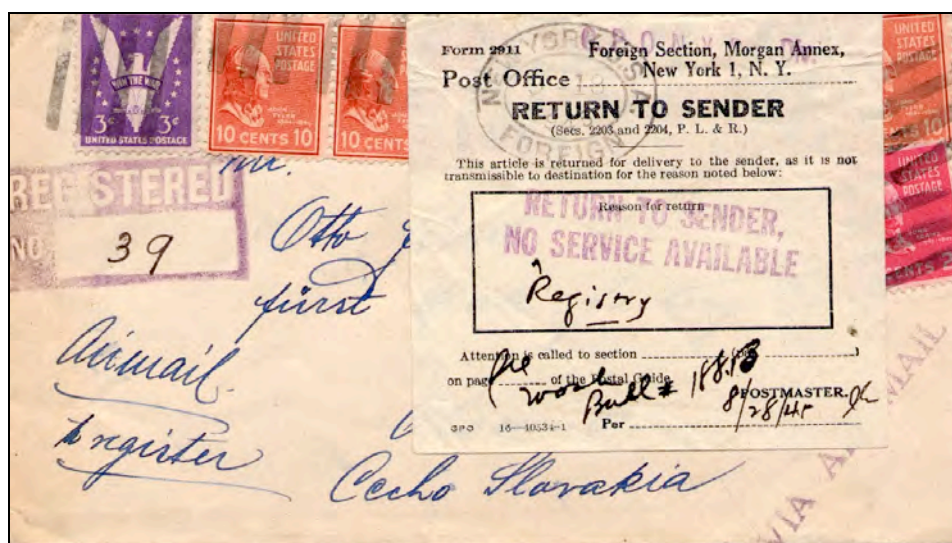


Figure 6

**RESTRICTED RESUMPTION OF MAIL SERVICE (INCLUDING AIR MAIL) TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA**

ORDER No. 28941; DATED AUGUST 27, 1945.

Effective at once letters not exceeding 2 ounces and post cards shall be accepted for dispatch by air or by surface means to destinations in Czechoslovakia.

The following postage rates are applicable to mail to be sent by surface transportation:

Letters—5 cents for the first ounce and 3 cents for the next ounce.  
Post cards—3 cents each.

Articles intended for dispatch by air are subject to the postage rate of 30 cents per half-ounce or fraction.

Air-mail articles are subject to the provisions of order No. 18605 published in the POSTAL BULLETIN of September 4, 1942.

Registration, special-delivery, money-order, and parcel-post services are not available.

Postal Bulletin 18858

Fall 2012



Whole No. 59

# *The Prexie Era*

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## Editor's Note

### 2013 Subscriptions Payable Now

The Fall 2012 issue is the last in the quartet of *The Prexie Era* for 2012. This means it is time for readers to renew your subscriptions. Rates for 2012 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:

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

\* \* \* \*

### Largest Reported Franking of the 19-Cent Rutherford B. Hayes Stamp

by

Albert Briggs



The 19-cent Prexie has always been a challenging stamp to find properly used on cover. Single stamp uses are very scarce. The stamp is typically seen on postal stationery or used with other stamps to pay for some combination of postal rates. The *U. S. Specialist* article discussing this value in the April 2001 issue listed five possible single stamp uses.

While not as aggressively sought after, but equally challenging to find, are multiples or large frankings on cover. The same article shows three covers with multiple stamps, ranging from a pair paying registration fees to five copies on a large envelope paying for registered airmail. The cover shown here is franked with 16 copies of the 19-cent Hayes stamp, including a block of 12.

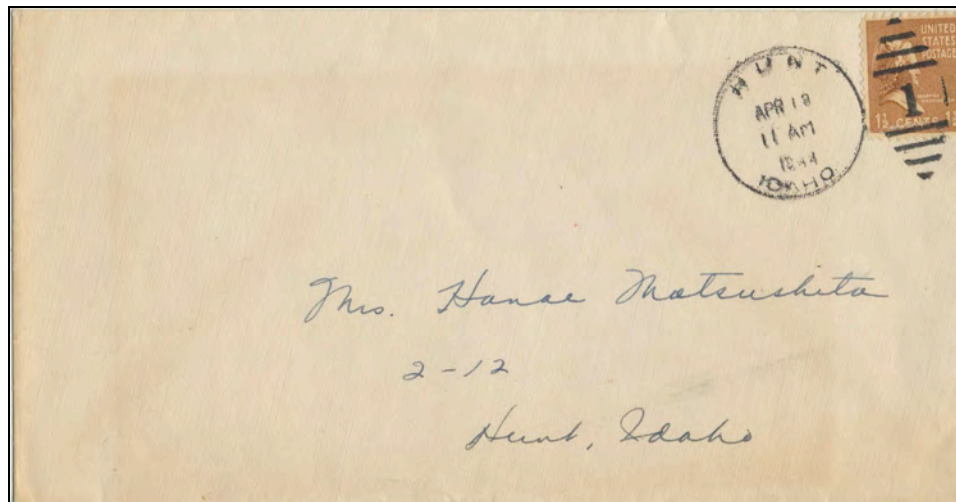
This cover was mailed on October 14, 1958 as evidenced by the backstamp. The fee breakdown is the following: 4 cents first class postage, 10 cents return receipt, and 3 dollars registration fee for up to \$5000.00 indemnity. The addressee is the Williamsport, PA. office of the brokerage firm Merrill, Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith. The envelope likely contained stock certificates or some other form of negotiable security. This is the largest franking of the 19-cent stamp reported in *The Prexie Era* and may represent the largest known use of the stamp.

### Third Class Mail Within An Internment Camp

by

Jeffrey Shapiro

While covers bearing a 1.5-cent Prexie paying the third class unsealed greeting card rate are common, sometimes a surprise can be found, as with this April 1944 within-center example from the Minidoka Relocation Center, located near Twin Falls, Idaho. The postmark and addressee have historical significance. Here in the high desert country, more than 9,000 Japanese Americans from the Pacific Northwest had been incarcerated since the summer of 1942. Hunt, the on-site branch of the Twin Falls post office, was established on September 1, 1942.



On February 19, 1942 Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 authorizing the removal and incarceration of all "Nikkei" (persons of Japanese ancestry) from the West Coast of the United States. A total of 120,000 individuals were eventually incarcerated by this order. It should be noted that while some were Japanese nationals, two-thirds of those incarcerated were U.S. citizens. Nearly fifty years would pass before the government would formally recognize the civil rights violation caused by this order and made restitution.

The exiles were transported to ten inland relocation centers where summers were scalding and winters bone cold. One of them, the Minidoka Relocation Center, was located twenty miles northeast of Twin Falls, in south central Idaho. The center operated from August 1942 until October 1945. At its peak the center held 9,397 individuals, most from the Seattle and Portland areas. With its 600 tarpaper structures, eight guard towers, and five miles of barbed wire fencing, it became the eighth largest city in Idaho.

Beginning in late 1942 inmates began to leave camp in significant numbers. Many worked as farm laborers throughout Idaho, while others left for college. Large numbers of families resettled in states that welcomed them. Draft eligible males served in the famed all-Japanese American 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team or Military Intelligence Service as volunteers or draftees.

The last inmates vacated the camp in October 1945, and the government disassembled most of the structures. Remaining structures were preserved to house returning war veterans or sold to area farmers.



Six acres of the Minidoka site were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in July of 1979, and in 2001 the core of the former camp was designated as a National Monument. Since then, stakeholder groups have engaged in a comprehensive planning process to develop the site to memorialize the wartime hardships and commemorate the sacrifices made by Japanese Americans. On December 21, 2006, President George Bush signed legislation guaranteeing \$38,000,000 in federal funds to restore all ten of the former relocation center sites, including Minidoka.

In 1990, Congress authorized a formal apology to all Japanese Americans impacted by Executive Order 9066, signed by President George H.W. Bush, and accompanying \$20,000 restitution.

\* \* \* \*

## U.S. Mail to Finland during World War II

by

Louis Fiset

An August 1939 a non-aggression pact between Germany and the U.S.S.R. provided that Finland fall under the Soviet sphere of influence. Finland's refusal to capitulate resulted in a 105-day war between this Nordic country and the Soviet Union. Throughout the war, that began 30 November 1939, mail from the U.S. to Finland was censored by the Finns and intermittently suspended. A treaty was signed on 13 March 1940, and Soviet troops withdrew. Mail service from the U.S. to Finland resumed shortly thereafter.

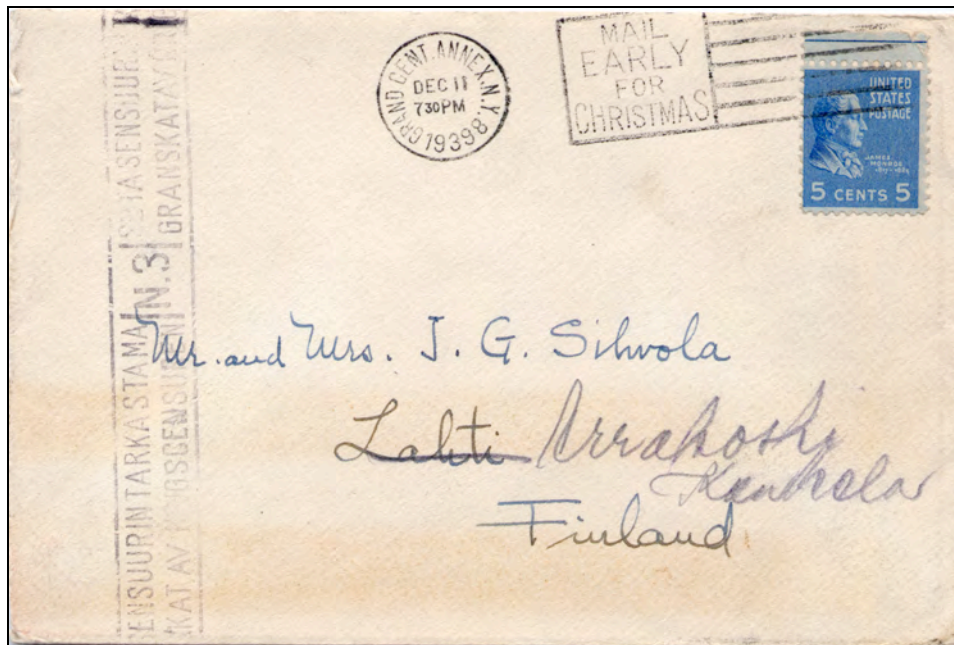


Figure 1: Trans-Atlantic ship mail from New York postmarked 12 days after the beginning of “The Winter War.” Passed unopened by Finnish censorship. Transit time: 72 days.



Figure 2: Surface mail postmarked two days before the end of the 105-day war. The letter reached UK, but mail had been suspended since late February, so was returned to sender via New York.



Figure 3: Registered airmail letter postmarked New York, 31 May 1940, two months after the end of the war. Received at Helsinki on 3 June 1940. Opened by Finnish censors. Transit time: 4 days.

Finland became an ally of Germany against the U.S.S.R. beginning 26 June 1941. Thus, once the U.S. entered the war on 8 December 1941, Finland had been at war with an Allied nation for five months. The U.S. immediately declared war against Finland. As a result, mail service from the U.S. was suspended immediately and for the duration of the war. Surface letter mail to Finland resumed on 16 February 1945. Airmail service followed six months later, on 28 August.



Figure 4: Surface business mail postmarked three months after the U.S. declared war against Finland. Censored at New York and returned to sender without ever leaving the country.

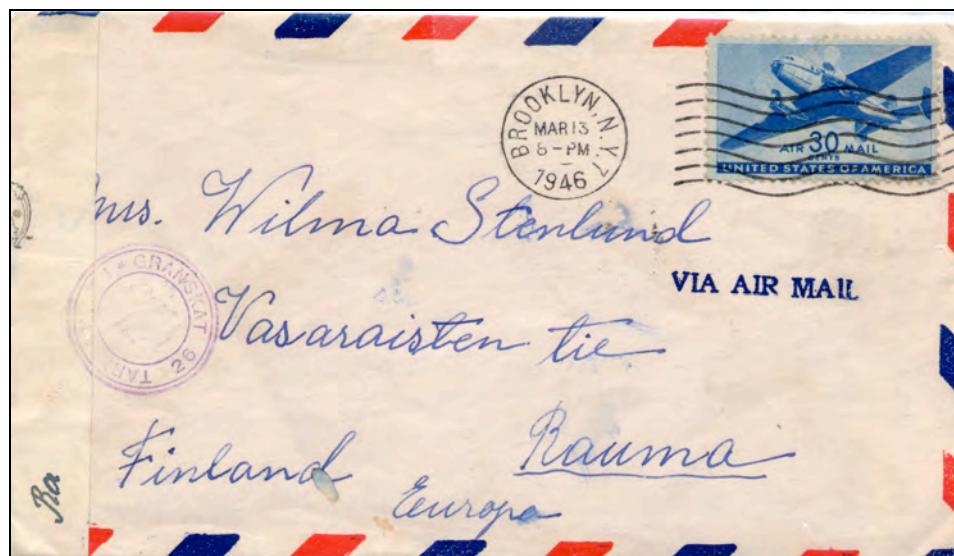


Figure 5: Airmail letter to Finland, postmarked 13 March 1946. By now all mail service to the country had resumed, including registration and special delivery services. Finnish censors were still examining the mail at this time.



## Censor Markings on Prison Mail during the Prexie Era

by

Albert Briggs

Mail remains a major means of communication between incarcerated individuals and the community. Processing mail to and from inmates in correctional facilities is an important function of prison and jail staff. This processing includes delivery and collection of mail, distribution of official mail, allowance for receipt of publications, and following procedures for handling legal mail and packages. Part of the processing function includes awareness of situations that can lead to violation of security and order in the institution. This awareness is achieved through the inspection of incoming and outgoing mail.

According to the Mail Management Manual of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, all mail and packages are opened and inspected. The authority of staff to open and inspect mail is recognized, as is the inmates' current right to elect not to have their mail opened and read. If this right is exercised however, their mail is returned to sender.

For years correctional facility officials censored or removed mail without any statutory guidance. This resulted in mail that was banned for undue complaints, expression of grievances, and mention of inflammatory political, racial, or religious beliefs. Essentially, if officials wanted to censor or return mail they could. Correspondence was considered a privilege and not a right.

The era of the Presidential Series pre-dates the tightening of regulations governing the censorship of mail. During this era many interesting censor markings can be found on mail to and from people incarcerated in penal institutions across the country.

One of the most notorious prisons in the United States, San Quentin, used several different markings indicating censorship.



Figure 1, an outgoing cover from 1947, shows a handstamp “*Apvd*”, indicating approval after inspection.



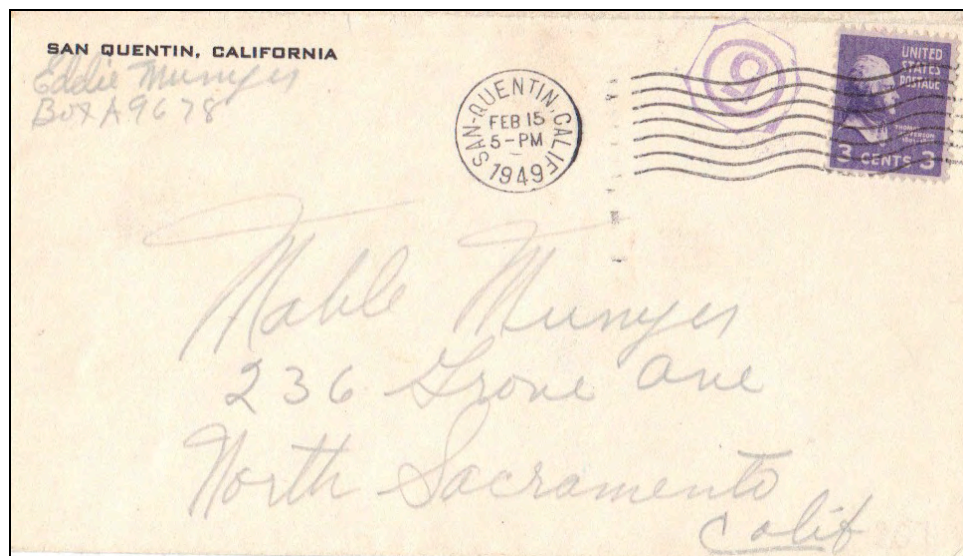


Figure 2 is a cover from an inmate in 1949 bearing numeral 5 in circle and geometric design applied by the prison censor.



Figure 3. Another California facility is represented by figure 3. This is an inbound cover to the Los Angeles city jail. This has a boxed censored marking and also states **no money enclosed**.

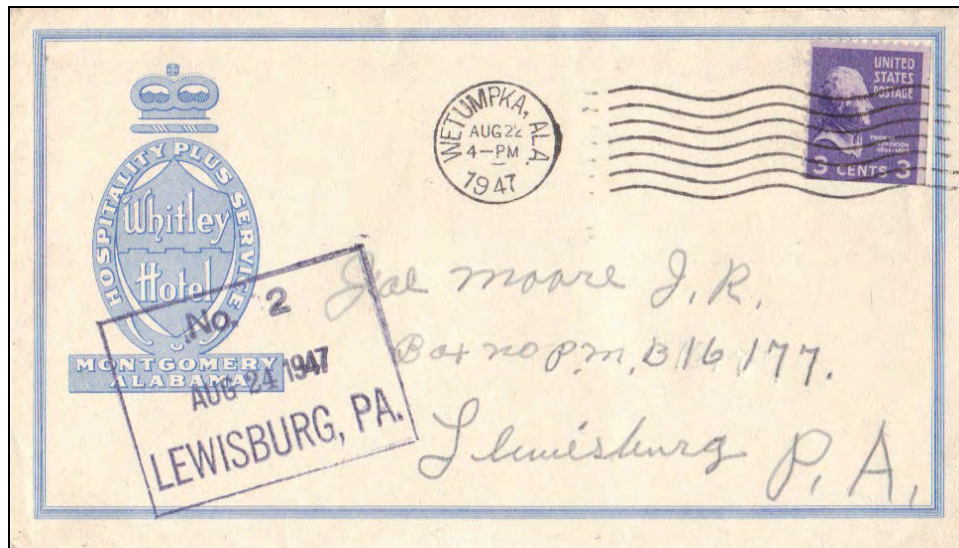


Figure 4. Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania used a boxed censor marking containing a number identifying the censor, date, and location.

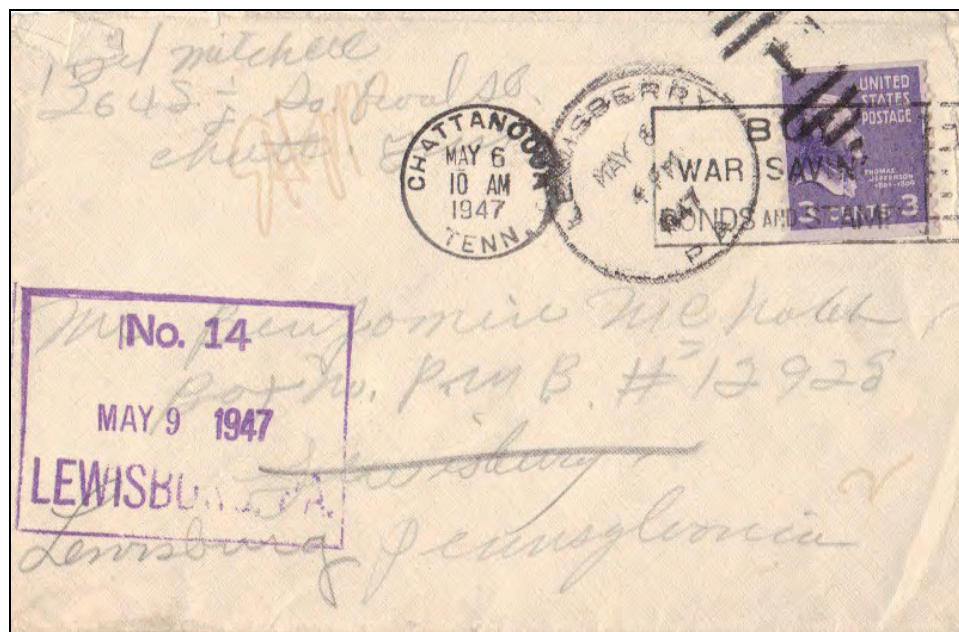


Figure 5: Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary correspondence with a different box censor marking than in Figure 4.





Figure 6. Washington State Reformatory for juveniles, at Monroe, Washington, also used a boxed censor marking containing date and blank line to record censor number.

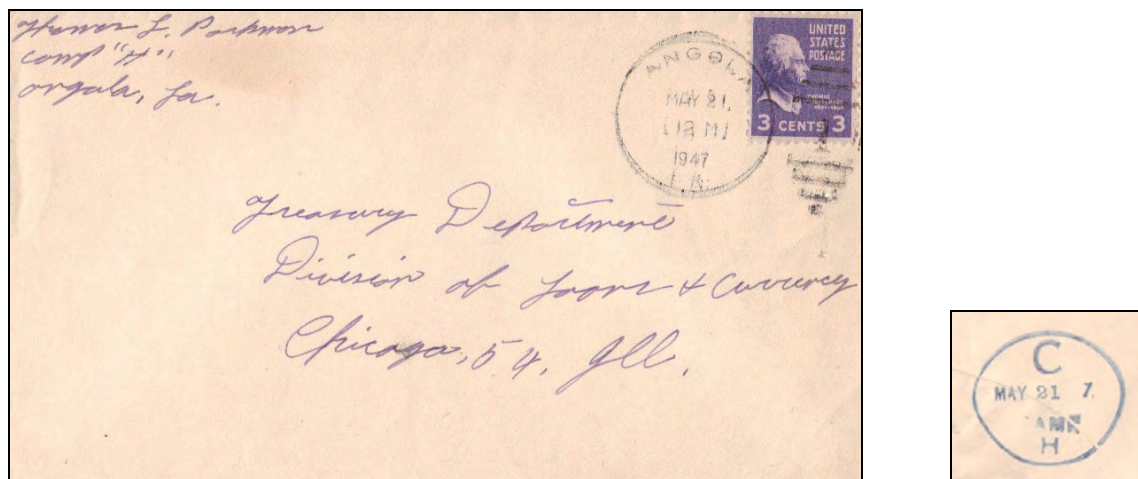


Figure 7. The cover in figure 7 contains a return address of Camp "H", Angola, La. Camp H was a prisoner housing facility of the Louisiana State Penitentiary. Located on 18,000 acres along the Mississippi River, it is the largest prison in the South. The reverse bears a circular censor marking with the date and camp designation.

In 1974 the U. S. Supreme Court ruled in *Procunier v. Martinez* that with regard to censorship of mail, officials had to show a government interest in a particular regulation and the regulation must be no greater than is necessary to protect that interest. Justice Thurgood Marshall in his concurring opinion wrote "the First Amendment serves not only the needs of the polity but also those of the human spirit—a spirit that demands self-expression." "When the prison gates slam behind an inmate, he does not lose his human quality; his mind does not become closed to ideas; his intellect does not cease to feed on a free and open interchange of opinions; his yearning for self-respect does not end; nor is his quest for self-realization concluded."

Winter 2013



Whole No. 60

# *The Prexie Era*

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Committee

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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## U.S. Mail to Turkey during World War II

by

Louis Fiset

### Introduction

Despite intense pressure from Nazi Germany and the Western Allies, Turkey remained neutral until the last months of World War II, joining the Allies on 23 February 1945. This largely ceremonial move assured the country of subsequent charter membership in the United Nations.

Turkey's neutrality meant wartime international mail could move in and out of the country, with mail service from the U.S. not in danger of being suspended. Nevertheless, geographically situated in a region of intense combat in nearby Mediterranean and Balkan countries, creative mail routes had to be devised to circumvent the fighting. Such alternate routes combined with all mail being subject to censorship resulted in considerable delays in transmission of both surface and airmail during the war.

*The Postal Bulletin* and the *U.S. Official Postal Guide* remain silent on wartime routings and average transit times involving Turkey. What we know is that from 28 April 1939 the transatlantic airmail rate to Turkey was 30 cents per half-ounce with no additional fee for airmail in Europe (*PB* 17681) including the part of Turkey in Asia. On 17 December 1941 the rate became 70 cents per half-ounce (*PB* 18348), and remained unchanged for the remainder of the war. Prewar airmail service occurred twice weekly, with an average transit time of four days. Routing of prewar surface mail went via New York and France three times a week, with an average transit time of 8 to 12 days. Twice each month ships sailed via Italy, with an average transit time of nine days.

Several years ago, over a period of several months a large World War II correspondence from the U.S. to Istanbul came on the eBay market. Providing an opportunity to study wartime mail to a neutral country between 1940 and 1945, the author's attempt to purchase the 200+ covers from the Vermont dealer proved unsuccessful. Alternatively, as covers came on line, Dickson Preston made scans, resulting in images for approximately 75 percent of the collection to be recorded.

The correspondence was sent from the eastern seaboard to Luther R. Fowle, a protestant minister who lived and worked in Turkey from 1914 to 1950. Fowle was affiliated with The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Founded in 1810, it became the first organized missionary society in the United States. It established mission stations throughout Asia and Africa, including Asiatic and European Turkey.

### Study Sample

The sample employed in this analysis includes 91 airmail covers postmarked between 8 August 1940 and 8 March 1945; and 72 surface route covers postmarked between 12 July 1940 and 15 January 1945. Sixty of the airmail covers received Turkish backstamps (most of them Istanbul) allowing average transit times to be calculated. Similarly, 47 of the surface covers had backstamps. Nearly all covers bear evidence of U.S. and/or foreign censorship, thereby providing information on routing of the mail. Thus, covers without Turkish backstamps but bearing censor markings were retained for the study.

Representativeness. The 75 percent representation of the correspondence allows generalization of the results to the universe of Fowle letters. However, because the correspondence was to a single addressee, the sample may or may not be representative of all wartime mail to Turkey. However, trends can be noted.

## Results

Airmail covers. Nearly all correspondence was postmarked on the eastern seaboard and thereby within one day of the foreign exchange office at New York. The average transit time for mail postmarked in the U.S. and received in Turkey was 57 days, with a range from 10 to 122 days. These summary results can be broken down into three groups, showing alternate routings that impacted the length of average transit times:

1. **Transatlantic 30-cent airmail rate paid; to Lisbon and onward by air within Europe.** Average transit time - 52 days (range, 46 to 57). [8 total covers; 3 backstamped]

Eight covers passed through Bermuda and were censored there by UK censorship. They were postmarked between 8 August 1940 and 31 July 1941. During this period, four airlines flew connecting flights to destinations within Europe. The German airline, Deutsche Lufthansa, transported mail from Lisbon to Frankfurt. Evidence of German censorship was found on four of these covers, three at Vienna, one at Frankfurt. Among its duties, the Vienna station was charged with examining mail to and from the Balkan countries, Hungary, and Turkey. See Figure 1.



Figure 1: Postmarked 23 May 1941; received 10 July. UK censorship at Bermuda (3432); passed by German censor (A<sub>g</sub>) at Vienna. Transit time: 49 days.

Prior to a significant routing change, shown in the next grouping, two covers in the study bearing the transatlantic 30-cent airmail rate were dispatched to the west coast and onward by transpacific air route to Singapore. These covers were postmarked in September 1941, and 6 October 1941. Presumably they were flown on the BOAC horseshoe route to Cairo. Lacking backstamps, the transit times from the U.S. to Istanbul remain unknown. See Figure 2. Reference to the transpacific route for mail to Turkey in PB 18348 (18 December 1941) may be seen below.

2. **Transatlantic 30-cent airmail rate paid; by ship from New York to Cape Town and onward by air to destination.** Average transit time - 75 days (range, 53 to 95). [12 total covers; 10 backstamped]

With Mediterranean airspace closed and General Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps on the offensive in North Africa, alternate airmail routes to the region had to be found. Connection with Cairo via the BOAC Horseshoe Route's terminus at Durban, South Africa was a logical choice. The covers in this group were postmarked between 27 October and 15 December 1941. The increase in average transit time by more than a month corresponds with prewar ship transit times of 22-28 days to South Africa. With censorship at Cape Town, the mail likely went by train to Durban for air dispatch to Cairo via the Horseshoe Route. Eleven covers were censored at Cape Town and passed unopened at Cairo. The twelfth bypassed Cape Town censors and was opened by a Palestine examiner. See Figure 3.



Figure 2: Transatlantic airmail from the west coast, to Singapore and onward via the BOAC Horseshoe Route. Censored at Singapore and Cairo. Transit time, unknown.

3. **Transatlantic 70-cent airmail rate paid, after December 17, 1941.** Average transit time - 55 days (range 10 to 122) [69 total covers; 47 backstamped]

With entry of the U.S. into the war and transatlantic air service beyond Honolulu suspended, a newly established southern transatlantic route with rates at 70 cents per half-ounce helped enable service to Africa, the Middle East, and beyond, to continue. Because of Turkey's location in a contested region, the trans-Africa route continued, but now at the 70-cent airmail rate, which became effective on 17 December 1941. The vast majority of covers in this group bear both U.S. and Egypt censor markings. See Figure 4.

Twelve of the 69 covers in this third airmail group bear both Cairo and Istanbul backstamps, which provide some information on the average transit time between the two cities. If we assume the Cairo backstamps were applied prior to censorship, the average time from Cairo, including censorship, was 11 days (range 8 to 17).

Surface route covers. Like the airmail covers in the study, nearly all surface route correspondence was postmarked on the eastern seaboard, within one day of the foreign exchange office at New York. The average transit time for mail postmarked in the U.S. and received in Turkey was 98 days, with a range from 58 to 153 days. The covers, postmarked from 7 December 1940 to 15 January 1945, fall into three groups:

1. **Transatlantic ship route from New York to Europe.** Average transit time - 93 days (range 78 to 107). [36 total covers; 16 backstamped]

Prior to the U.S. entry into the war, Italy permitted mail to pass between neutral countries despite Axis control of the Mediterranean region. All covers were opened and censored at Cairo or Palestine. See Figure 5.



Figure 3: Transatlantic airmail postage paid. By ship from New York to South Africa, and onward by air to Cairo. Censored at Cape Town and passed unopened at Cairo. Average transit time for airmail routed via Cape Town – 75 days.



Figure 4: Postmarked 5 Sep 1941; received 14 February 1945. Censored at New York and passed unopened at Cairo. Transit time: 32 days.



2. **Transatlantic ship route from New York to Cape Town and onward by surface to destination.** Average transit time - 124 days [range 120 to 130]. [12 total covers; 11 backstamped]

Covers in this group were postmarked between 21 September and 1 December 1941. They correspond to the same period in which surface/airmail service via Cape Town occurred. All covers were opened and censored at Cape Town. See Figure 6.

3. **Transatlantic ship route from New York after December 11, 1941.** Average transit time - 99 days (range 56 to 153). [24 total covers; 20 backstamped]

After 11 December 1941 and until 9 July 1944 all covers in the study sample were opened and censored at Cairo. The first U.S. censorship (New York) markings appeared mail postmarked 2 February 1943. Throughout 1943 and mid-1944 dual USA/Egypt censorship markings may be found on all surface correspondence. Subsequently only U.S. censor markings appear. See Figure 7.

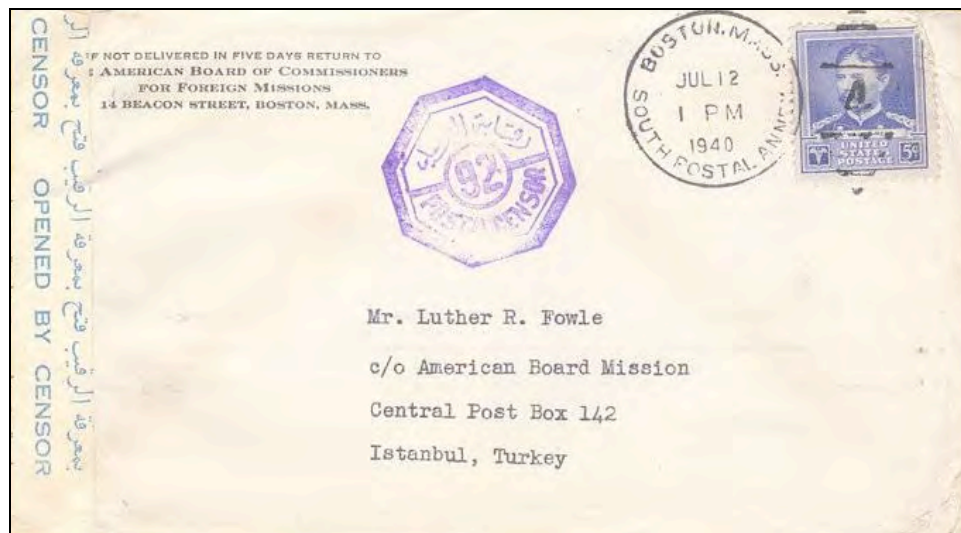


Figure 5: Surface letter postmarked 12 July 1940; received 20 Oct 1940. Censored at Cairo. Transit time: 100 days.

## Discussion

It is clear from this survey that regardless of method of dispatch and routing, the war slowed transmission of the mail to Turkey significantly. Several inferences can be made from the evidence provided in the study:

- Official publications and existing philatelic studies make no mention of a suspension of mail to Turkey during the war. The covers used in this study provide no evidence that in-transit mail was held or returned to the exchange office pending a resumption of suspended service. While covers “returned to sender/service suspended” likely would not have been included in the sample, the evidence provides evidence to validate mail to Turkey not having been suspended.
- At least three periods existed for both airmail and surface mail in which changes in routes occurred, impacting the length of average transit times.
- Airmail service or combined surface/airmail had shorter average transit times than surface mail regardless of routing or censorship.

- Airmail service during the 30-cent transatlantic airmail rate period that was dispatched by ship from New York to Cape Town had significantly longer average transit times than mail dispatched from New York by air.
- All mail was opened and examined by at least one Allied country, whether U.S. or British (Bermuda, South Africa, Palestine, Egypt.) The impact of censorship on increased average transit times, especially individual pieces that were opened and censored multiple times, cannot be determined.
- In most cases, transit mail was opened by only one Allied censor then docketed and passed unopened at censor stations in other countries.
- Because the average prewar transit time between Cairo and Istanbul has not yet been found, whether transit airmail dispatched from Cairo went by air or surface routes cannot be determined.
- Average transit times for airmail correspondence shortened significantly late in the war.

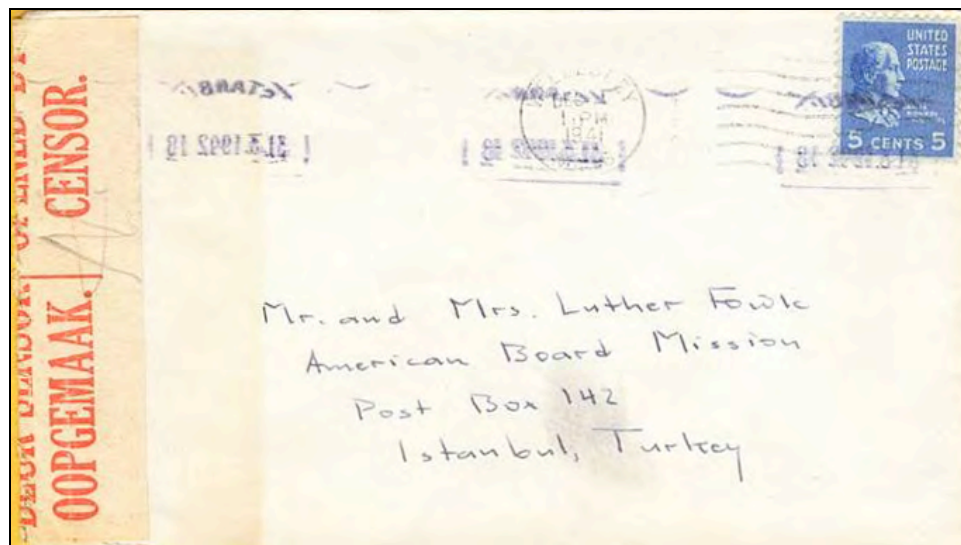


Figure 6: Surface letter postmarked 1 Dec 1941; received 31 Mar 1942. Censored at Cape Town, South Africa. Transit time: 90 days.

## Conclusion

Turkey's neutrality during World War II and its precarious geographic location enable the impact of the war on transmission of the mail to an embattled region to be examined empirically. The exigencies of war contributed to the delay of the mail by rerouting and censorship, which help explain the wide range of transit times. However, lag times at individual censor stations and the length of time bags of mail sat on the tarmac awaiting outbound flights will be forever unknowable. In wartime, routines and schedules simply fly out the window.

SECOND ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,  
*Washington, December 17, 1941.*

**FOREIGN AIR MAIL SERVICE**

Air mails for Netherlands Indies, North Borneo, Sarawak, Straits Settlements, Malaya, Burma, unoccupied China and countries west thereof (including Turkey), which have heretofore been sent by the trans-Pacific route, shall be routed promptly via Miami, Fla. The total postage on articles for all these countries is 70 cents per half ounce.

Air mails for the countries listed in the POSTAL BULLETIN of December 2, 1941, under the heading "Foreign Air Mail Service To Africa," will of course also be sent via Miami, except any that are prepared to be carried by steamship to Africa thence by air.

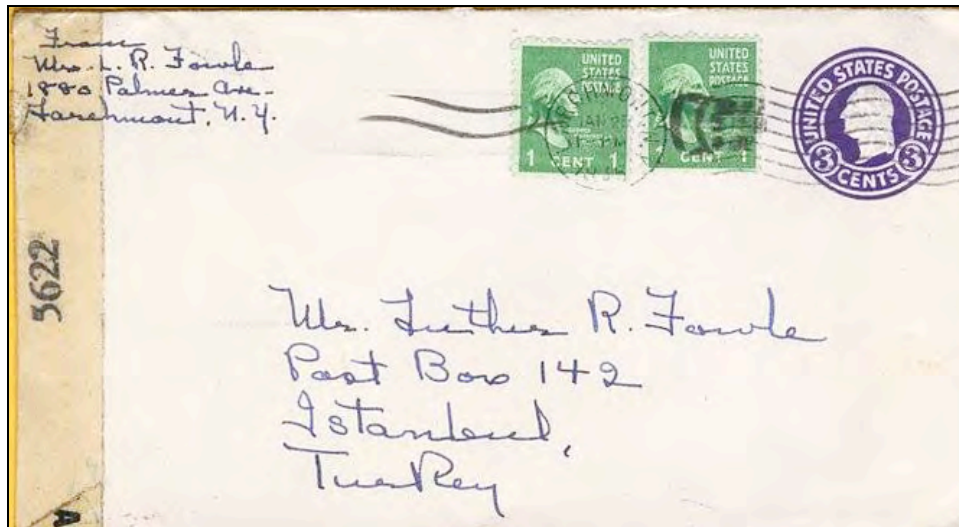


Figure 7: Surface letter postmarked 25 January 1945; received 16 Mar 1945. Censored at New York. No Egypt (Cairo) censorship. Transit time: 51 days.

### 20-Cent Non-Concession Airmail Rate to New Zealand

by

Art Farnsworth



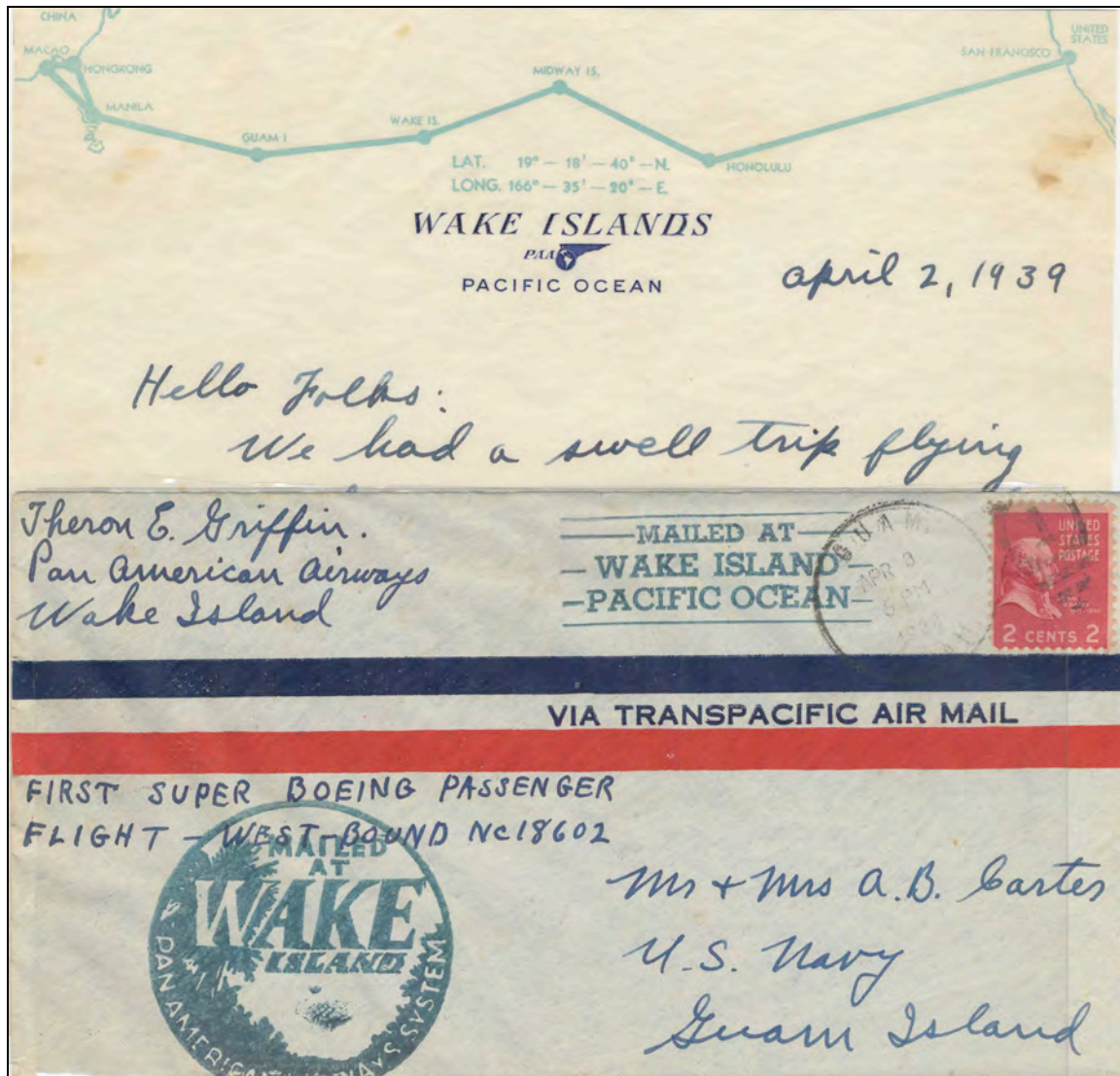
During World War II active duty personnel, non-military direct and indirect employees of the U.S. government, and members of government and private relief agencies were given a reduced rate (6 cents per half ounce) airmail privilege on mail sent between their overseas location and the continental U.S. The rate did not apply to mail sent to overseas addresses. The cover shown here was sent from a sailor aboard the troop transport USS *Harris* to a civilian New Zealand addressee. The *Harris* was in the South Pacific during the autumn of 1943. The 20-cent rate is curious. Were the letter posted in the continental U.S. the rate would have been 50 cents. Given the ship's location at the time, the postage paid suggests the letter originated at Fanning or Washington Island, where the rate to New Zealand was 20 cents.



## Local Delivery in Guam of a Cover from Midway

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



A 2-cent Prexie paid the local carrier rate on this April 3, 1939 cover sent from the Pacific Island of Midway Island to Guam. How can a local carrier rate be valid on a cover sent from Midway Island?

The cover was sent by Theron E. Griffin, an engineering officer working for Pan American Airways. It was carried free as a courtesy aboard the westbound Clipper flight across the Pacific from the US mainland, saving the unpublished 20 cents per half-ounce airmail rate. With a scheduled stop at Guam, the letter was off-loaded and placed into the U.S. mail stream, which required two cents to pay the local carrier fee to deliver the letter to a Mr. & Mrs. A. B. Carter, of the US Navy. Mr. Carter (1922-2010) was a retired Texas postal employee who served in the US Navy as a radio operator during World War II.



The cover was carried aboard the first westbound passenger flight of Pan Am's new Super Boeing 314 Clipper, one of the largest aircraft of the time. Twelve 314s were sold to Pan Am and three were resold by Pan Am to the British Overseas Air Corporation (BOAC) in 1941. The Boeing 314s were built for "one class" luxury air travel. The Clipper had a lounge and dining area, with chefs from four-star restaurants serving five and six course meals on china with silver utensils. The passenger seats could be converted into bunk beds. Flying at 155 mph and with multiple refueling stops along the way, a one-way trip from San Francisco to Hong Kong took six days to complete. Tickets in 1939 cost \$760 (\$12,500 in today's currency).

Commercial passenger service across the Pacific lasted less than three years, ending when the United States entered World War II in December 1941. The Pan American Clipper fleet was pressed into military service. At the end of the War, surviving Clippers were returned to Pan Am, but by then new technology had made the planes obsolete.

### ***LaPosta* Seeks "Prexie" Articles**

With the First Quarter 2013 issue of *LaPosta: The Journal of American Postal History*, editor Pete Martin has initiated a regular series of articles featuring the postal history of the Prexie series. In a column he titles, "The Prexies," Martin will publish articles of varying length first appearing in *The Prexie Era*, as well as previously unpublished material. An electronic copy of the first article showing the formatting style accompanies the current issue. For more information, contact Martin at: [pmartin2525@yahoo.com](mailto:pmartin2525@yahoo.com)

### **Airmail/Surface Rate to Japan?**



The cover illustrated here is franked with 26 cents postage to pay the domestic airmail rate to the west coast, airmail to Hawaii, and onward to Japan by surface. The question here is, given the sender's instruction, what postage rate was correct? We know that 20 cents paid the Clipper rate to Hawaii from any location on the mainland. But what additional amount was necessary to pay the surface rate to Japan; 5 cents, or 2 cents? We all know that a mainland letter paying the 5-cent UPU rate first flown by airmail to the exchange office required 8 cents postage, with 3 cents of the 6 cents domestic airmail rate contributing to the UPU rate. Here, presumably 3 cents of the 20-cent Clipper rate would contribute the same, making the correct rate 22 cents. Can anyone come up with another plausible rate for this wartime cover – one that never left the mainland?

Spring 2013



Whole No. 61

# *The Prexie Era*

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Committee  
Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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## H. M. S. Asbury

by

Albert Briggs

Would you believe a hotel? That's right. The Asbury was not a seagoing vessel at all and was certainly not the property of His Majesty. H.M.S. Asbury was the name given to two hotels located next to each other in Asbury Park, New Jersey. The resort hotels Monterey and Berkeley Carteret, separated by Sixth Avenue along the Asbury Park seafront, were converted for use by Royal Navy sailors temporarily stationed in the United States. They received their "official" name in a Naval Department memo dated September 8, 1942. The designation, His Majesty's Ship (H.M.S.), was applied in order for sailors to receive on-duty pay while located there. The complex can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1: The Berkeley Carteret Hotel on the left and the Monterey Hotel on the right with the Sunset Avenue Pavilion in the foreground.

The Carteret, containing 420 rooms and built in 1925, along with the neighboring Monterey Hotel were co-opted for use by the Navy. Specifically, Royal Navy personnel, awaiting completion of ship construction or repairs, were housed in these buildings. Between 5,000 and 7,500 men spent time at this location, mainly during 1943. The most famous of the British seamen was Alec Guinness, a well-known stage and screen actor. Guinness, reportedly bored with his assigned duty, was able to arrange appearances on Broadway during his stay in New Jersey.

The Monterey was used to house enlisted men while the Carteret was designated for officers. Enlisted men were bunked four to a room. The sailors would arrive at the North Asbury railroad station and march to the hotels. Sixth Avenue served as a site for morning drills. A fence was put up around the hotels to provide a secure perimeter. Cinema and "Dime-a-Dance" joints provided recreation. Frank Sinatra, from nearby Hoboken, was all the rage. A source of aggravation, however, was the fact that Royal Navy personnel could not use the beach. This regulation was enforced by MPs patrolling the beachfront.

In order to placate the beach-deprived sailors, the Navy also took over Seventh Avenue Pool and bathhouses, as reported in a local newspaper. See Figure 2.

### British Take Over Swimming Pool

The U. S. government has taken over the Seventh Avenue swimming pool and bathhouses at Asbury Park for use of the British sailors quartered at H.M.S. Asbury, Royal navy, recruiting station. The pool will be used by the sailors in training.

Figure 2: From the *Red Bank Register*; Red Bank, New Jersey, May 27, 1943.

Special provisions were even made for British personnel to write home. The Post Office Department, in *Postal Bulletin* No. 18588, dated April 30, 1943, extended V-mail service both to Army and Navy personnel temporarily stationed in the United States and their relatives and friends in Great Britain. Postage required was the prevailing international rate of 5 cents, as shown in Figure 3. This postal provision remained in effect until October 30, 1945.

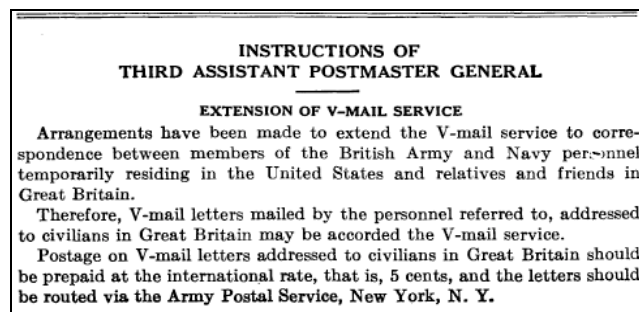


Figure 3: From *PB* 18588 (April 30, 1943).

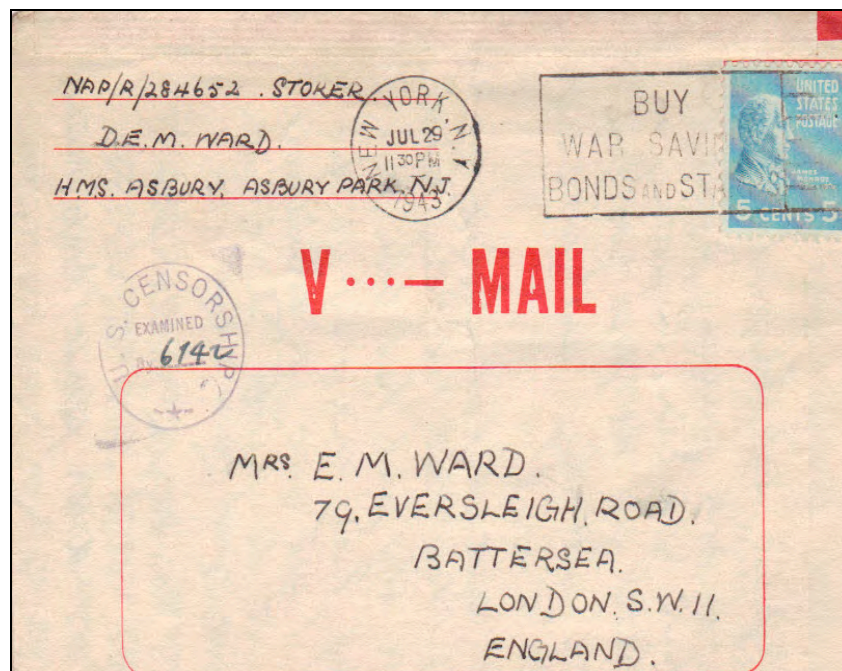


Figure 4: V-mail from an enlisted sailor quartered at the Monterey.



Figure 4 illustrates a cover sent from a sailor stationed at H.M.S. Asbury in July 1943. The V-mail letter sheet was examined by a civil censor at the New York censorship station and subsequently placed in the mail for dispatch by ship to London. Figure 5 shows the contents. A Royal Navy censor mark may be found in the upper left corner. The sailor misspelled his location ("Asprey"); in the body of the letter he mentions to his mother having sent an "ordinary letter" where he "will say a great deal more than I can in this "V" mail."

Print the complete address in plain block letters in the panel below, and your return address in the space provided. Use typewriter, dark ink, or pencil. Write plainly. Very small writing is not suitable.


No.	To	From
 (CENSOR'S STAMP)	MRS. E.M. WARD. 79 EVERSLEIGH ROAD. BATTERSEA SW11. LONDON. ENGLAND.	DOUGLAS E.M. WARD. (Sender's name) STOKER, NAD/R/284652 (Sender's address) H.M.S. ASPREY ASPREY PARK, N.J. (Date) 27/7/43.
	<p>My Dearest Mother,</p> <p>Just a brief letter, to let you know I am progressing well, here in H.M.S. Asprey's sick bay. I have no doubt that I shall soon be up and gardening about once more, so please don't worry more than you can, I'm getting on OK. There should be an ordinary letter in the post for you, so please look out for it; it was dated 25th July, and will say a great deal more than I can in this "V" mail.</p> <p>The weather here is glorious, my only regret is that I can't get out to enjoy it just yet. Still, my dog has his day and believe me I shall have mine. Victor my pal has been very good, he comes down to see me every hour and then to see if I want anything. I only hope I get out of here before he gets drafted, as I wouldn't like to be parted now, before our fight to keep together all this time.</p> <p>Hope you are keeping fit and well, have you heard from Grandma lately and does dear Winnie still come to see you at the week-ends. I sincerely hope she does, please keep writing to her from time to time won't you.</p> <p>If you see Nellie Hammond remember me to her, how is Derek going on, I hope his health will improve give him my kindest regards. I still stick of those last few hours with Julie Carter and Charlie and what good times we had, well close now.</p> <p>Your ever loving son,            Douglas.            xxxxxx            xxx</p>	
	<p><b>V...-MAIL</b></p>	
	<p>U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1942 10-28465-4</p>	

Figure 5: Contents of the V-Mail letter shown above. The writer is recuperating in the H.M.S. Asbury sick bay.

### 4.5-Cent Prexie on Printed Matter to Japan, Returned To Sender

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



A 4.5-cent precanceled Prexie sheet stamp paid three times the 1.5 cents per two-ounce international printed matter rate on this censored wrapper from Cleveland to Japan and mailed early in 1942. It was returned to sender via Vancouver, B.C., where it was censored. The **RETURN TO SENDER** marking, in French and English, was applied in Canada. Mail service had been suspended since December 11, 1941 after the U.S. declared war against Japan.

While similar returned wrappers sent worldwide can be found, this example, addressed to an oil storage facility in Tokuyama, Yamaguchi Prefecture, contains postal history plus irony. The irony comes from the fact that many historians conclude Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 because of the US oil embargo put in place in July 1941 in retaliation for Japan's invasion of French Indochina and continuing expansion into China. Because of Japan's reliance on the US to supply 80 percent of its petroleum needs, the Japanese government considered the embargo to be a highly provocative act.

Tokuyama city, facing Tokuyama Bay in the Inland Sea, on Honshu Island, was a sleepy 'backwater' town until the 1896 completion of the Sanyo Railroad Line connecting Kobe and Hiroshima. Then, with the building of the main Japanese naval coaling station, the area saw major industrial growth becoming a leading center for petroleum refining and chemical production. This made the area a target for Allied bombing.

The City's industrial capabilities were wiped out in a series of air raids, including one on May 10, 1945 by 60 planes of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Wing sent to destroy the Tokuyama Naval Fuel Station. The raid was a success, and all crewmen returned to their base safely.

## Prexie Era Postage Stamp Vending Machines

by

Art Farnsworth



Postage stamp vending machines were introduced to postal patrons by the Brinkerhoff Company in 1906. They dispensed privately perforated coil stamps made from strips of imperforate sheet stamps glued together. Stamp vending machines have been with us ever since. The illustrations accompanying this article highlight machines in use during the Prexie era.

Patent 2,444,747 was issued to the Postage Stamp Machine Company of New York on July 6, 1948 for improvements to a machine that, among other attributes, provided "an efficient and simple indicia" for indicating when the machine was empty and a means to lock it in place.

The photograph of the machine known as "The Leader," clearly shows 2-cent and 3-cent Prexie stamps in the windows above the numerals. The 2-cent first class postcard rate that went into effect on January 1, 1952 helps date the photograph to the latter years of the Prexie series. In this machine, two 2-cent Prexie stamps contained in sanitary folders were dispensed for a nickel, while the push lever dispensed three 3-cent stamps for the cost of a dime. Various combinations of stamps could be dispensed as the need arose. The advertising card promotes the machines as a way of providing a service to customers while offering a modest profit for the business.

Vintage postage stamp vending machines appear occasionally on eBay, and several period models may currently be found in the collection of the National Postal Museum.



## Matches Sent Through the Mail

by

Dickson Preston

Although the transmission of inflammable substances was, in general, prohibited in the U.S. mails during the Prexie era, there were certain exceptions. Paragraphs 2(e) and 2(h) in Section 588 of the 1940 Postal Laws and Regulations give the details. Paragraph 2(e) allows substances having a flash point between 80 and 20 degrees weighing 4 ounces or less to be sent under certain conditions when "contained in tightly closed metal boxes or cans and packed in strong papier-mâché tubes or in boxes made of good quality double-faced corrugated pasteboard." Paragraph 2(h) allows safety matches to be sent when packed in asbestos or tightly closed metal containers.

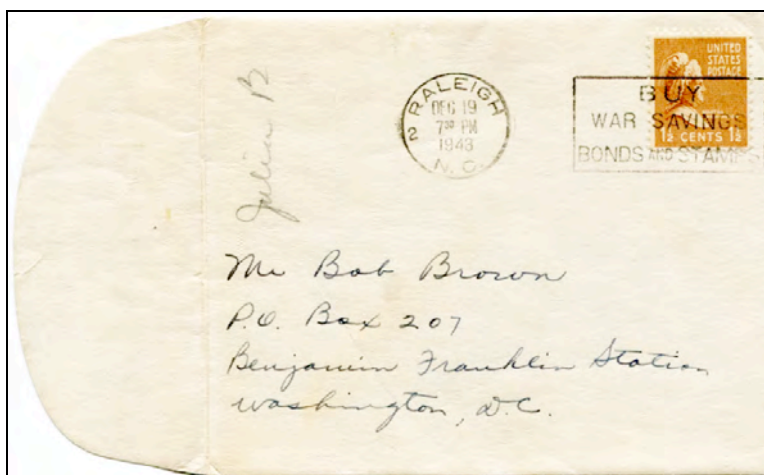


Figure: Front and back of a foil lined envelope for sending a book of matches through the postal system.

A special envelope sent during the Christmas season of 1943 was designed to send matches as a holiday gift or advertisement (Figure 1). The interior of the envelope is lined with metal foil, and an inscription on the reverse references section 588 of the P.L.& R.

**This envelope contains one book of safety matches packed in Foil Lined Container in accordance with Section 588, Paragraph 2-E United States Postal Laws and Regulations.**



The claim made is a bit of a dodge, since Paragraph 2 (e) makes no reference to foil lining as being sufficient protection. Paragraph 2(h), which addressed matches specifically, was ignored most likely because of its even more restrictive packing conditions. Nevertheless, the envelope was accepted as single piece third class mail at the Raleigh, N. C. post office, perhaps because a broad interpretation of the rules for sending matches was applied in this tobacco-growing region.

\* \* \* \*

### A Prewar Prexie Cover to the U.S.S. *Edsall*

by

Jeffrey Shapiro

Ten 5-cent Prexies paid the 50 cents per half ounce airmail rate (in effect April 1937 thru June 1946) to mail this 1940 correspondence from the U.S. mainland to the Philippines. The letter, between spouses, is addressed to Lt Commander E. M. Crouch then serving on the destroyer U.S.S. *Edsall* (DD 219) and stationed at Manila.



Figure: 1940 family correspondence between Hollywood, California and Manila. Four 5-cent Prexies on the back help pay the half-ounce airmail rate to the Philippines.

Edward Crouch was transferred from the *Edsall* early in 1942. Just weeks later, on March 1, 1942, the ship was lost south of Borneo in the Indian Ocean after being crippled by the Japanese battle cruiser *Chikuma* and subsequently sunk by air strikes from an estimated 26 dive bombers. Crouch was eventually promoted to Commander of the Pacific Destroyer Division #57.

Records indicate that Commander Crouch perished while a passenger aboard the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* three and a half years later. The *Indianapolis* was torpedoed and sunk by the Japanese submarine I-58 on July 30, 1945 after delivering vital parts for the first atomic bomb to the U.S. Air Base at Tinian a few days earlier. This bomb, code named "Little Boy", was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945.

## *Servizio Sospeso June 1940*

by

Louis Fiset

Mussolini's June 1940 offensive into southeast France along the Franco-Italian border brought Italy into World War II. This soon resulted in closure of Mediterranean airspace, requiring new airmail routes for mail transiting the region for destinations in the Middle East, Africa, and parts of Asia. Prior to this, the Italian airline, Ala Littoria, carried significant volumes of transatlantic airmail from Lisbon to Rome for onward transport.

With the fall of France Italian censors began to delay transit mail or suspended it altogether. The three covers shown here illustrate several treatments of interrupted mail at Rome during this June 1940 transition period.



Figure 1: Airmail to Palestine, returned to sender.

Figure 1 shows business mail addressed to Palestine postmarked 5 June 1940 prior to Italy's incursion into France. However, by the time the letter reached Rome, Italy was in the war against Great Britain, and censors condemned this letter addressed to Jerusalem. Since the censor's tape completely covers the address and no other transit marks or evidence of Allied censorship appear, likely the letter was returned to New York.

The 3 June 1940 letter in Figure 2, intended for onward dispatch from Europe to Beirut, also in the Middle East, was also condemned by Italian censors and returned to the U.S. In this case, the Italian *Al mittente* tape was ripped off and the letter transported to the west coast for onward transmission on the FAM 14 route to Hong Kong and subsequent connection with the British Horseshoe Route at Singapore. The letter was received at Victoria (Hong Kong) on 19 Feb 1941 where a "transit by air required" marking (A.V.2.) was placed. This circular marking may be seen tying a 3-cent Prexie at the left. The letter was passed unopened by Singapore censorship (G 24 censorship sorter signature). The *jusq'a* "BY AIR TO Baghdad ONLY" marking, seen at the lower left, was also applied at Singapore. The letter was received at Baghdad on 12 Mar 1941, and at Beirut five days later. The indistinct purple circle at the lower left is a Vichy censor marking applied at Beirut. The addressee has annotated receipt of the letter on 18 Mar 1941, documenting

a total transit time of nine and a half months. [Ed. note: A similar cover may be seen in Figure 3 of Steve Suffet's article in the No. 60-Winter 2012 issue.]



Figure 2: Airmail to Lebanon, condemned and returned to the U.S. Dispatched by transpacific route to its ultimate destination via Hong Kong, Singapore, and Baghdad.

Finally, the letter to India, shown in Figure 3, also shows only a remnant of the censor's *Al mittente* tape, which shows the letter was held, but ultimately released. The two-ounce letter (airmail rate to India, 50 cents x 4) reached its intended destination in Bombay where it was censored and subsequently redirected, to New Delhi.



Figure 3: Airmail to India, interrupted, but eventually released and sent on.

Italy capitulated in September 1943. However, for a short time Axis forces continued to control the region, and surface and airmail routes through the Mediterranean remained cut off. Routing across the Mediterranean resumed early in 1944 as Allied forces advanced up the Italian peninsula after North Africa was pacified.



Summer 2013



Whole No. 62

# *The Prexie Era*

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Committee  
Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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### **Editor's Note**

The Prexie Group will hold a regional meeting at the APS Milwaukee Show on Friday August 9th, at 2 pm. Attendees should bring material for show and tell or trade.

### **New Trends in Judging and the Decline of Exhibiting**

by

Dickson Preston  
dicksonp@u.washington.edu

The purpose of this article is to present an email exchange between Steve Reinhard, the Chairman of the Committee on Accreditation of National Exhibitions and Judges (CANEJ), and myself discussing some recent trends in judging and a perceived decline in the number of exhibits at WSP shows. Since part of the discussion involves the kinds of exhibits entered in WSP shows by members of the Prexie Era Committee, Jeffrey Shapiro, Committee Chairman, Louis Fiset, *Prexie Era* editor, and I thought it would be useful to reproduce the exchange in this newsletter. The text has not been altered from the original emails except that some parts are not relevant to the subject and have been omitted.

We would like to thank Steve Reinhard for considering our concerns and for allowing us to reprint the extracts from our email exchange here. Comments from the members of the Prexie Era Committee and other interested parties are welcome. Please send them either to me or to the editor.

#### **From Dickson Preston to Steve Reinhard 1 April 2013**

Hi, Steve,

Recently several people, including yourself at the Judges' Roundtable last year, have expressed concerns about a declining number of exhibits and exhibitors. Some of the decline stems from forces beyond our control, such as the cost of travel, and so forth. But I also think that there are some aspects of the Manual of Philatelic Judging which are causing some people to cut back on their exhibiting. These are, in my opinion, unintentional side effects of what is really a superb piece of work which has made a great contribution to both the clarity of judging and the excellence of the exhibits on display.

Let me first say that I am writing about the decline in the number of exhibits and exhibitors rather than any other related topics. Specifically, I am not writing about the award levels given to displays done in my own style of exhibiting. Good heavens, I have plenty of certificates, ribbons, medals, pins, clocks, propellers, and other significations of excellence already.

So here are some thoughts, which I hope will prove useful. They are presented in summary form only, although I have been thinking them through in detail for the last two or three years.

First, the Manual of Philatelic Judging is in danger of becoming a kind of rule book, which defines the only proper manner in which an exhibit can be prepared. I have heard quite a few remarks at feedback fora that have made me fearful that this trend is increasing. The basic problem with this approach, in my opinion, is that it offers the exhibitor two choices: Do it our

way or don't do it at all. Naturally some people, including myself, in part, are choosing the second option. In this way the Manual of Philatelic Judging indirectly discourages exhibitors, and results in fewer exhibits.

I think a lot of this effect stems from the tone in which much of the Manual of Philatelic Judging is written, which has a tendency to be overly directive and to talk down to its readership. In many places the points made are made as mandates, rather than suggestions. A phrase that pops into my mind often when reading the manual is "Streng verboten, mein Herrn!"

My second concern is about the inadvertent exclusiveness that is implied in the classification scheme for exhibits. I think this stems from the overly specific wording of these definitions within this classification scheme, which does not leave room for much flexibility. For example, there is a large group of exhibits which is not "allowable" in the current version of the manual. These exhibits, which I will for convenience call "Use of Issue Exhibits," show covers of a certain issue or group of stamps without showing the mint or used copies of the stamps themselves. In the subjects chosen, often mid-twentieth century ones, the stamps themselves are common, but many of the uses of the stamps are scarce or philatelically exciting. Hence only covers are shown. Some typical U.S. examples are exhibits of Transports, Prexies, Liberties, or a specific commemorative series. Cover exhibits of issues from foreign countries also fit in this group. In the past such exhibits have been very successful, winning many gold medals and specials, as well as several Grand Awards. The problem is that these exhibits do not fit into any of the Divisions as they are now defined in the Manual of Philatelic Judging. They are not traditional exhibits, because they do not show stamps or archival material. In the past they were considered Postal History, in its broader conception of covers which are not FDC's or event covers. But the new manual uses a narrower concept of Postal History, so the Use of Issue Exhibits do not fit here either. As a result judges have begun to question the viability of these kinds of exhibits at WSP feedback fora and in individual critiques. At one recent feedback forum a senior judge said an exhibit of this kind "falls between two stools."

There is a large group of exhibits that fit into this category, and I have personally observed exhibitors of this material cut back on showing existing exhibits, decide not to create new exhibits, or give up exhibiting altogether, because they perceive that their kinds of exhibits are no longer being given due consideration, in part because of the new trends they believe are set in the Manual of Philatelic Judging.

The larger problem is, I think, that the classification of exhibits is too rigid in the way the divisions are described, so that the wording weeds out existing groups of exhibits and discourages new kind of exhibits from being developed. I chose the Use of Issue Exhibits for my discussion, because I happen to be familiar with them and have watched a decline in exhibiting in this area. It may well be that other kinds of exhibits are affected also.

At any rate, these are my concerns. It has been suggested that I write an article, perhaps in TPE, about them, but having watched people back away from exhibiting just because of a couple of email exchanges and informal conversations on the subject, I was afraid the more publicity would just lead to more defections. So my rough drafts of articles on these topics have been shelved.

Steve, let me once again reiterate that my main focus here is the decline of exhibits. I am not writing in defense of certain topics or styles just because I or my friends happen to exhibit them.

Let me also once again thank you for taking time to address my ideas.

Dickson

**From Steve Reinhard to Dickson Preston****2 April 2013**

Hi Dickson,

Thank you for taking the time to draft such a detailed response. I really appreciate your interest in this and hope, going forward, we can address the issues. First, let me say that it was not clear from your first email that you were talking about “usage” exhibits. Rather, it appeared that you were lamenting that the rules seem to prohibit “modern” exhibits from getting a fair evaluation, which, as you must now understand, I am in disagreement with. Yes, “usage” exhibits do seem to fall outside the strict rules of any one class or division. Proper “usage” exhibits are really just a part of what has been come to be known as a “Traditional” exhibit. So the question then becomes “Where are the other parts?” The problem often is that the exhibitor is confused between what is “usage” and what is “postal history.” I have seen exhibit titles that include the term “usage” but are actually rate studies (Postal History) or have an actual postal history thread. CANEJ recognizes that there seems to be a growing trend to mix Postal History and Traditional in the same exhibit. It is often difficult for judges to determine whether an exhibit is Postal History (with some stamps) or Traditional (with a Postal History story). We have told judges that when in doubt they should just judge the exhibit using the UEEF and its categories. While I understand that you are opposed to the use of “points,” it would be a tremendous help when using the UEEF in these cases to actually point the exhibit. The points are the same for all FIP classes except Thematic and Youth. Perhaps it is time to add “usage” exhibits to those where the UEEF is used without regard to the strict rules of Traditional or Postal History??? A serious problem with some of the “usage” exhibits that I have seen is that the exhibitor thinks that just mounting all the wonderful “usages” that he has found for a particular issue makes for a great exhibit. The exhibitor will not score many Treatment “points” unless he comes up with a way to develop the exhibit from beginning to end. A “usage” exhibit is not a way to throw page after page of wonderful covers from a collection into the frames. Judges should be pointing this out to exhibitors when they come across this problem. I personally feel that there is a place for “usage” exhibits in our scheme of things. Please, not a separate class or division, though. Instead, let’s bring in points and use them in conjunction with the UEEF to truly make the judging of philatelic exhibits “uniform.” Best wishes, Steve.

**From Dickson Preston to Steve Reinhard****4 April 2013**

Hi, Steve,

Thanks for your detailed, thoughtful reply and for taking the time to dig into some of the issues involved.

Please remember that my main purpose in bringing these issues up was not related to the judging of certain kinds of exhibits but to my personal observation that WSP is losing exhibits and exhibitors because of issues relating to the current Manual of Philatelic Judging.

One area in which this is happening is what we who created them twenty years ago referred to as “rates and uses” or “issue” exhibits, of which Prexie exhibits and Transport exhibits are examples. Although the use of a single issue was often the scope, and frankings were important, the main informational and research elements which explain the material were the rates, routes, markings, and conditions of dispatch of the covers shown. That is why they were shown as postal history.

These exhibits were very successful for twenty years. They are not a new kind of exhibit and they were quite popular, but, for whatever reason, they were not considered when the new edition of the manual was created. Hence exhibitors of this group of exhibits are now left out in a kind of



philatelic wilderness and, as a natural result, the number of exhibits and exhibitors of this area is declining.

Is the loss of this group of exhibits a big deal for WSP? Perhaps, in the greater scheme of things, it does not matter so much. I am not writing to advocate any changes. It is really up to CANEJ to decide whether any of this is worth pursuing.

Dickson

**From Steve Reinhard to Dickson Preston**

**4 April 2013**

Dickson, One last thought! You mentioned your thoughts about writing articles on this topic for TPE. What would be very helpful for both “usage” exhibitors and judges alike would be an article that provides (1) ideas about how to organize such an exhibit to maximize “treatment” points and (2) what types of usages need to be included in a good exhibit of this material. Right now I doubt that there are many exhibitors or judges who truly understand what a “usage” exhibit is. Steve

**From Dickson Preston to Steve Reinhard**

**4 April 2013**

Hi, Steve,

Thanks for the additional thought. There are, as I see it, quite a few people who understand these kinds of exhibits very well, Steve Suffett, Jeff Shapiro, and myself, three WSP judges, Len Piskiewicz and Tony Wawrukiewicz, two distinguished philatelists, plus several exhibitors. But I expect you may be right that there is not anyone at the CANEJ level who has much experience creating or working with these kinds of exhibits.

Dickson

\* \* \* \*

***Postal Bulletin through 2012 Now Online***

by

Tony Wawrukiewicz

After over three years of concerted effort the entire *Postal Bulletin (PB)* of the United States exists as a fully searchable database. Every page of every issue from inception in 1880 to the last issue of 2012 has been scanned, OCR’ed and made fully searchable. The URL of the site is: <http://www.uspostalbulletins.com/>

For those who have not seen articles I have written on using the site, once you get to the site's home page, be sure to read the FAQ section (which explains in detail how to use the site) and browser information on the site that you need to follow if you are to have the site fully functional. Figure 2 shows the Browser information.

It may be of interest to readers to know that the *U.S. Postal Laws & Regulations* from 1794-1948 will exist as a similar fully searchable database by July of this year.

## 1940 Mail to Germany, Released 1946

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



Figure 1: Registered surface letter to Munich, held throughout the war and released in 1946.

The Tatham Stamp Company of Springfield, MA, in operation from the mid-1920s to the end of the Prexie Era, was a leader both in selling stamps and coins and promoting these hobbies. As an added bonus, the Tatham Company archives have provided postal historians with a wealth of material to collect and research.

In this example from the Tatham Archives, a registered letter was sent from Tatham in April 1940, ambiguously addressed to the "Munich Mint" in Munich, Germany. It is franked with two 10-cent Prexies, paying the 5 cents per ounce UPU surface rate plus 15 cents fee for international registration with maximum indemnity of US \$9.65.



Figure 2: Returned to sender "Unknown" 7 September 1946.

The Munich Mint was in fact the Bavarian Central Mint (*Bayerisches Hamptmunzamt*), founded in 1158. The Mint's forges were moved to larger quarters in 1809 to a former ducal stable, now known as the Old Mint Yard (*Alte Munze*). The building was extensively damaged during 71 British and American air raids on Munich carried out between 1940 and 1945.

The Tatham cover did not in fact reach Munich until after the end of World War II. Upon arrival by ship in England it was seized by British authorities and opened by Examiner 490 in London. Great Britain and Germany were at war at the time of the April 1940 posting, and examiners considered any registered mail to Germany as a possible source of financing for the Nazi Regime. Thus, it was subject to seizure, as was non-registered mail with contents to condemn.

The Tatham cover was ultimately released by postwar British officials and forwarded to the “Munich Mint” sometime in 1946. A label written in German was attached either by British censors at the Bonn censorship office or by German officials at the Railway Post Office at Cologne reminding the addressee that any reply to this correspondence had to conform to strict post-war regulations. The label reads, in full: “Detained mail released by censor. If a reply is to be sent, it must be in accordance with current regulations.” What these regulations might have been remains unclear. They may have referred to prohibition of any reference to the Third Reich.

The cover was eventually returned to Tatham in September 1946, marked “inconnu” or unknown.



Figure 3: Mail condemned at Bermuda, forwarded to UK for disposition and released in 1946.

The second example of mail with this post office advisory, shown here, illustrates mail condemned at Bermuda that was forwarded to England for disposition after the censor station's closure on 1 May 1944. The wavy line **RELEASED** marking was applied in England.

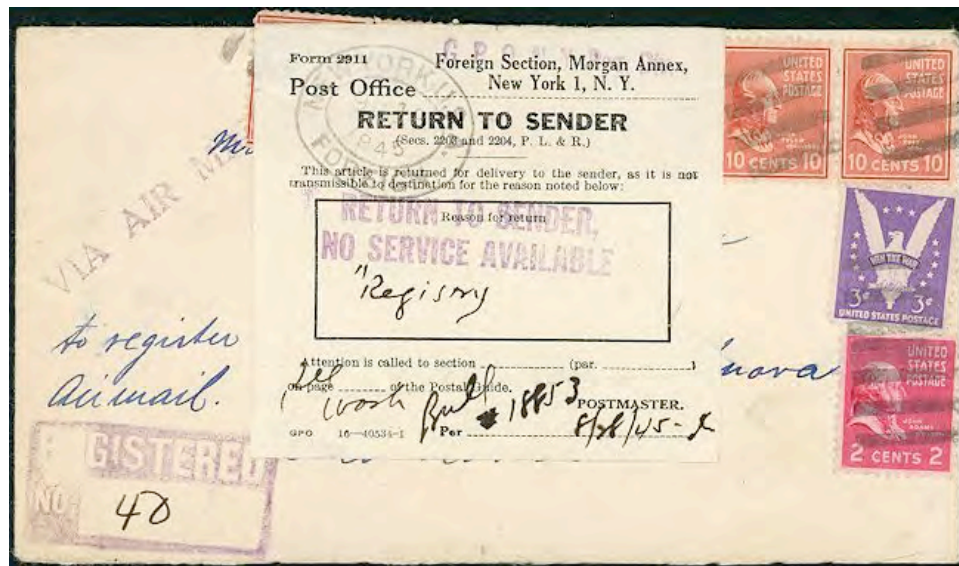
Although examples of mail with this particular post office advisory sticker are not frequently seen, considerable mail released to Germany in 1946 is known to have passed through the UK. One reference sites 80 bags of “Old Mail” being processed in June 1946 containing a significant amount of correspondence from Central and South America. Some of it was docketed upon arrival, indicating receipt in late August and early September 1946.

**Source:** Tony Brooks, “Detained Mail to Germany Released from Censorship in June 1946: More of the Story.” *Civil Censorship Study Group Bulletin*, 37:1(January 2010), pp. 21-26.

## Jumping the Gun to Czechoslovakia

by

Bob Hohertz



Resumption of postal service to European countries liberated in World War II began with nonillustrated post cards to Sicily and the south of Italy on 16 February 1944 and concluded with special delivery service to Germany on 4 August 1948. According to *Postal Bulletin* #18853 (August 28, 1945): “Effective at once letters not exceeding two ounces and post cards shall be accepted for dispatch by air or by surface means to destinations in Czechoslovakia.” The Bulletin went on to say, however: “Registration, special-delivery, money-order and parcel-post services are not available.”

Nevertheless, the cover shown here was sent by registered airmail to an inhabitant of the Upper Silesian town of Krnova on 17 September 1945. It is franked with six 10-cent Prexies, one 2-cent, and a 3-cent Win the War stamp, apparently over paying by fifteen cents. Of particular interest is that it was returned two days later marked “**RETURN TO SENDER, NO SERVICE AVAILABLE**,” with an added manuscript “registry” and a reference to “Bull # 18853.” We are accustomed to seeing Form 2911 indicating that mail could not be delivered, but not that, literally, a service could not be provided.

While the sender’s return address was Brooklyn, it was posted at Effort, Pennsylvania, where the postal clerk probably should have known to not accept registered mail in the first place. However, with services to individual countries expanding every few days, it’s difficult to fault anyone for not knowing that the sender was jumping the gun.

According to *Postal Bulletin* #18872 (November 2, 1945), all classes of service to Czechoslovakia were restored as of 29 October 1945.



## Los Angeles Cover to Bolivia Missent to Albania

by

Louis Fiset

The cover shown here first attracted my attention because of the Japanese ethnicity of the writer and the addressee's apparent location, in Albania. How many Japanese people could have been living or working in Italian-occupied Albania during World War II? Was the addressee a member of a diplomatic delegation? Hope that answers to these questions could possibly be "yes" blinded me to the real story, which was evident on the front of the cover all the time. This article summarizes the odyssey of this interesting item and provides a number of additional details philatelist Kiyoshi Kashiwagi revealed through his translation.



This airmail correspondence began its journey in Los Angeles on 22 July 1941. Addressed to Senor (*sic*) Ryotoku Higa at Potosi, "borivia (BORVIA)", a postal clerk, unable to read the address in the Japanese to the left or decipher the country as indicated, marked "(Albania)" in pencil as his best guess and sent it on its way. The letter reached the New York exchange office and was flown on the FAM-18 transatlantic route to Lisbon. Likely, Ala Littoria transported it from Lisbon to Rome. Despite an existing Ala Littoria air link with Albania's capitol, Tirana, the letter was nevertheless off loaded and sent north. The letter reached Gorizia, north of Trieste, on 8 Sept 1941 and entered Albania from the north, via Yugoslavia. Albania town receiving marks may be seen on the back side of the cover: Elbasan (13 Sept 1941); Korçe (15 Sept and 9 Oct 1941); and Berat (30 Oct 1941). Albanian postal authorities, ultimately unable to locate the addressee, marked the letter AL MITTENTE, which began its return to the U.S. At some point, either coming or going, Italian authorities censored the letter.

By the time the letter returned to New York, the U.S. had entered the war, with all international mail now subject to censorship. The letter was opened at the New York censor station and read by an examiner fluent in written Japanese. This is evident from the Japanese handwriting on the resealing tape, which does not duplicate exactly the text beneath. At this point the true "Potosi" address, in Japanese, must have been revealed. The examiner likely placed all contents in an ambulance envelope and returned it to the mail stream.



So, what became immediately evident to the Japanese language censor that was not clear to a casual viewer of this cover? Here's the other part of the story. On the back of the envelope three lines of Japanese manuscript writing may be found. The first line reads "16. 7. 21," indicating the date Showa 16 (1941), July, 21. The second line reads, *Heiyo Maru*; and the third, Katsuko Higa, writer and presumably the spouse of the addressee. Finally, the Japanese writing on the front of the cover indicates the true location of the addressee -- Potosi, Bolivia, South America.

The address, written in "plain English" before us, now makes perfect sense, for we see the Spanish language "Senor" and "Casilla" (post box), and the letters, "S A," straddling a 5-cent Prexie. And finally, the franking is 35 cents, the airmail rate to Bolivia in effect since 1 December 1937. What must have confused the original postal clerk was the phonetic spelling of the country, Bolivia, reflecting pronunciation by a writer unfamiliar with English and who may have had difficulty pronouncing "r"s and "l"s.

But there's more. On 26 July 1941 Japanese assets in the U.S. and Great Britain were frozen, leading almost 75 percent of Japan's foreign trade to a standstill. This fact brings the *Heiyo Maru* into play here. The N.Y.K. cargo-passenger vessel sailed from Yokohama reaching Los Angeles harbor, via San Francisco, on 19 July 1941. According to the *Los Angeles Times* it departed on 21 July at 3 pm for Valparaiso, via Manzanillo, Mexico. The ship carried a cargo of rayon destined for Mexico. Likely this was one of the last cargo laden Japanese ships to make the transpacific crossing until after the war.

The *Heiyo Maru*, which later served as a Japanese troop transport, was torpedoed near Truk on 17 January 1943 and sent to the bottom by the submarine, U.S.S. *Whale*.

And what about the diplomat, Ryotoku Higa? Not likely a consular employee, after all, but more likely an immigrant to landlocked Bolivia, whose wife was planning to join him after debarking *Heiyo Maru* at Valparaiso and venturing north by train to Potosi. The couple would be among the 600 or so aliens of Japanese ancestry living in Bolivia on the eve of World War II.

Fall 2013



Whole No. 63

# *The Prexie Era*

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Committee  
Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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## A Letter that Missed the Boat -- Twice

by

Lawrence Sherman

The last days of August 1939 were the worst of times for Americans mailing letters to Europe, but the best of times for later collectors of World War II postal history. There was fear of war, talk of war, and diplomatic and military actions that soon brought war. On August 21, the German foreign ministry announced the imminent conclusion of a Soviet-German non-aggression pact. In Moscow on the 24th, Foreign Ministers Molotov and von Ribbentrop signed the pact, which contained a secret protocol dividing central Europe between the two totalitarian regimes. Poland was about to be crushed. On the day the pact was signed, British diplomats in Berlin began burning secret papers while Adolf Hitler issued orders for his army to prepare its Polish invasion. On September 1 Germany struck. Two days later, Britain and France declared war on Germany.



In New York City, a mailer on the Upper West Side of Manhattan sent a surface letter to Berlin postmarked August 29. A 2-cent Adams Prexie and 3-cent Panama Canal commemorative paid the UPU rate. The intended Berlin address was neatly typed in black on the cover. At the upper left, also neatly typed—but in red, and doubly underlined in red as well—was “Via s.s. BREMEN!” Four inked lines crossed off these words. Why? *Bremen*, pride of Norddeutscher Lloyd, the German steamship line (it had won the Blue Riband for fastest transatlantic liner speed when it entered service in 1929), had been ordered home. On August 30 the liner hurriedly left Pier 86 in New York City without passengers or mail. She sailed not for her home port, Bremerhaven, but for Murmansk, Russia, to avoid British cruisers patrolling somewhere on the high seas.

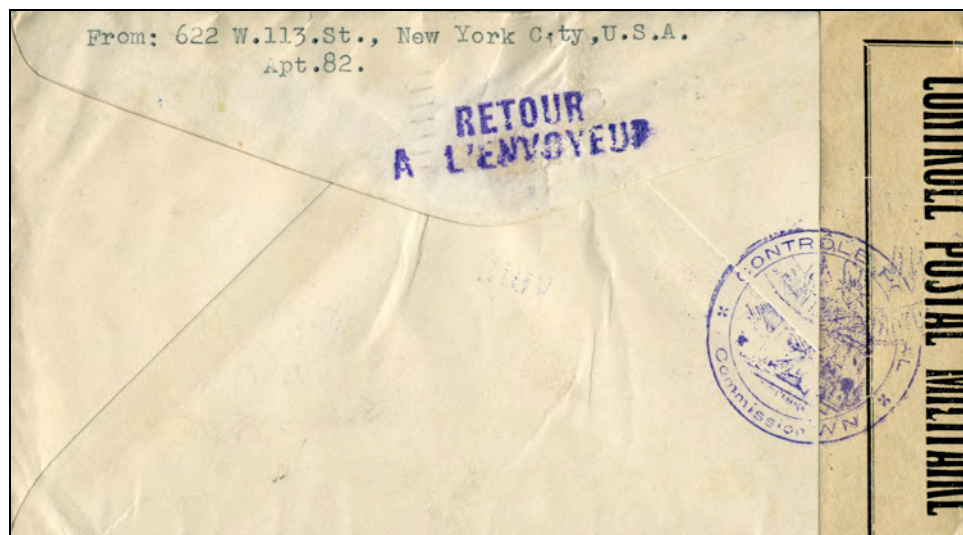
The mailer’s second choice of ship carriage—“Via s.s. *Normandie*!”—was neatly lettered in ink above the typed *Bremen* notation. National pride was at stake as swift transatlantic liners were developed in the twentieth century, and *Normandie* was the crown jewel of the French Line, Compagnie Générale Transatlantique. The ship claimed the prestigious Blue Riband transatlantic speed award upon entering service in 1935. On August 23, 1939, *Normandie* left Le Havre for New York City. She arrived on the 28th, was moored along Pier 88, and was scheduled to get



underway for return on the 30th. Fearing an encounter with German submarines, French authorities cancelled her departure that day. Booked passengers were transferred to Cunard-White Star's *Aquitania*, which left the evening of the 30th for Liverpool. *Normandie* was destined never to return to France.

Did *Aquitania* carry the letter? It is possible; the ship was often referred to as RMS (Royal Mail Ship) *Aquitania* for the large load of mail it carried on its transatlantic route. But there is no evidence the letter arrived at a British port or incurred English censorship, although *Aquitania* arrived a few days after the invasion of Poland.

In which ship, then, did the letter travel to Europe? Most likely, the carrier was a ship of the American Export Line (AEL), the largest U.S.-flag shipping company operating cargo services between the United States East Coast and Mediterranean ports from 1919 to 1977. AEL's four transatlantic vessels offered regularly scheduled passenger and cargo (including mail) service between New York and Lisbon and Mediterranean sites including Gibraltar, Marseille, and Genoa. Steamships *Excalibur*, *Exeter*, *Excambion*, and *Exochordia* were the quartet of alliteratively named ships of the Export Line. The Berlin-addressed cover likely traveled on one of these four ships, was removed (along with all Germany-bound mailbags) at Marseille when it arrived after September 1, and handed over to *Controle Postal Militaire*.



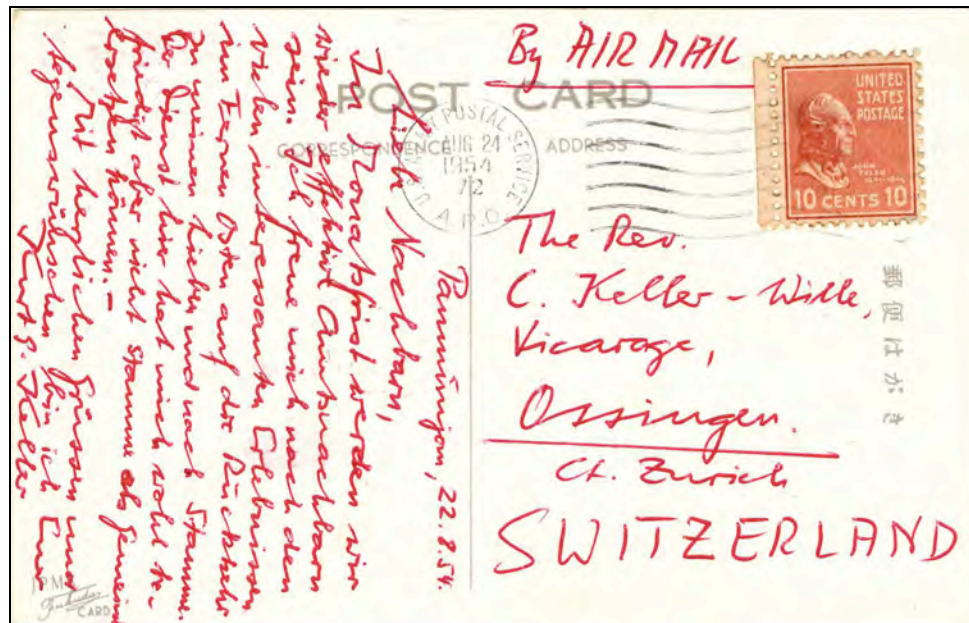
Opened by a military censor at Narbonne (WL452) and resealed, the cover was also handstamped on its front, "**VOIR AU DOS**" ("See back"), and on its back, "**RETOUR/A L'ENVOYEUR**," plus a circular cachet censorship handstamp, **CONTROLE POSTAL/COMMISSION WN**. [Ed. note: Michael Deery, in his book on "Return to Sender" devices lists 18 covers to Germany with the "**RETOUR**" device applied, 12 of which also have the "**VOIR AU DOS**" directive on the front. These devices have been reported in use on covers postmarked from July 29 through November 8, 1939.]

Finally, the letter was returned to the writer in the neutral United States just as it had traveled to Europe, on an unknown ship that likely had never been considered for the Blue Riband Award.

## A Postcard from Korea

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



A 10-cent Prexie paid the international airmail post card rate (in effect June 1954 thru June 1961) on this picture post card mailed to Switzerland by the Army Postal Service in August 1954.

Even though the card was mailed from Asia, regulations allowed mail sent from APOs anywhere in the world to be franked as if mailed in the United States.

Beginning in June 1950, two years of back and forth exchange of battle-won territory on the Korean Peninsula stalemated around the 38th Parallel. Starting in July 1951 armistice negotiations dragged on, between the Democratic Peoples Republic (North Korea) and its allies, China and Russia, and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) supported by the United States and the United Nations.

With a compromise offered by India accepted, an armistice was signed in July 1954, resulting in a demilitarized zone established that same month along the 38th Parallel. The Neutral Supervisory Commission, composed of members of the Swiss and Swedish Armies, was established at the same time to monitor reparation activities between the combatant nations.

This post card was mailed by a member of the newly created Neutral Supervisory Commission at Chunchon, Korea (APO 72) located northeast of Seoul. He was writing to a family member in Switzerland.

While the armistice remains in effect today, a formal peace treaty has never been signed.

### 5-cent Airmail Rate within Australia Only

by

Louis Fiset

The 70-cent transpacific airmail rate to Australia via Honolulu and Auckland went into effect on July 12, 1940, significantly reducing the transit time to that country from the West Coast of the United States. This rate included dispatch by airmail within Australia, as well. However, postal patrons retained the option of paying for transpacific carriage by ship and airmail within Australia. The cover shown here, from Hawaii to New Guinea, provides one such example.



Postmarked Honolulu April 18, 1941, the 15 cents franking on this one-ounce letter, paid the 5-cents per one ounce UPU rate plus 10 cents for twice the 5-cent per half-ounce airmail rate within Australia only. Airmail beyond Australia to New Guinea was covered by the within-Australia rate. Although the cover is interesting for paying a rate not commonly seen after the advent of transpacific airmail service, its real story may be found in the details.

The letter was addressed to a Mr. R.D. Winne at Bulolo, New Guinea, via Salamaua. A search on the *Ancestry* database reveals that Ralla D. Winne was an American mining engineer known to have worked in Belgian Congo and Angola as early as 1921. Twenty years later he was working as a civilian in a gold mining region in the mountains of New Guinea, near Bulolo, 150 air miles north of the country's capital, Port Moresby.

Transported by ship from Honolulu to Sydney, this cover was off loaded then censored by Australia censors at the Sydney field station. The resealing tape partially covers a manuscript directive, "Airmail via Sydney, Australia only." W.R. Carpenter Airlines then flew the letter from Sydney to Salamaua, via Cooktown, Australia and Port Moresby. It was then flown to Bulolo by a Carpenter subsidiary, Mandated Airlines. A Bulolo receiver, dated 30 May 41, may be found on the back.

By this time the addressee had departed New Guinea to return to his home in Adrian, Michigan. So, the letter began to retrace its steps. A Salamaua receiver, dated 21 Aug 1941, shows the letter having passed through on its way back by air to Port Moresby and Sydney. From Sydney the letter began its slow, sea going journey to the U.S. mainland, eventually arriving at Adrian by rail some time in November 1941.

The letter, however, had not yet completed its journey, for a second forwarding address may be seen, “Army Navy Club Manila, P.I.” The cover received an Adrian, Mich., November 12, 1941 postmark, less than a month prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor. It was awaiting transpacific passage by ship from the west coast to the Philippines when the U.S. entered World War II. This explains the **RETURN TO SENDER/SERVICE SUSPENDED** marking.

The letter subsequently made its way back to Honolulu where it was docketed on May 26, 1942. Alas, the writer was now gone, as indicated by the penciled forwarding address to Los Angeles. Its journey likely ended on the mainland some time in June or July 1942, after more than 14 months in transit – and 15 cents postage paid.

Interestingly, this is one of the few pieces of post-December 7, 1941 mail I have seen passing through Honolulu that does not bear Honolulu censorship markings. Since the correspondence originated in April 1941, eight months before the country entered the war, its contents, if intercepted, likely would have provided little useful information to U.S. censors or the enemy.



R.D. Winne, ca. 1941

\* \* \* \*

## Two Oversize Postcards

by

Bob Hohertz

When post cards were authorized in 1898 limits were put on the sizes permitted to be mailed at rates less than those for first class letters. The sizes for domestic mailings often were different from those permitted by UPU standards, which was the case from July 1, 1928 until August 1, 1958. During this period the U.S. post card maximum size was 3 9/16” by 5 9/16” while the UPU standard was 4 1/4” x 6”.

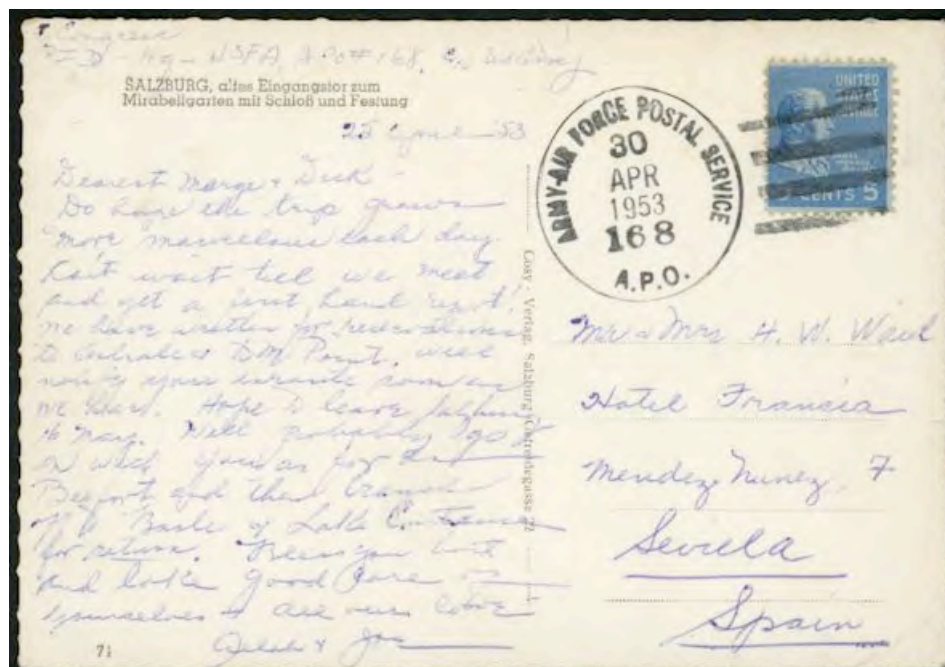
The two postcards discussed here are European size – 4 1/4” x 6”. The first was mailed in 1941 with one-and-one-half cents postage for some unknown reason, since a normal-sized postcard would have gone for one cent. The size difference was noticed by the post office, perhaps due to the odd franking, and the card was rated one-and-one-half cents due to bring the postage to the first class letter rate of three cents.





The second card was mailed in 1953 from A.P.O. 168, Salzburg, Austria to Seville, Spain. The APO would have been operating under domestic postal rules, so the card was deemed to have been oversize and the full international surface rate of five cents was charged.

So far, so good, but postcards and letters to the countries in the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain (PUAS) could be sent at reduced rates until November 1, 1953, roughly five months after this card was mailed. The PUAS postcard rate was two cents, but this oversized card required letter postage. The sender could have saved two cents by paying the 3-cent PUAS letter rate instead of the 5-cent UPU letter rate that he did pay.



## A Small Tragedy of War

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



Six 10-cent Prexies paid twice the 30 cents per half-ounce airmail rate to Europe (in effect May 1939 -- October 1946) on this December 1, 1941 business correspondence from New York City to Berlin. While the letter was in transit, Germany declared war against the U.S. The cover was seized at the Bermuda censor station and returned to the sender after an eight month delay.

RADIOGRAMA			
CORPORACION			
INALAMBRICA			
CUBANA			
OFICINA PRINCIPAL:			
EDIFICIO "LA METROPOLITANA" - SAN JUAN DE DIOS 111 - TELÉF. M-9826 - M-9827 - M-9828 - M-9829			
ESTE MENSAJE SERA ENVIADO RAPIDO A MENOS QUE SE INDICARE LO CONTRARIO.	CLAVE (CDE)	CHECK	NUMERO
	DIFERIDO (LC)		INALAMBRICA
	CARTAS RADIO (RLT)		HORA
	MENSAJES A BARCOS		
LEGACION CUBA		HABANA:	
<p>11018 VISE PASAPORTE O DOCUMENTOS IDENTIDAD CUBANA POR LO          ELSE (ELSA) WOLFF Y GERHARD (IRUDE) WOLFF NATURALES ALEMANIA          PUNTO REQUISITOS LEGALES JOBO COMPLETOS INMIGRACION 2512          PUNTO AVISABLES DIRECCION TREISINGERSTR 8 BERLIN-SCHOENBERG          ALEMANIA PUNTO * * * * *</p>			
TRANSMISOR:		CORTINA	
L. R. MIRANDA		MINISTRO ESTADO	
SUBSECRETARIO DE		COPIA	
NOMBRE Y DIRECCION DEL REMITENTE (QUE NO SE TRANSMITE)		TELEFONO	

While the cover provides an interesting example of early World War II postal history, the envelope contains an example of a small tragedy of war. Addressed to two Jewish women in Berlin, the enclosure is a copy of an exit visa allowing the women (sisters?) to emigrate from Germany to Cuba, via Lisbon. Unfortunately, the documents never arrived at its destination. It may be surmised that by the end of January 1942 the women joined 10,000 other Jewish Berliners deported to the ghettos of Eastern Europe, including Lodz, Poland and Riga, Latvia. These ghettos were eventually emptied and their occupants sent to Nazi death camps. If not then, by the end of April 1943 the remaining 80,000 Jewish Berliners had been transported directly to extermination camps throughout Nazi-occupied Europe.

\* \* \* \*

### Patience is a Virtue

by

Dickson Preston  
dicksonp@uw.edu

1 October 1946 saw a major revision of U.S. domestic airmail rates, including reductions in all domestic rates. Postage for airmail letters and postcards sent within the U.S. (also to Canada and Mexico) was reduced from the wartime airmail rate of 8 cents to 5 cents per ounce. This airmail rate was the only one of the "temporary" increases implemented in 1944 to support the war effort, which was actually rescinded. In addition the separate, higher airmail rates to and from U.S. possessions were replaced by the new domestic airmail rate of 5 cents per ounce. As well as being higher, the old possession rates had been calculated per half ounce.



Figure 1. Airmail within the U.S., 30 September 1946.

One month later, on 1 November, the hodge-podge of separate airmail rates for different countries was replaced by composite rates, which divided the world into three zones, 10 cents for airmail to the Americas, 15 cents for airmail to Europe and North Africa, and 25 cents for airmail to the rest of the world.



Shown here are two letters sent by non-opportunists who managed to pay the old higher domestic rates on the last possible day. Figure 1 shows a letter paying the old 8-cent rate for airmail within the U.S. on 30 September 1946. The USPOD had issued a stamped envelope for the new airmail rate on 25 September 1946, six days before the 5-cent rate came into effect (Scott UC14). In order to use the new envelope to pay the old rate, Lt. Snodgrass added a 3-cent Prexie to uprate the envelope. This is a most unusual procedure, since, in most cases, senders add postage to uprate old stamped envelopes to new, higher postage rates.



Figure 2. Airmail to Hawaii, 30 September 1946.

The sender of the letter in Figure 2 paid a steeper price for not waiting one day for the new rate. He or she paid 15 cents per half ounce for airmail to Hawaii on 30 September. On the next day the same service would have cost 5 cents.

If anyone can show an airmail letter sent to a foreign destination paying an old international airmail rate on 30 October 1946, the author would be delighted to see it.

\* \* \* \*

### Constant Variety on 50-Cent Taft Discovered!



A constant variety on the 50-cent Taft definitive was reported at the 2013 SESCO meeting this past October. An illustration is provided here. Discovery of multiple copies and speculation on why they took more than a half century to appear created quite a stir at the awards banquet. Collectors should be on the lookout for additional examples. Please report new findings to your tablemates at the next awards banquet you attend.



Winter 2014



Whole No. 64

# *The Prexie Era*

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Committee  
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## Editor's Note

### 2014 Subscriptions Payable Now

The Fall 2013 issue was the last in the quartet of *The Prexie Era* for 2013. This means it is time for readers to renew your subscriptions for the upcoming year. Rates for 2014 remain the same as for last year: \$5 for the electronic version, \$10 for the color “snail-mail” version. 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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P.O. Box 3211  
Fayetteville, MA 01745-0211

\* \* \* \*

### Mail Service to/from the Philippines Prior to and at the Beginning of World War II

by

Albert “Chip” Briggs

Trans-Pacific airmail service to the Philippine Islands began on November 22, 1935. Announced in Postal Bulletin #16794 (November 1, 1935), the first west-bound trip was to leave San Francisco on November 28<sup>th</sup> with intermediate stops at Honolulu, Wake Island, and Guam. The postage rate was 75 cents per half-ounce. The first east-bound flight was scheduled to depart from Manila on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The inauguration of the new Trans-Pacific mail service was quite an event, and a crowd estimated at 125,000 people lined the shore in San Francisco to watch the departure. This route was designated Foreign Air Mail Route 14, or FAM-14. On April 21, 1937 the rate was reduced to 50 cents per half-ounce, which remained in effect until 1946.

Trans-Pacific clipper mail service proved reliable. The volumes of mail transported increased significantly once the war in Europe began. Covers such as the ones shown in Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the 50-cent rate to and from the Philippines prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor.



Figure 1: All-coil pairs pay the half-ounce airmail rate to the Philippine Islands in 1939.

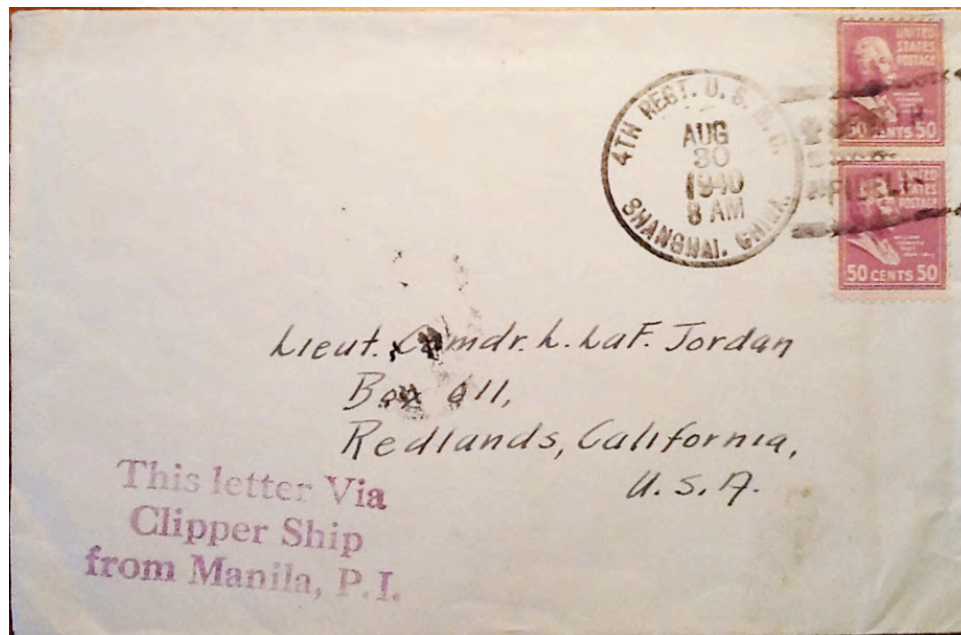


Figure 2: Two 50-cent Taft stamps pay double the airmail rate for a one-ounce letter initially mailed by surface means from a U. S. Marine in Shanghai, China and sent airmail from Manila to the United States.

Interrupted mail on the last pre-war flight of the *Anzac Clipper* has been previously shown in this newsletter. A newly discovered cover, also on this last flight that departed San Francisco December 6, 1941, has recently come to light. The cover, illustrated in Figure 3, is franked with two 25-cent McKinley stamps and originated in Auburn, New York on December 2, 1941. The interesting aspects of this cover are not only that it was on this last pre-war flight, but also contains the original letter as well as a previously unrecorded censor slip.

The eight-page letter, focusing primarily on hometown memories and fears of war, refers to a \$5.00 enclosed gift. The passage describing the monetary gift may be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 5 shows the censor slip enclosed by Honolulu censorship. Printed on blue paper, it refers to the uncertainty of mail movements in the Pacific area and specifically to the money enclosed, stating in part, “. . . this letter with its monetary enclosure is returned in order to protect your funds.” The enclosure slip is signed in type: **INFORMATION CONTROL BRANCH**. To the author's knowledge no other examples of this censor slip have been reported.



Figure 3: From Auburn, New York to the Philippines carried on the last pre-war flight of Anzac Clipper.

I am sending you and Ad  
a check this year for your Christ-  
mas gift, as I have not been  
able to do any shopping yet. Then  
later Barbara will send you  
her Senior Photograph which she  
thot you would like to have.  
Hope you can use this \$5.00  
to buy something you really  
need.

Figure 4: Detail from the eight-page letter referring to a Christmas gift of an enclosed \$5 check.



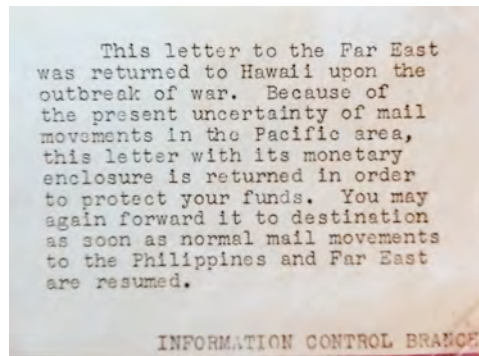


Figure 5: INFORMATION CONTROL BRANCH censor slip.

Mail bound from the Philippines to the continental United States is also found interrupted or re-routed. Figure 6 shows a cover postmarked on December 5, 1941 from a sailor aboard the USS *Houston*, stationed at Manila,. The sender, Walter Gillespie Winslow LT JG was captured when the *Houston* was sunk in the Battle of the Java Sea in February 1942. He survived the war and was liberated in 1945.

The cover, unable to make the Trans-Pacific crossing due to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, had to be routed via Asia, Africa, and across the Atlantic to its ultimate destination at Washington, D.C. The rate for this route was 70 cents per half-ounce. 20 cents in postage due stamps was added in Washington to make up this rate.

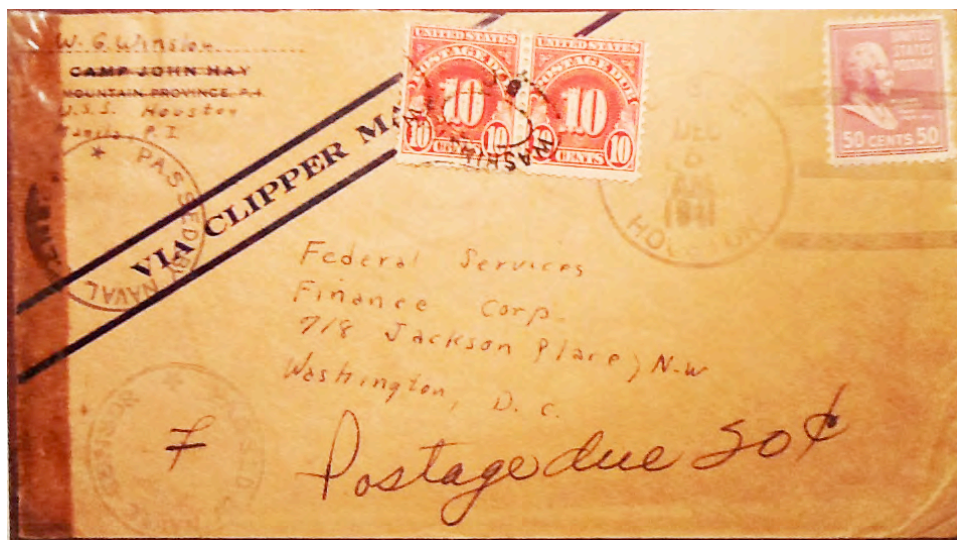


Figure 6: A re-routed airmail letter from Manila to Washington, D.C., requiring additional postage.

Figure 7 shows a cover mailed from DePere, Wisconsin on January 12, 1942 to Private Reginald D. Evraets. Private Evraets was assigned to Coast Artillery, stationed on Corregidor, where the mail was addressed. With the surrender of Allied Forces by General Wainwright, Evraets was taken prisoner and held by his Japanese captors at Military Prison Camp #1, Cabanatuan. Uncertain of his fate, the soldier's family was unaware of his capture until they received a telegram from the War Department in February 1943. Another letter, from the Red Cross in 1945, confirmed his liberation. Private Evraets was freed from Cabanatuan by Army Rangers, a story depicted in the Hollywood film *The Great Raid*.

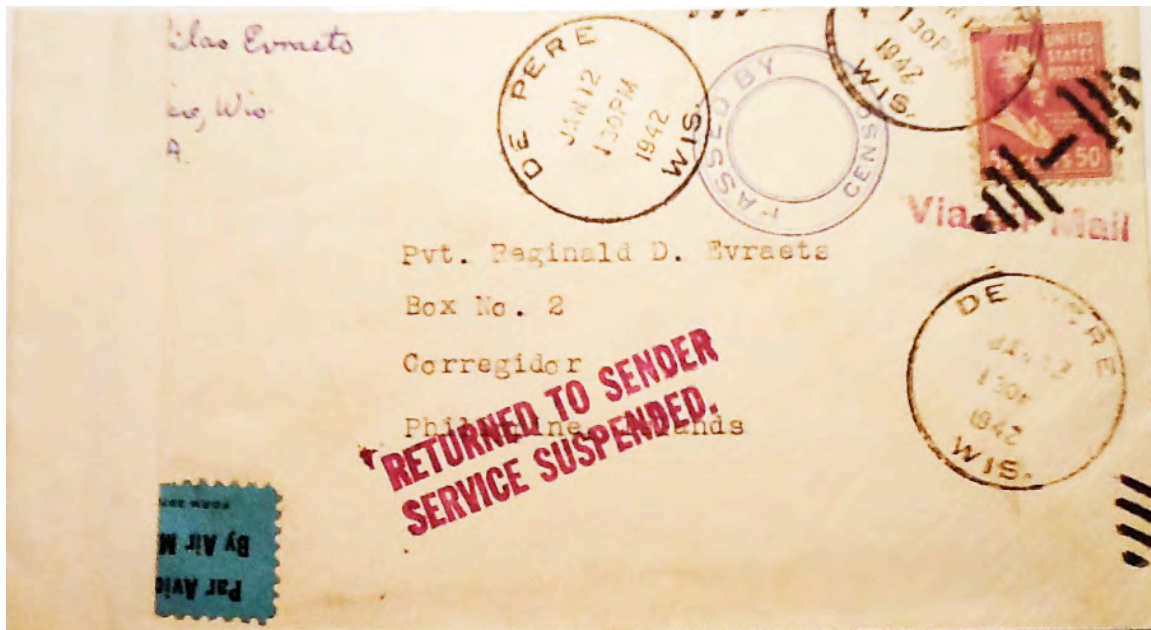


Figure 7: Airmail letter to an Army private taken captive at Corregidor and interned in the Philippines. He was later liberated and survived the war.

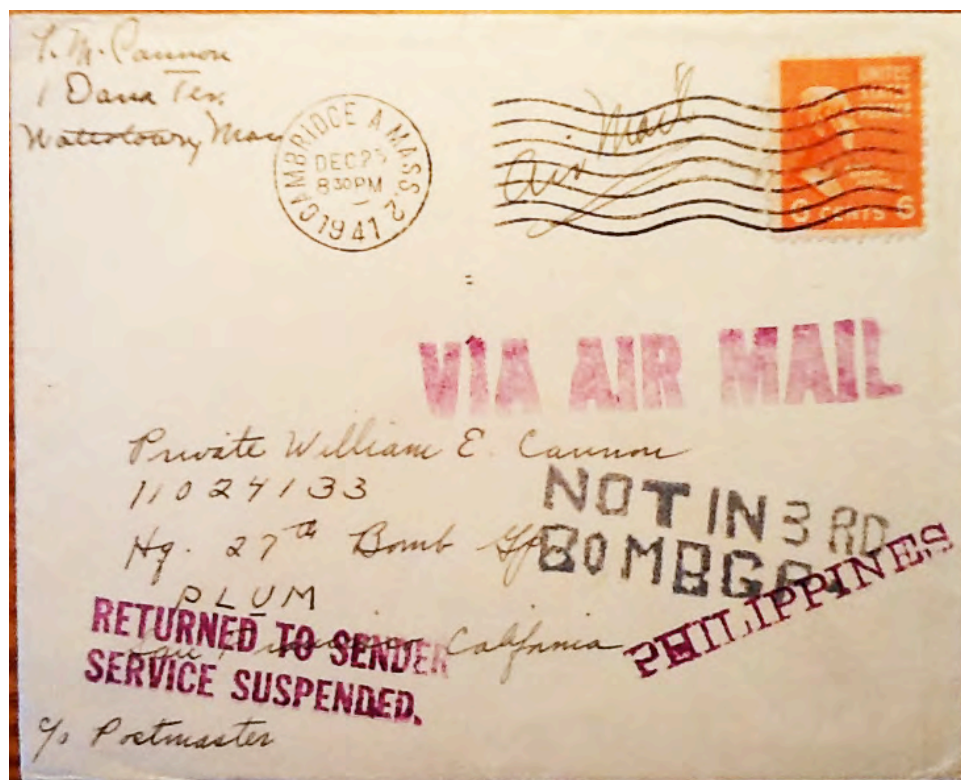


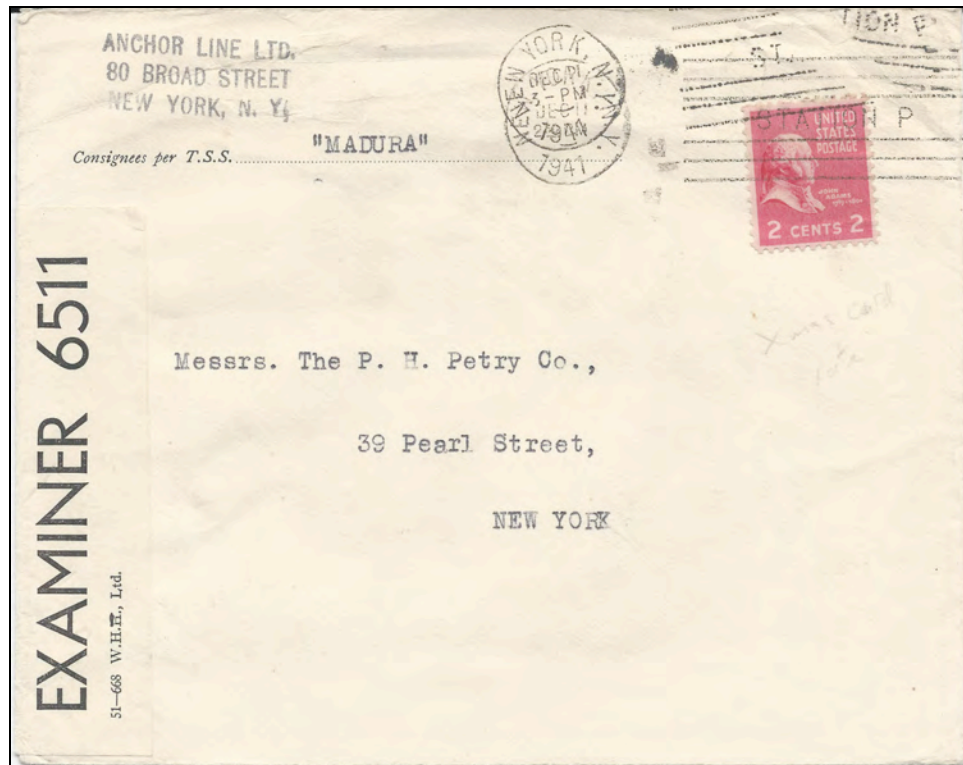
Figure 8: Christmas card sent to an undercover address (PLUM) for troops destined for the Philippines.

Another unusual example of interrupted airmail service intended for the Philippines may be seen in Figure 8. This Christmas card, addressed to Private William Cannon, was postmarked December 23, 1942. The address contains the designation: PLUM, c/o Postmaster, San Francisco, California. This address was used for mail sent to troops heading to strengthen existing forces in the Philippines. Its use was intended to help maintain secrecy with the intention that soldiers could inform their families and friends of their location 45 days after departure. With the initial military defeats in the Pacific these troops were returned to the states, and mail sent to the PLUM destination was also returned.

### A Censored Local Letter

by

Robert Schlesinger



The cover shown here, which likely contained business correspondence, illustrates the common 2-cent per ounce first class, local letter rate (in effect July 1, 1885 to March 26, 1944), but is more interesting having been censored in England. The sender is Anchor Line, Ltd., a Glasgow shipping line with offices in New York, which provided passenger service between the United Kingdom and New York. The addressee is a freight hauling business headquartered in New York.

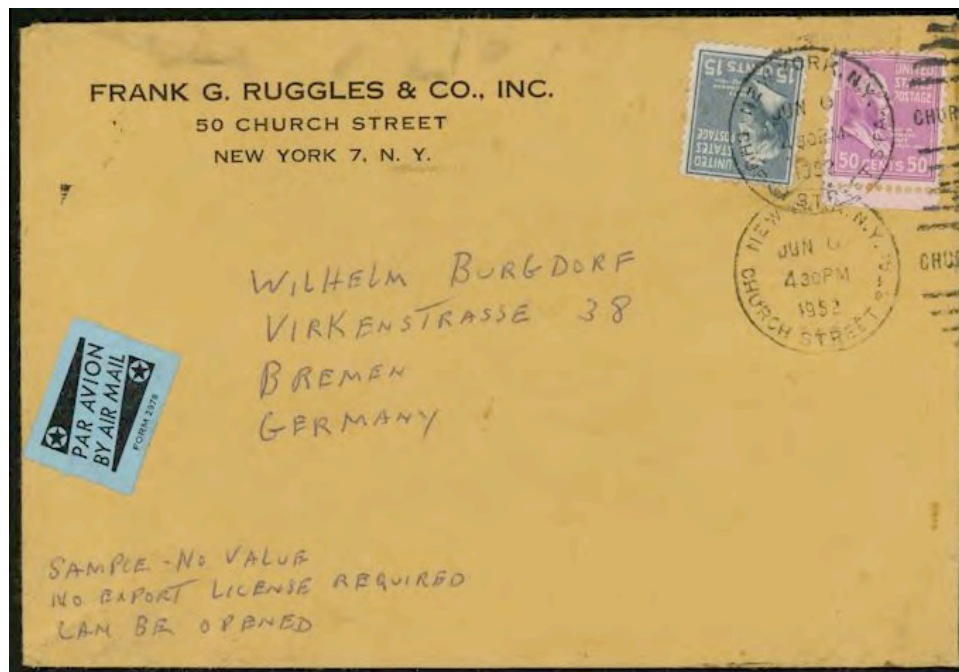
It appears the un-posted correspondence was handed over to British censorship, examined, then placed aboard TSS *Madura* sailing westbound to New York. The ship may have called at Bermuda, but censors there, having seen the prior censorship, would have placed it on board the next ship bound for New York. The U.S. was now at war, but because U.S. censorship had not yet been established, on December 11, 1941 the correspondence went directly into the mail stream, for delivery that day or the next.



## An Unusual Rate

by

Bob Hohertz



The cover illustrated here was sent by air to Germany in 1952. A note from the sender says that it contained a sample of no value, and it was sent at the special rate for small packets, samples of merchandise and commercial papers lumped under the category of “other articles.”

The rates beginning on May 1, 1949 were specific to a country, and were not available to all countries. The rate to West Germany (*PB* 19224, April 19, 1949) was forty-three cents up to and including the first two ounces, and twenty-two cents for each additional two ounces. The items sent apparently weighed between two and four ounces for a total postage of sixty-five cents. The cover conforms to the requirement that a blue Par Avion/By Air Mail label be affixed and the classification of the mail plainly marked.

What might have been in the envelope? Frank G. Ruggles & Company, Inc. apparently dealt in asbestos products. Chances are some carcinogenic item was enclosed.

**AIR-MAIL SERVICE FOR REGULAR-MAIL ARTICLES OTHER THAN LETTERS AND POST CARDS TO CERTAIN COUNTRIES**

Effective May 1, 1949, a new feature will be inaugurated in the international air-mail service, providing for articles in the Postal Union (regular) mails other than letters, letter packages, and post cards to be accepted for air dispatch to the countries named in the table below at the postage rates indicated.

Commercial papers, printed matter, samples of merchandise, and small packets (to countries which accept them) will be sent by air if paid at the rates shown below. The articles must bear the blue “Par Avion/By Air Mail” label and be plainly marked “Commercial Papers,” “Printed Matter,” etc., to designate their classification in the mails. They must not be sealed, and must comply in other respects with the provisions applicable to such articles in the surface mails, as set forth in sections 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9 of the July 1948 Postal Guide, Part II.



**\$2 and \$5 Prexie Census Revived**

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



A recent conversation by the Philatelic Group of Boston turned to the rarity of some twentieth century postal history items, including the rumored existence of a solo franking of the \$5 Prexie. Guy Dillaway, a nationally recognized philatelic judge, exhibitor, and secret Prexie collector mentioned he had acquired such a cover and later provided me with the scan shown here.

Dickson Preston and I came up with the following "best case scenario" rate explanation for this damaged, forwarded, and returned November 17, 1938 \$5 First Day Cover:

Three ounces --- six times the 70¢ per half ounce Trans-Pacific airmail rate to Java (in effect April 1937 - December 1941) plus 15¢ for international registration with a 65¢ overpayment --- Or, if a 3.5 ounce letter it would have been 5¢ underpaid!

Receiving marks give an idea of the cover's travels. Receiving a first day cancel by the POD in Washington, D.C. on November 17, 1938, the cover received domestic airmail service to San Francisco then onward via Trans-Pacific Clipper to Hong Kong. There the letter would have been handed over to KLM for air transport to Java. The cover was returned by surface routes to the sender in Philadelphia and received five weeks later, on January 27, 1939.

Note: The Scott US Specialty Catalog shows a total of 15,615 First Day Covers serviced for the \$5 Coolidge Presidential issue --- A small number but still impressive as \$5 in 1938 Depression-Era dollars equal \$84 in today's buying power.

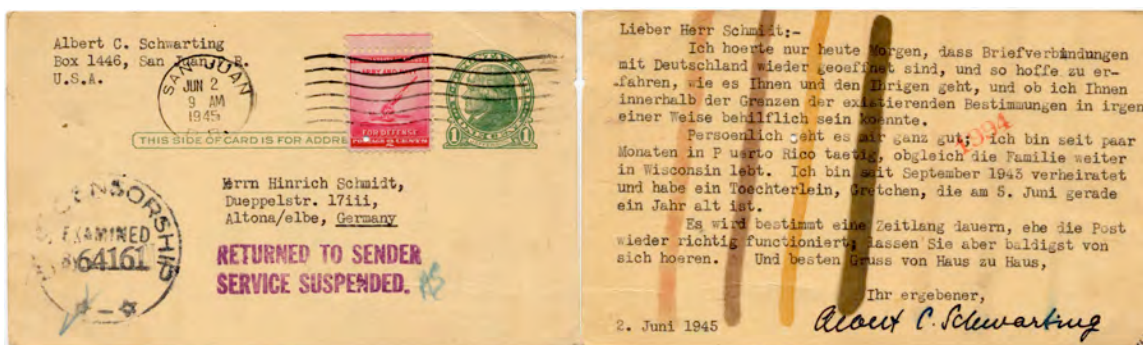
While some collectors may consider this example a philatelically contrived cover, it nevertheless provides a nice usage to an exotic destination. This begs the need to re-open the never-completed and almost forgotten census of \$2 and \$5 Prexie frankings initiated by members of the Prexie Era Committee a few years ago. Please check your collections for covers (not tags) and send scans of them to me at: [coverlover@gmail.com](mailto:coverlover@gmail.com) Covers need not be solo franks.

## Chemical Censorship

by

Louis Fiset

Resumption of mail service to Europe began on February 16, 1944 with non-illustrated postal cards to southern provinces in Italy and ended with special delivery service to Germany on August 4, 1948. Postal patrons attempting to reconnect with family, friends, and business acquaintances throughout that four year period were often frustrated by fast changing regulations that were poorly communicated by postal workers. The postal card illustrated here reveals some of that confusion. It also reveals the existence of chemical censorship by the U.S. Office of Censorship, rarely seen on outbound mail originating in the U.S.



The postal card is postmarked June 2, 1945 at San Juan, Puerto Rico. It was censored at the San Juan censor field office and returned to the sender. By June 1945 postal service had resumed, in part, to many of the overrun countries, including Italy, France, The Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, and others. However, other countries, such as Albania, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Germany, still awaited any form of mail service. All attempts to communicate with these countries resulted in mail being returned.

Postal relations with Germany resumed on April 2, 1946 when non-illustrated postal cards were permitted. This was 14 months after the postal card shown here was postmarked. The erroneous message on the back reads in part, "I heard only this morning that communication with Germany has once again resumed . . ."

Of interest to collectors of censored mail are the eight vertical streaks appearing on the message side of the card. Censors at New York and San Juan employed chemicals to detect secret writing with invisible inks applied with improvised quills. Urine, lemon juice, vinegar, and other liquids could be applied and later made visible by heating or dipping in chemicals. Each streak shown on the card represents a separate reagent used to identify a different invisible ink.

Chemical censorship applied by U.S. censors is rarely seen. Usually, the sender or addressee was on a "watch list" of individuals or businesses whose mail was to be closely scrutinized. Mail containing invisible inks was condemned and forwarded to specialists at the field station for final disposition. Such mail likely has never found its way into collectors' hands.



# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

No. 65 Spring 2014

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
fiset@uw.edu

## Presidential-Era Committee Convention at ARIPEX 2015

by Dickson Preston



The Prexie-Era Committee will hold its first formal convention at ARIPEX 2105. We will be a convening society at the show under the name “The Presidential-Era Committee of the United States Stamp Society.” The convention, which has already received an official nod from both the ARIPEX Show Committee and the USSS will include exhibits, presentations, a general meeting, and opportunities to socialize with like-minded philatelists.

ARIPEX 2015 will be held at the Mesa Convention Center in Mesa, AZ on February 20 to 22, 2015. The show hotel, which is adjacent to the show, will be the Phoenix Marriott Hotel Mesa, which will offer special rates for ARIPEX attendees. Please see the ARIPEX website ([aripex.org](http://aripex.org)) for further information about the show venue and the hotel.

ARIPEX 2015 will be an excellent opportunity to exhibit Prexie-era stamps and covers, including exhibits of traditional material, postal history, airmail, revenues, illustrated

mail, and other subjects. Three of the five members of the jury are specialists in Prexie-era material. ARIPEX is reserving a minimum of fifty frames for our convention, although

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we are hoping for an even larger turnout. The prospectus and entry form are available at the ARIPEX website ([aripex.org](http://aripex.org)).

The show will offer presentations on Prexie-era topics. If you would like to do a presentation, please contact Jeffrey Shapiro at [coverlover@gmail.com](mailto:coverlover@gmail.com). The Presidential-Era Committee will also offer a special award for the best exhibit of Prexie-era material. The specifics of

this award are still being worked out and will be announced in a later issue of this publication.

Although eight months away, the idea of having the Prexie Era Committee's first formal convention has already generated much enthusiasm. We hope the membership will enjoy this opportunity to join their fellow specialists for three days of philately and fellowship in the warm sunshine of mid-February Arizona.

## Scarce Prexie Usage at A Japanese American Relocation Center

by Louis Fiset



At first glance, the cover illustrated here looks pretty ordinary. However, it has a number of hidden attributes of interest to Prexie-era collectors and students of World War II.

First, the letter originated in one of the ten War Relocation Authority centers that incarcerated U.S. citizens of Japanese ancestry and their alien elders. The Manzanar camp, located in the Owens Valley of eastern California, opened in March 1942 and closed in November 1945. Each center had a branch post office to serve the needs of the inmates. Los Angeles was the parent post office of the Manzanar branch.

The Prexie franking, under most circumstances, would be common. Six cents pays the one-ounce domestic airmail rate. What makes this franking

special is that Prexies on mail originating in the relocation centers are uncommon. In fact, although I have been collecting relocation mail for more than 30 years, this is the first cover I have seen from any of the centers bearing the 2-cent value.

The parent post offices decided what stamps would be sent out to their branches except when special requests came in from collectors seeking new issue commemoratives. The vast majority of outgoing mail consisted of ordinary 3-cent letters. The Win the War adhesive, issued July 4, 1942, shortly after the centers came into being, served as the postage workhorse throughout the war, at the expense of the 3-cent Jefferson stamp. High value Prexies are rarely seen except on registered mail, which, itself was uncommon.



At Manzanar, one would expect to see a lot of 2-cent frankings. Although the parent post office was more than 200 miles away, postal patrons enjoyed the 2-cent local rate on mail to Los Angeles. Unfortunately for Prexie collectors, however, all such frankings I have encountered are from the Defense Issue.

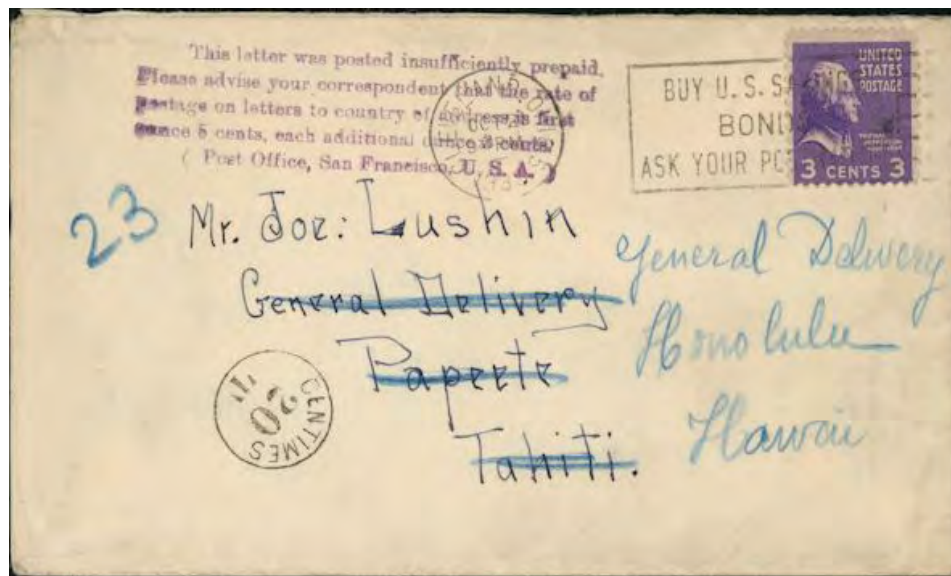
This cover also reveals historical facts of interest. The letter was addressed to a Japanese American in Denver, in care of a family that also appears to be of Japanese ethnicity. The letter was then

forwarded to a hospital in Wisconsin. By this time in the War, almost 50 percent of the inmates in the centers had left camp for resettlement away from the West Coast in communities that would accept Japanese American migrants there, many attended colleges and universities or found employment opportunities. The addressee may have been a nursing student in Denver and was now working in a hospital.

All but one relocation center closed by December 1945, and along with them the branch post offices.

## To Charge Postage Due or Not to Charge Postage Due

by Bob Hohertz



The illustrated cover raises an interesting question. Sent from Cleveland, Ohio to Tahiti in 1939, it was unquestionably underpaid by two cents and received a 20 centimes due marking as well as a detailed handstamp explanation. It reads: "This letter was posted insufficiently prepaid. Please advise your correspondent that the rate of postage on letters to country of address is first ounce 5 cents, each additional ounce 3 cents (Post Office, San Francisco, U.S.A.)"

By the time the letter reached Tahiti, the addressee, Mr. Lushin, had moved on to

Honolulu. Once forwarded there, the postage was sufficient, or at least would have been if the letter had been addressed there in the first place. The letter apparently was not returned to sender nor held for postage.

So, should the postage due have been collected? As the addressee was no longer where the Tahiti post office could collect it before delivery, would the Honolulu post office have done so? Could it have been worth the postage to send the difference to Tahiti? I suspect it was delivered without any further action. But then, we are talking about the post office . . . .

## \$2/\$5 Census Revival

by Prexie Census Committee



In the last newsletter Jeffrey Shapiro announced the revival of the census of \$2 and \$5 Prexie frankings, a project that had remained dormant for some time. Here is an illustration of one of the covers that has been reported.

The \$3 postage affixed pays the 3.5-ounce (40¢ x 7) airmail rate to Chile plus 20¢ registration fee. The letter, postmarked 21 February 1945, was sent by the Chilean Consulate in Los Angeles to Chile's Foreign Ministry, in Santiago. The letter transited Miami on 23 and 24 February and was received on 28 February. Numerous manuscript and printed numbers may be routing numbers within the Foreign Minister's office.

During World War II postal regulations prohibited airmail correspondence exceeding two ounces in weight except to countries in the Western Hemisphere. This cover nicely illustrates the exception.

Another interesting aspect of this cover is the violet, small-box censor marking found just to the right of the address line. Diplomatic correspondence between agencies was considered privileged mail by the U.S. Office of Censorship and thus remained free of examination by its censors.

This marking, which reads **PASSED BY/U.S. CENSOR**, was applied at the Los Angeles field station, as indicated by the censor's identification number (2516). This marking alerted other censors, at Miami and elsewhere, that the item had been reviewed by censorship and allowed to pass unopened. Such markings helped expedite the dispatch of privileged international mail.

Please check your collections for covers bearing \$2 and \$5 frankings (not tags) and send scans to Jeffrey Shapiro at [coverlover@gmail.com](mailto:coverlover@gmail.com). Letters need not be solo frankings.

## Letter to A Hometown Hero

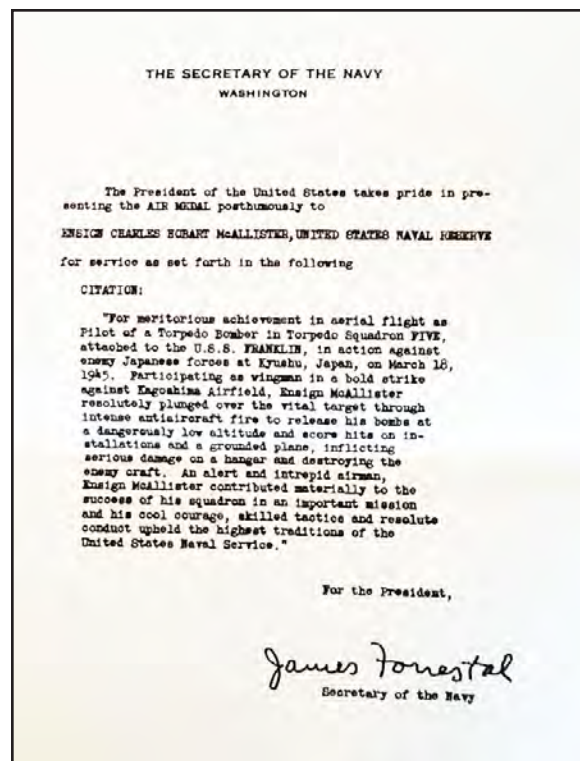
by Albert "Chip" Briggs Jr.



V-Mail was a widely utilized means of communicating with servicemen during the Second World War. Occasionally, one can run across V-Mail that has not been processed or returned to sender for some reason. Such is the case with the cover illustrated above. This cover is addressed to Ensign C. H. McAllister United States Naval Reserve, C/O Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, California. The return address is S. O. McAllister, 505 Washington Ave., Vinton, Va. The mailing was postmarked May 1, 1945, near the end of the war. The cover bears a boxed handstamp reading **Returned to Sender, Unclaimed By F.P.O. Directory Service, Wash. D.C.**

Unbeknownst to the family member sending the mail, Ensign McAllister had been killed in action on March 18, 1945. Piloting a torpedo bomber in Torpedo Squadron FIVE attached to the aircraft carrier U.S.S. *Franklin*, he was killed in a raid against Kagoshima Airfield. Credited with inflicting serious damage on a hangar and destroying a enemy aircraft on the

ground, he was posthumously awarded the AIR MEDAL. Below may be seen a citation from Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal.





## 30-Cent Transports to Mauritius

by Joe Bock



The cover shown here is a March 1944 usage of the 30-cent Transport stamp to Mauritius, an island located in the North Indian Ocean east of Madagascar. Mauritius was a British Crown Colony since the early 1800s.

Of special interest here is P.O. Box 1000, an underecover address for a Jewish internment camp. This address was established to receive all camp mail and provided a return address for outgoing mail.

The camp was set up by British authorities for would-be illegal immigrants to Palestine. In September 1940 a contingent of approximately 3,500 Jewish emigrants from Poland, Danzig, and Austria sailed in several ships bound for Haifa, Palestine from Europe, via Crete and Cyprus. Due to crowded refugee camps in Palestine, most were not permitted to disembark.

In December 1940 about 1,500 were sent to Port Louis, Mauritius via the Suez Canal and Red Sea. These desperate refugees were initially confined under harsh conditions. Eventually, camp conditions improved. The inmates

built synagogues and made improvements to housing. Most remained in the camp until late 1945 when they were finally permitted to leave for Palestine.

The 60-cent airmail rate to Mauritius, established on 1 July 1939 for trans-Atlantic dispatch to Marseille and onward from France to Madagascar, ended with the fall of France in June 1940. From 2 December 1941 the 60-cent rate paid for trans-Atlantic service to Leopoldville and onward by air to South Africa. From there the letter likely reached Mauritius by ship. Unfortunately, there is no backstamp to confirm this.

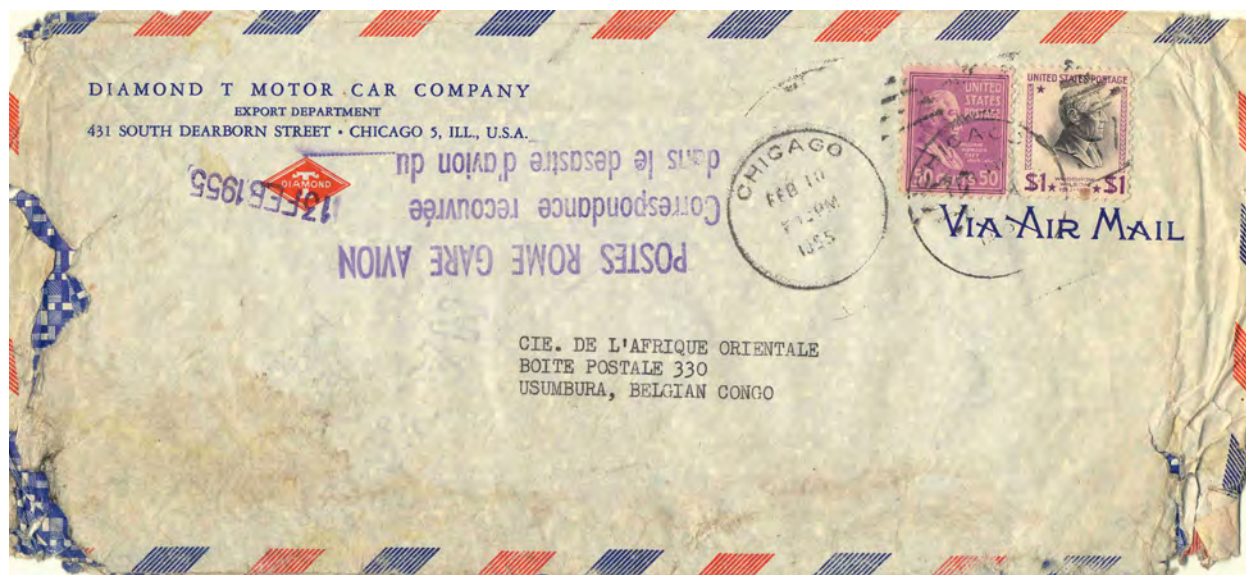
This cover bears evidence of having been censored three times. It was first examined at New York (8411), then by British censors at Mauritius (EE/8). Finally, the letter was passed by one of four censors at the Mauritius camp (B 4), as evidenced by the distinctive triangle censor marking.

Incoming mail from the U.S. to the Mauritius internment camp is relatively scarce compared to outgoing mail.



## 1955 Crash Cover to Belgian Congo

by Jeffrey Shapiro



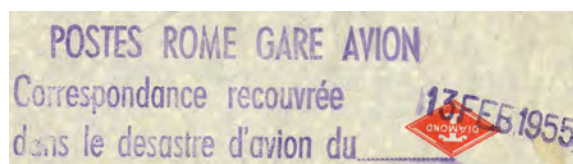
The combination of single 50-cent and \$1 Prexie stamps prepaid six times the 25 cents per half-ounce uniform airmail rate to Africa, (in effect October 1946 thru June 1971) on this ill-fated February 10, 1955 cover. It was mailed by Chicago's Diamond T Motor Car Company (truck manufacturer) and addressed to Usumbura, Belgian Congo (actually located in the Belgian colony of Ruanda-Urundi). In 1959, this city of 350,000 became the capitol of the independent Republic of Burundi.

As part of it's journey to Africa, the cover was carried aboard a February 13, 1955 SABENA (Société Anonyme Belge de la Navigation Aérienne, or Belgian Corporation for Air Navigation Services) flight from Brussels to Rome.

Fifty miles from Rome's Ciampino Airport, the Douglas DC 6's navigational system failed, and the plane crashed into the side of 7,750 foot Monte Termanillo, killing all twenty-two passengers on board, including the 19 year old aspiring actress and former Miss Italia,

Marcella Marian. The crew of seven also perished.

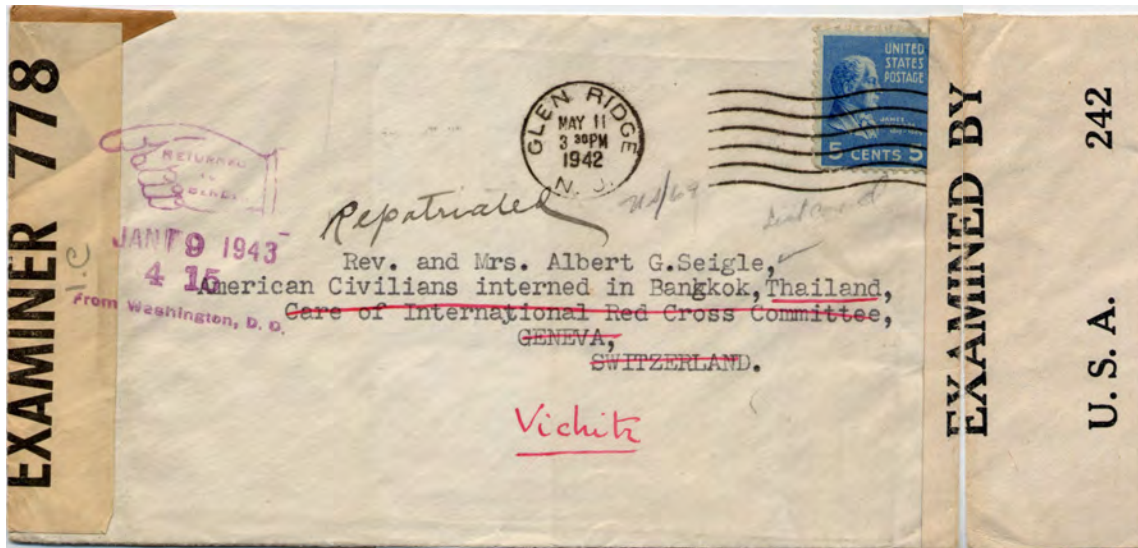
Heavy blowing snow prevented searchers from reaching the crash site for three days. One bag of mail, containing this cover, was eventually retrieved by Italian postal authorities who, after examining and marking the cover, sent it on its way on February 13, 1955. The cover finally reached its destination on March 17, 1955.



Author's Note: In 2009, A Judge at the Minnesota Stamp Expo advised me that in order to improve my exhibit's medal level, I needed to replace the "ratty" covers, pointing specifically to this cover. The Judge seemed genuinely surprised that this cover was a survivor of a terrible disaster. I therefore concluded I need to show less "ratty" examples of "interrupted" mail in my exhibit.)

## MS *Gripsholm* Repatriates

by Louis Fiset



In World War II more than 8,000 Western civilians were held in territory controlled by Japan, the vast majority of them U.S. citizens desperate to return home. They included diplomatic personnel, businessmen, newspaper correspondents, missionaries, and other noncombatants. Approximately 3,000 repatriates returned to New York on two voyages of the mercy ship, MS *Gripsholm*. Diplomatic attempts to complete additional voyages designed to rescue the remaining 5,000 continued throughout the war, but were not successful.

I have always believed the addressees on the cover illustrated here returned to the U.S. on the first voyage of the *Gripsholm*, but only recently have I been able to confirm it, thanks to the Ancestry database (ancestry.com), that now provides the passenger lists of all incoming voyages of the ship, both during the war and in peace time.

The letter to Rev. and Mrs. Albert G. Seigle was postmarked 11 May 1942, prior to the release of names of repatriates due to return aboard the Swedish mercy ship. With postage affixed for

dispatch by surface means, it was addressed to the IRC at Geneva with the directive the couple was interned in Thailand. It remains unclear whether the letter, censored at Bermuda (778), ever reached its IRC Geneva destination. This part of the address has been lined out in red, with a notation of unknown significance added, “Vichitz.” The letter was examined at the POW Unit (242) of the New York censor station some time after September 10, 1942 when the unit was moved from Chicago. From there the letter was forwarded to Washington, D.C., presumably the State Department.

In manuscript are the words “Repatriated,” “US/69,” and “List card.” These notations help establish the couple was indeed repatriated. On 29 June 1941, 69 civilian internees from Bangkok boarded the Thai passenger ship, SS *Valaya* when it sailed to meet the Japanese exchange ship, *Asama Maru*, at Saigon on 3 July. All were believed to be carrying U.S. passports. Two of the fortunate 69 were the Seigle couple, who, with 1,500 other repatriates now aboard *Asama Maru*, reached Lourenco Marques, Mozambique on 22 July. MS *Gripsholm* arrived two days earlier and was

awaiting the exchange of its 1,500 Japanese repatriates for westerners arriving on the Japanese vessel.

The 52 year old Rev. Seigle, graduate of the San Francisco Theological Seminary, and his 47 year old wife, Jeanette, a graduate in education, were sent to Siam in 1919 to perform missionary work among the Cantonese speaking Chinese in Bangkok. They were sponsored by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church. Prior to World War II they saw the opening of several churches and founded a school in the Bangkok area. Following an alliance pact between Thailand and Japan in December 1941, the missionaries were held by the Japanese pending repatriation.

As seen by the pointed finger **RETURNED TO**

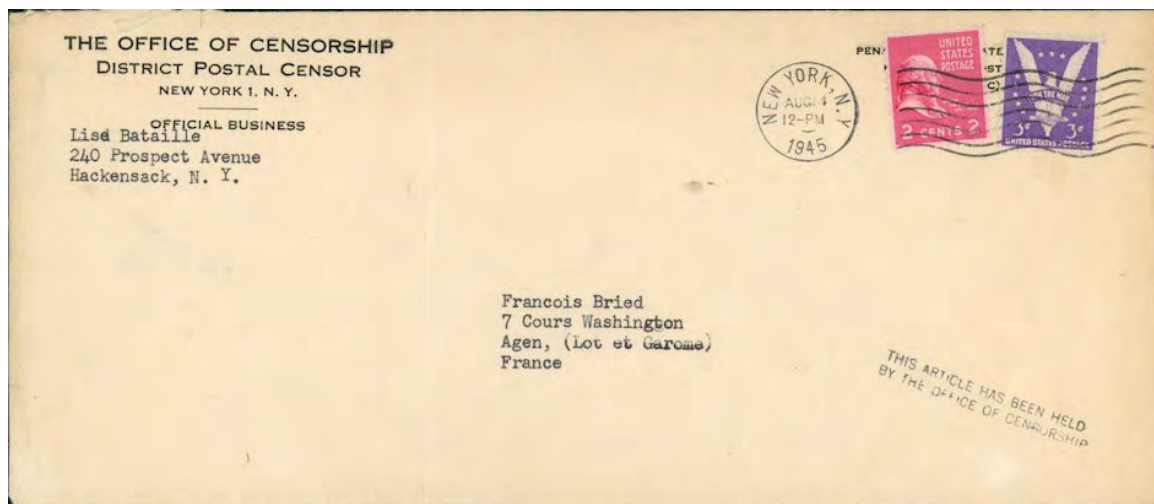
**SENDER** auxiliary marking, the letter never reached the Seigle couple. It was returned to the writer on 9 January 1943, from Washington, D.C. The writer, from the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Bloomfield, New Jersey, noted in pencil its return to him on 11 January.

The Seigles, meanwhile, had returned to New York harbor on 25 August 1942 and were likely at home in Santa Cruz, California while the letter was still in transit.

After the war Albert and Jeanette returned to Thailand to continue their missionary work, but eventually returned to California for their retirement years. The Reverend died in California on 26 December 1968.

## Nobody Immune to Censorship

by Bob Hohertz



The censor marking on the lower right of this late World War II cover is ironic, to say the least, when one notices the printed return address.

Agen is in the south of France. Postal service to France was resumed "on a rolling basis" beginning 5 September 1944, but by 2 July 1945 a letter not exceeding two ounces

could have been sent anywhere throughout the country. Business communications were limited to ascertainment of facts and exchange of information, which is the only restriction likely to have applied to this communication. Anything more, such as money, could only have been sent on or after 17 August. The envelope is postmarked 4 August, 11 days before the end of censorship.



# Air Mail to Africa after Italy Entered World War II

by Robert Schlesinger



Prior to World War II and until Italy entered the war in June 1940, the cost of a half-ounce letter to Tanganyika sent by domestic airmail, trans-Atlantic dispatch by ship, and onward by air from Europe, was 23 cents (5¢ UPU + 3¢ domestic airmail surcharge + 15¢ airmail surcharge from Europe). While this is the rate paid on the cover illustrated here, it is, in fact, underpaid by 5 cents. Note the 1941 postmark.

Italy's involvement resulted in closure of Mediterranean airspace, requiring rerouting of airmail to Tanganyika and elsewhere via trans-Pacific routes, and at higher rates of 85 cents and, eventually, \$1.10. On 1 November 1940 a new airmail surcharge of 20 cents per half ounce came into effect, from Cape Town. This was in addition to the 5-cent UPU rate paying the surface rate from New York to South Africa. This cover went by domestic air from

Minneapolis to New York, by ship to South Africa (where it was censored), and by air to Tanganyika. The correct rate was 28 cents (5¢ UPU + 3¢ domestic airmail surcharge + 20¢



airmail surcharge from Cape Town). Thus, the franking was 5 cents deficient. Apparently no one noticed, as this rate was seldom used.

After a transit time of 51 days to Kinyangiri, the addressee was no longer at this location. So, on 4 August 1941 the letter began its long, return journey to the U.S.

Tanganyika Territory-----	85¢ 20¢ per ¼ oz. in addi- tion to ordi- nary post- age.	Tue-----	20 days from San Francisco. By steamship from New York to Capetown (about 29 days), thence by air mail (about 3 days).	"Via Pacific." "From Capetown."
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Supplement to the Postal Bulletin of 1 November 1940





No. 66 Summer 2014

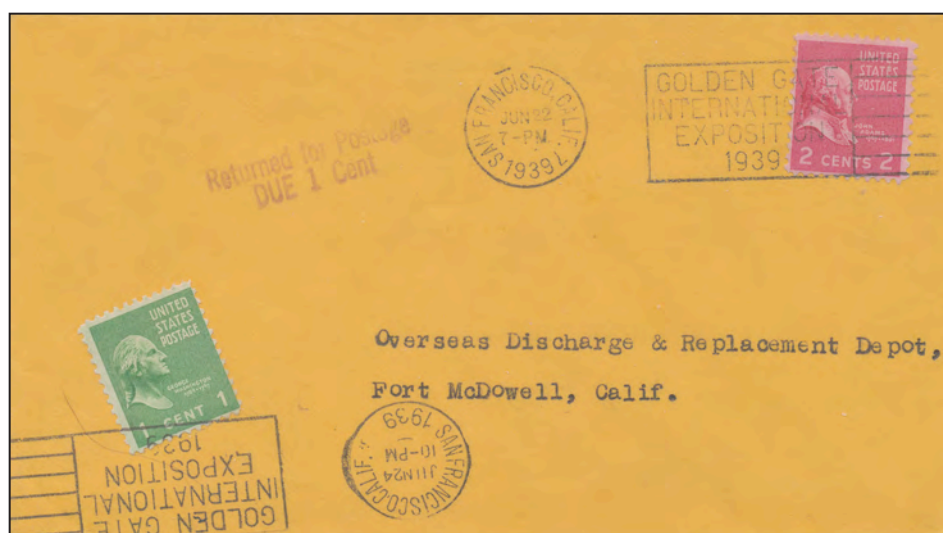
# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
fiset@uw.edu

## Unmailable and Undeliverable Prexie Mail

by Tony Wawrukiewicz



*Figure 1*

The major area of interest I now have is the process by which U.S. domestic first-class surface unmailable and undeliverable mail was returned. All six items shown in this article reflect one of these two processes and all cards and covers are franked with Presidential series stamps.

The first cover, *Figure 1*, is an unmailable, June 22, 1939 letter from San Francisco to Ft. McDowell, CA. It was franked with the 2¢ Prexie stamp, and thus short paid 1¢ the 3¢ for up to one ounce domestic, surface letter rate of the time. It was 'Returned for Postage / DUE 1 CENT.' The letter was returned for this postage due (there was a return address on the envelope's reverse), and the writer paid the due

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postage with a 1¢ Prexie (interestingly, canceled with a June 24 San Francisco machine cancel) and the letter was then correctly remailed to the addressee.

Before I discuss the post card in *Figure 2*, I need to present some references. These references are from 1902 *Postal Laws and Regulations*, but the references and the conclusions drawn from them continued to be published in subsequent *PL&Rs*, including those of 1932, 1940, and 1948 (those relevant to Prexie postal history).

Section 571, paragraph 2 of the 1902 *PL&R* stated: "If any unpaid or insufficiently paid letter or other matter bear the card or the address of the sender, or he be known to or can be conveniently ascertained by the postmaster, and is within the delivery of the office, the letter or package will at once be returned to him for proper postage."

This was followed by paragraph 3: "Where the sender of any unpaid or insufficiently paid letter or other matter is not known or can not be conveniently ascertained, such matter will, on receipt thereof, be indorsed "HELD FOR POSTAGE," the addressee notified by the next mail, by an official card (Form 1543) or otherwise, of such detention and the amount of postage required and requested to remit the same."

Paragraph 2 of the 1902 *PL&R* is uncertain as to whether postal cards and post cards are included, referring to "letter or other matter" and "letter or package." But Paragraph 3 is less specific and refers to "any unpaid or insufficiently paid letter or other matter." More importantly, large numbers of surviving "Held for Postage" post cards in succeeding years indicate that post cards were indeed included in these somewhat nonspecific regulations.

Also, note in paragraph 2 that we read: "If any unpaid or insufficiently paid letter or other

matter bear the card or the address of the sender, or he be known to or can be conveniently ascertained by the postmaster, and is within the delivery of the office, the letter or package will at once be returned to him for proper postage." This comment is especially important for post cards because more often than not they have no return address. So, if a post card is short paid and has no return address it can only be returned for postage if: "... he ... or can be conveniently ascertained by the postmaster, and is within the delivery of the office ...."

With all this in mind, let's now look at the post card in *Figure 2*. This Oct. 7, 1953 card was mailed unpaid from Bowling Green, KY and was thus unmailable. At this time the post card rate was 2¢. The card was first 'Returned for Postage' 'POSTAGE DUE 2 CENTS,' and since there is no return address on the card, the postmaster must have known the writer in some other manner. When the writer didn't come up with the 2¢ due, or simultaneous with the postmaster requesting the 2¢ due from the writer, the addressee paid the 2¢ due with the 2¢ Prexie ('THIS IS THE MAIL / FOR WHICH YOU SENT POSTAGE'), and the card was remailed to the addressee on October 14. A remarkable set of circumstances.

The May 11, 1954 Burlington, Vermont letter in *Figure 3* was first franked at the 3¢ per up to one ounce domestic, surface letter rate with a 3¢ United Nations stamp. This stamp could only pay postage at the United Nations post office in New York City. Therefore the letter was unpaid, unmailable, and 'Returned for Postage' 'Postage due 3 cents.' The writer paid the correct postage with a 3¢ Prexie, and the letter was remailed to the addressee on May 14.

The 1953 post card with a return address in *Figure 4* was mailed after the rate change of January 1, 1952 (2¢ domestic first-class post card rate now in effect), but franked with only one copy of the 1¢ Prexie. The card was noted

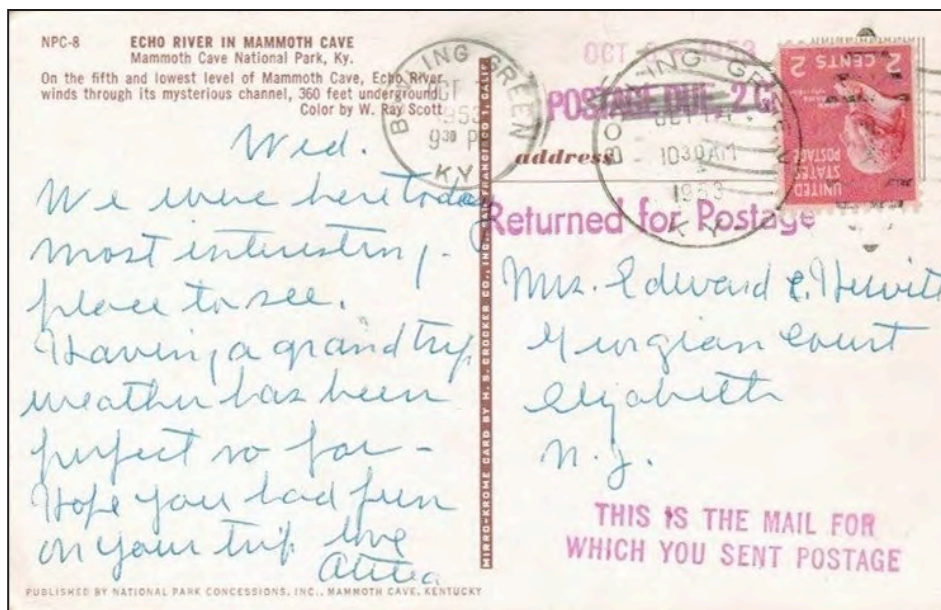


Figure 2

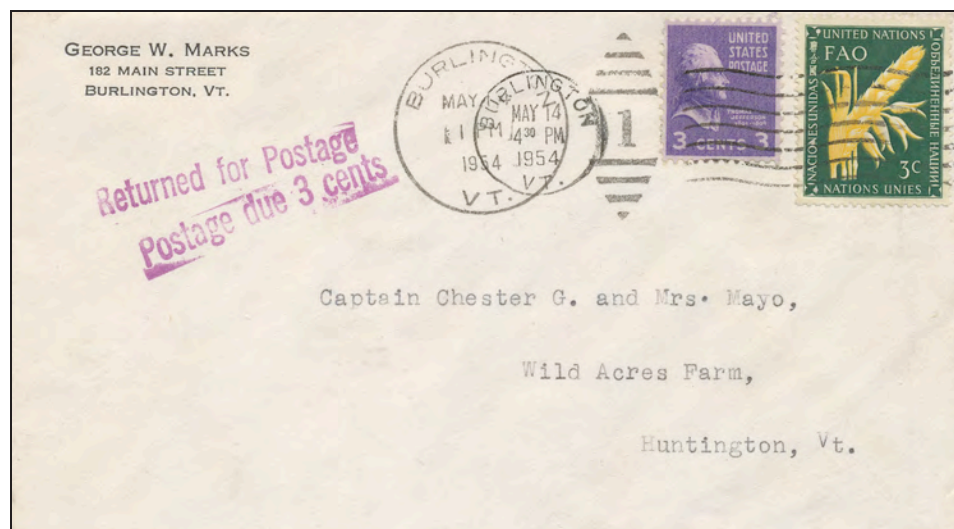


Figure 3

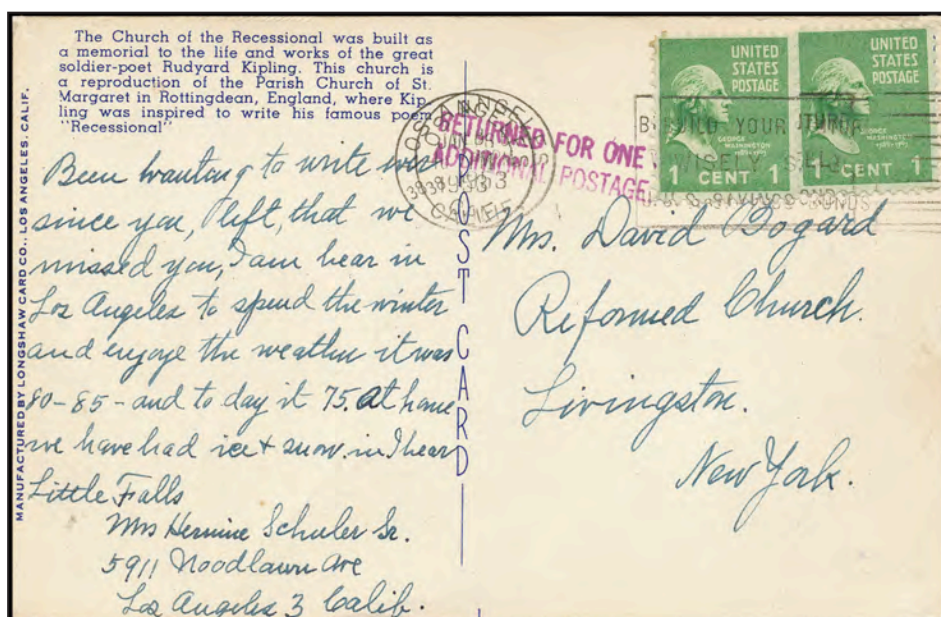


Figure 4



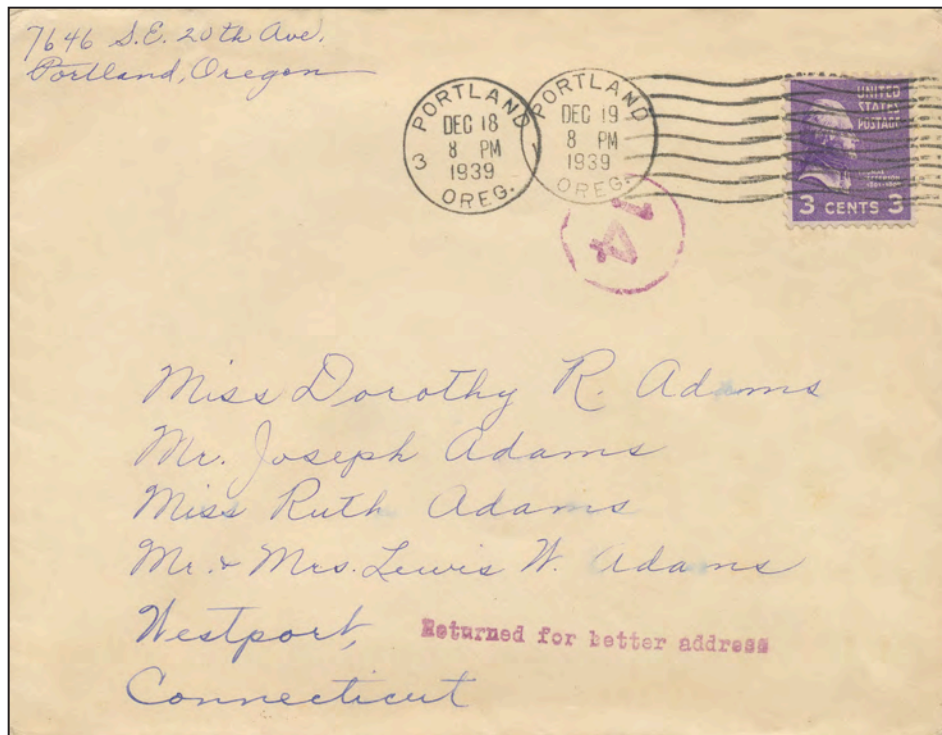


Figure 5

to be short-paid 1¢ at the mailing office, was thus unmailable, and was 'RETURNED FOR ONE CENT ADDITIONAL POSTAGE' from the sender. After the 1¢ Prexie was placed on the post card, it was remailed on to the addressee fully paid.

The next item, shown in *Figure 5*, was also unmailable. This December 18, 1939 Portland, OR letter was noted by mailing office to be misdirected (no city or state given in address). It was thus unmailable and 'Returned for better address.' The address was then corrected by the writer with the addition of "Westport, Connecticut." After this uncommonly seen address correction was made, the letter was remailed, correctly, on December 19, without additional postage.

The final item is an example of how undeliverable post and postal cards were handled after 1924, and in particular after 1940. As of the 1924 *PL&R* this important announcement, in Section 611, was made:

"Unpaid, misdirected, unmailable, and

unclaimed domestic postal cards and post cards deposited for local delivery shall be returned to the sender, without additional postage, when they bear his return address in the upper left corner of the address side. Single postal cards and post cards, and double post cards not having postage prepaid on the reply portion, when mailed

for other than local delivery, shall be returned to the sender only when they bear his return card in the upper left corner of the address side, together with a pledge to pay return postage. Such cards bearing the sender's return card and pledge to pay return postage shall be returned charged with 1¢ postage due, to be collected on delivery, as provided in section 614. All other undeliverable domestic cards shall be held for reclamation two weeks and then if not delivered shall be destroyed or disposed of as waste by postmasters, except that such as are obscene or scurrilous or bear uncanceled postage shall be sent to the Division of Dead Letters. Before being disposed of as waste, the written communication on undeliverable cards shall be cancelled or mutilated so as to prevent the improper use of the correspondence."

Note that the pledge to pay return postage meant a pledge to pay whatever the post card postage was at the time of return.





Figure 6

In 1941, an insert from the 1940 *PL&R* also noted that local and reply-paid cards now required the card to bear the sender's return address and a pledge to pay return postage in order for the card to be returned. In my experience these onerous requirements for the return of cards resulted in these uses being quite difficult to locate. In fact, the example shown in this article is the only such returned post card that I have seen.

This return process is seen for the post card in *Figure 6*. This undeliverable 1953 card (there is another, readable cancel on the card's reverse) was mailed from Waukegan, IL to Lake Villa, IL. and was returned 'Unclaimed' (the addressee was "gone"). By law, this

appropriately guaranteed card with a return address could be returned 'POSTAGE DUE 2 CENTS,' at the first-class post card rate of the time. The fact that there were 4¢ in postage due stamps on this card indicates that two cards were returned to the sender, and this card was at the stack's top.

I hope these six examples of returned Prexie postal history will stimulate collectors to look for somewhat different types of uses. In particular the post card uses are a challenge to locate because they usually do not have a return address, and it's the ones that have such a return address that are the more interesting and difficult to locate.

### Editor's Notes

- You will see in the current newsletter another \$5 Prexie on cover has surfaced. Slowly, the data bank of \$2 and \$5 covers is growing. Please check your holdings and forward scans to your editor or Jeff Shapiro. You should include a brief write-up of the cover so we can publish them in the newsletter. Remember, we are not including tags with the high dollar values.
- Steve Suffet won a Vermeil medal (81 points) at 2014 Philakorea for his five-frame Prexie-era exhibit, "Rates and Usages of the United States One Cent Presidential Series Stamp 1938-1958."
- The United States Stamp Society (USSS) will hold its annual meeting at **Philatelic Show**, Boxborough, MA, May 1-3, 2015.

## Early Use of a 20-Cent Transport Stamp

by Joe Bock



This cover shows a 20-cent Transport use on a letter posted aboard the battleship USS *Maryland* at Hawaii, on 15 September 1941. The ship (BB46) was tied up at Pearl Harbor's battleship row on 7 December 1941.

During the Japanese attack, a gunner aboard the *Maryland* shot down a torpedo bomber that had severely damaged the adjacent USS *Oklahoma*,

which ultimately capsized with a heavy loss of life. The *Maryland* was not severely damaged, however, and was returned to action on 26 February 1942.

This cover is of interest to Transport collectors because it shows an early use of the 20-cent stamp that first went on sale 27 August 1941.

## 6-Cent Transport Pays Return Receipt

by Joe Bock



Use of a 6-cent Transport airmail stamp, posted from Anchorage, Alaska to send back on 30 August 1943, via airmail, a return receipt for a **REGISTERED ARTICLE**. Postmarked the next day.

## Interned German Diplomat, 1941-42

by Louis Fiset



The cover shown here is clearly a philatelic item that ordinarily would not interest most 20th century postal history collectors. What caught my eye is the New York censor's resealing label on a domestic letter.

The correspondence was sent from Gimbel Brothers department store and postmarked May 14, 1942. The addressee was a guest at the upscale Greenbrier Hotel, in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. The letter was returned to the retailer because the addressee had apparently moved and left no forwarding address.

On the return, the letter was first directed back to the "Stamp Dept," then finally, as shown in red pencil, to "Mr. Minkus," presumably the well known stamp dealer and album publisher, Jacques Minkus.

Tucked inside the cover was a censor's enclosure slip, also shown here, explaining to

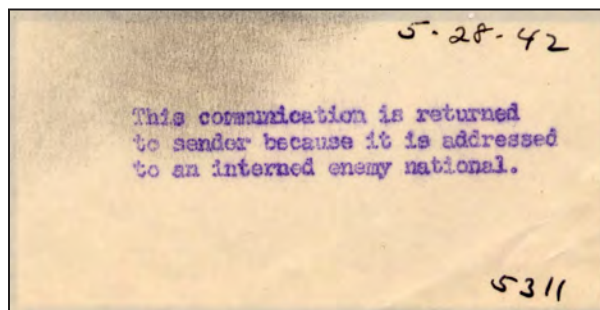
the writer why the letter was being returned.

Mr. Johann Diedrich Entrup was a low ranking member of the German diplomatic corps assigned to the German Embassy, in Washington, D.C. He was involved in "propagating un-American propaganda that is instigated from foreign countries. . . and attacks the principle of the form of government as guaranteed by our Constitution."

Within hours of Germany's declaration of war on the U.S., Entrup and his 434 German compatriates were in

State Department custody. On December 19, 1941 the entourage arrived at The Greenbrier, a haven for wealthy vacationers in peacetime. They departed the hotel on May 5th and left New York Harbor aboard the repatriation ship, M.S. *Gripsholm*, two days later.

The cover's franking is a reminder to Prexie-era collectors that 1940s commemoratives also fall within this time period.





## \$5 Prexie on Commercial Mail to Switzerland

by Bob Schlesinger



Illustrated here is an address label cut from a business package to Switzerland paying 37 times the 15-cent per half ounce airmail rate to Europe. The postmark is indistinct on this 18.5 ounce package adorned with a \$5 Prexie.

However, it would have to have been posted after the uniform airmail rate to Europe went into effect November 1, 1946 and the 25-cent San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge airmail stamp was issued, on July 20, 1947.

## Presidential-Era Committee Convention at ARIPEX 2015

by Dickson Preston

Plans for our convention at ARIPEX are moving forward apace. It looks like the Presidential-Era's first official convention will be an action-packed weekend, so please plan to exhibit or attend, if you can. Some of the highlights are given below.

**Presidential-Era Exhibits.** We are looking to have a broad range of Presidential-Era exhibits at this, our first convention, including exhibits of Prexies, Transports, Famous Americans, and

any other U.S. issues from our era, 1938-1959. Exhibits of traditional material, postal history, illustrated mail, revenues, and any category defined in the APS Judges Manual are encouraged. Please note that exhibits of the Liberty Series are not eligible for our Special Award.

**New Presidential-Era Exhibits.** There is still time to create and enter a new exhibit, since entries for ARIPEX do not close until January 9, 2015.



**Presidential-Era Committee Special Award.** The Roland Rustad Memorial Award for the best Presidential-Era exhibit will be presented at the show banquet on Saturday night.

**Presidential-Era Group Meeting.** An open meeting will take place on Sunday Morning 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. We scheduled the meeting for Sunday, because four members are judges, and will be working evaluating exhibits on Saturday.

**Presidential-Era Presentations.** There will be two presentations by committee members on subjects in our area. Joseph Bock will present "Development and Delivery of the U.S. Atomic Bomb 1942-1946" and Louis Fiset will speak on "Resumption of U.S. Mail Service to Europe after World War II."

**Show Banquet.** The ARIPEX banquet will

take place at 7:00 Saturday evening. The banquet food selection has been chosen to mirror the show theme for Aripex 2015, Native American Artists of the Southwest. For additional information, please see the events tab on the ARIPEX website: [www.aripex.org](http://www.aripex.org). Tickets should be purchased in advance.

**Dealers Breakfast.** Kevin Lesk, the show chairman, has invited our members, spouses, friends or judges to a dealer's breakfast planned for Sunday morning, February 22, 2015 anytime between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. There will be a full buffet including a made to order omelet station, and other goodies. Price is \$14 all inclusive including tax and tip. Kevin will have ticket vouchers available at the show and on Sunday as well.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at: [dicksonp@u.washington.edu](mailto:dicksonp@u.washington.edu)

## Two-Ocean Airmail Rate, Hawaii to Europe

by Bob Schlesinger



The so called "two ocean" airmail cover is popular among cover collectors and in most cases commands a premium when found. The most common examples during the Prexie

era may be found originating in Hawaii and addressed to destinations in Europe or beyond, thus transiting transpacific, U.S. domestic, and transatlantic airmail routes.

Additive airmail postage was required. For example, the rate from Hawaii to Europe was 50 cents, including 20 cents transpacific to the mainland and 30 cents transatlantic to Europe. This particular rate was in effect from April 21, 1937, through January 14, 1945, when the airmail rate from Hawaii to the mainland was lowered to 15 cents. *Figure 1* shows this rating, which also includes a 15-cent registry fee and 5-cent prepaid return receipt, for a total of 70 cents.



Figure 2

From January 15, 1945 through Oct. 31, 1946 the two-ocean half-ounce airmail rate was 45 cents, as shown in *Figure 2*.

The last change affecting the two ocean rating took place on November 1, 1946 when the territorial airmail surcharge to the mainland was eliminated. Thus, territorial mail from the Pacific region to Europe was now charged the same as if originating on the mainland. The half-ounce airmail rate to Europe was reduced from 30 cents to 15 cents on November 1, 1946. So the 1949 use shown in *Figure 3* is correctly prepaid.



Figure 3





# The Prexie Era

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

No. 67 Autumn 2014

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
fiset@uw.edu

## Fourth Class Mail

by Bob Hohertz



Earlier this year an eBay seller ran a lot consisting of Prexie covers and pieces, most of which were not pictured. One visible item was an insured cover from H.E. Harris franked with a solo 19-cent Prexie. Its obvious “philatelic” nature apparently didn’t attract any of us, and the lot did not sell. When re-listed I bought it quite inexpensively and was surprised and pleased to find that it included a number of commercial labels with stamps cut from mailings to John F. Lutz, Inc., of Esterly, Pennsylvania.

Lutz and his descendants ran a combination furniture store and undertaking business in Esterly from the late 1800’s until 1960. Their

building complex is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. If you go looking, the community of Esterly is now

### Inside

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named Saint Lawrence.

One of the Lutz employees was J. Russell Yoder, a stamp collector who made purchases from H.E. Harris and undoubtedly cut the pieces from mailing wrappers to the company I found in the eBay lot. The Harris mailings were dated 1948 and 1949, but as we shall see, the mailings to Lutz ranged from the early 1940's into the later part of the decade. The illustrations shown here provide a sampling of the fourth-class package fragments included.

A number of the mailings were from the Philadelphia Carpet Company, which placed them in fourth-class Zone 1.

This 12-cent mailing on the label shown above must have contained samples (though it isn't likely that an entire shipment of carpets was sent through the mail, if one thinks about it.) It could have been sent during either of two rate periods: from March 26, 1944 until January 1, 1949, or from January 1, 1949 to October 1, 1951. If the former, it weighed from two to three pounds, with the charge being 8 cents for the first pound and 1.1 cents each for the next two pounds, plus a 1-cent minimum surcharge, then rounded up. If sent in the later period it weighed one pound or under.

The mailing for 17 cents (Figure 2) could have occurred any time from 1932 until 1949. If during the earliest period it would have weighed nine pounds (8 cents for the first pound plus 1.1 cents for the next eight pounds,

rounded up,) and after the wartime surcharge went into effect, eight pounds (the previous arithmetic for seven additional pounds, plus the 1-cent surcharge.) The most likely time period was after 1948, where it would have weighed two to three pounds. This conclusion is in light of the one to two pound weight of the 12-cent example – but see the next example.

This 18 cent mailing (Figure 3) could not have been done after the beginning of 1949, as the charge for the first pound then was 12 cents and the increments were 2.1 cents per pound. The steps were 14.2 cents, 16.4 cents, and 18.6 cents, with the fractions of cents always rounded up. Since this puts the mailing earlier, the weight ends up being higher. Prior to the 1944 war surcharge the weight of the shipment would have been ten pounds (8 cents plus nine times 1.1 cents) and after the inception of the

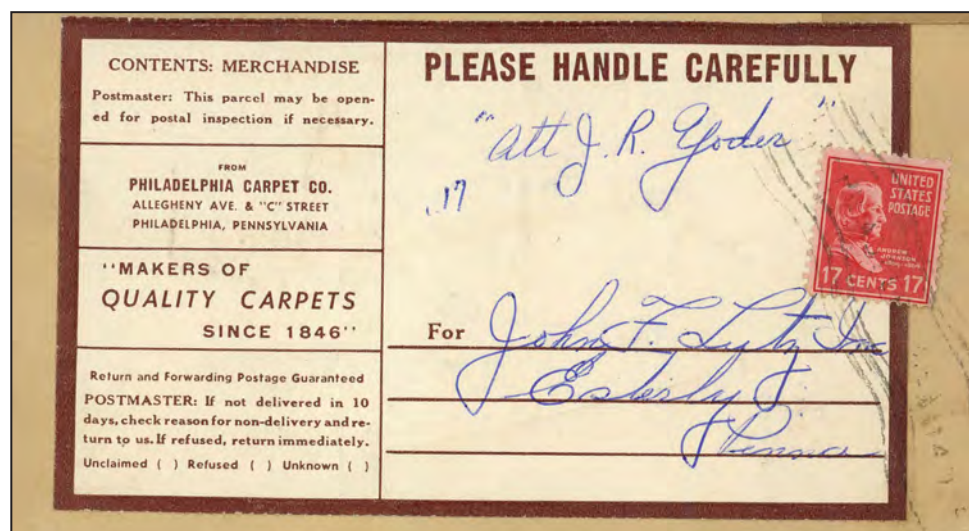


Figure 2.

surcharge, nine pounds (8 cents plus eight times 1.1 cents plus the 1-cent surcharge.) Therefore, a nine pound weight for the previous example would not have been so unlikely.

The package this 17-cent example came from (Figure 4) was mailed from Grand Rapids, Michigan, which was Zone 4. The only possibility is that it was mailed between October 1, 1932 and March 26, 1944, which

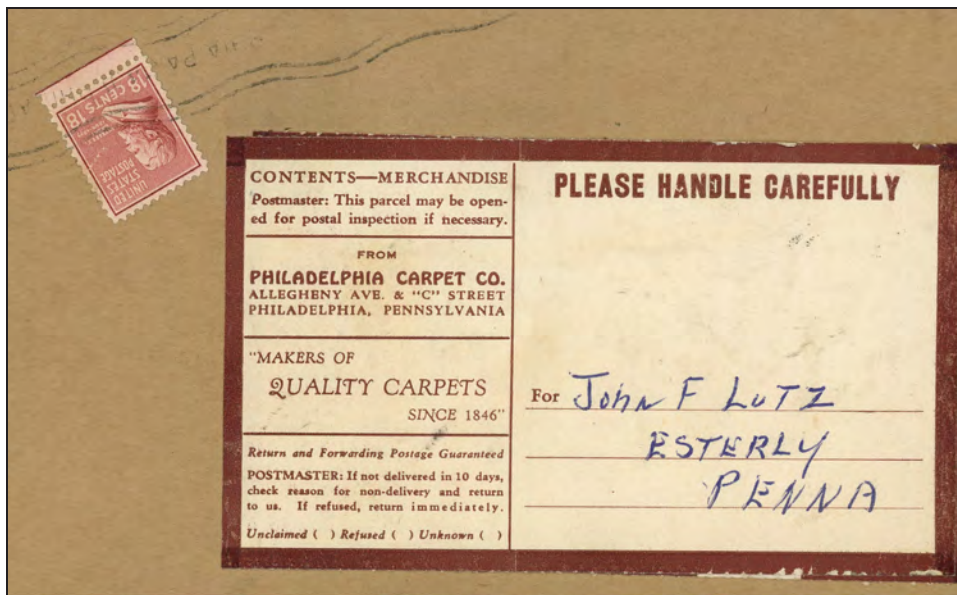


Figure 3.

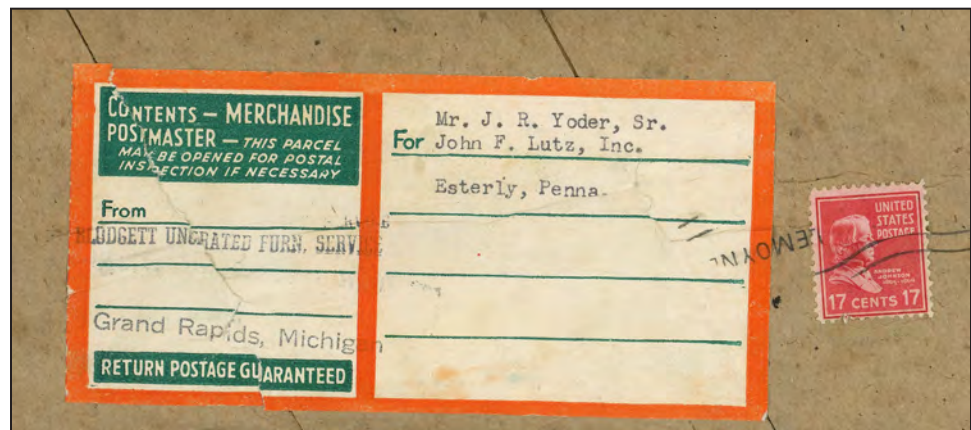


Figure 4.

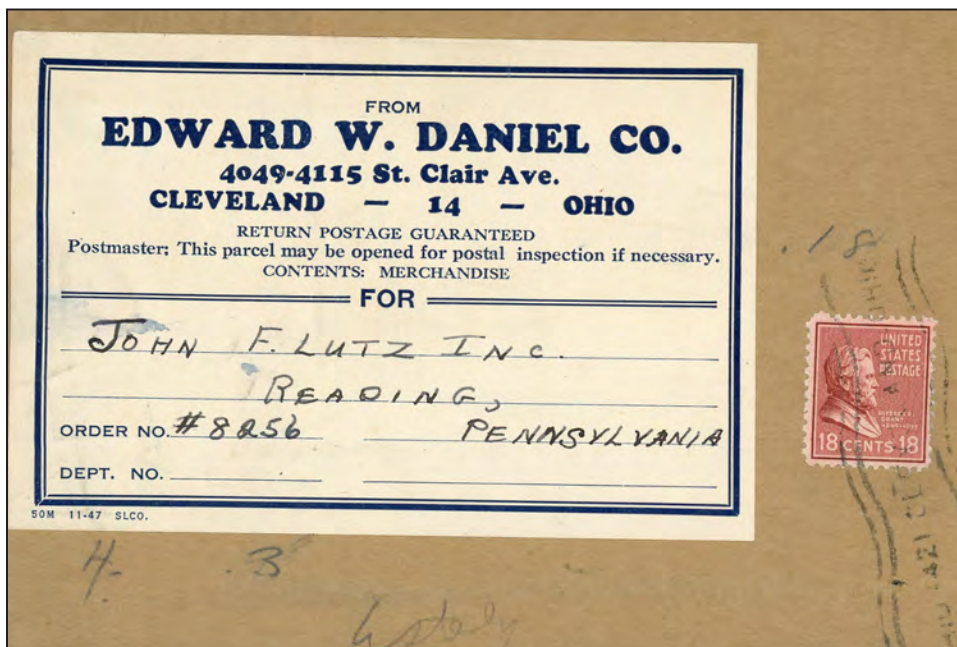


Figure 5.



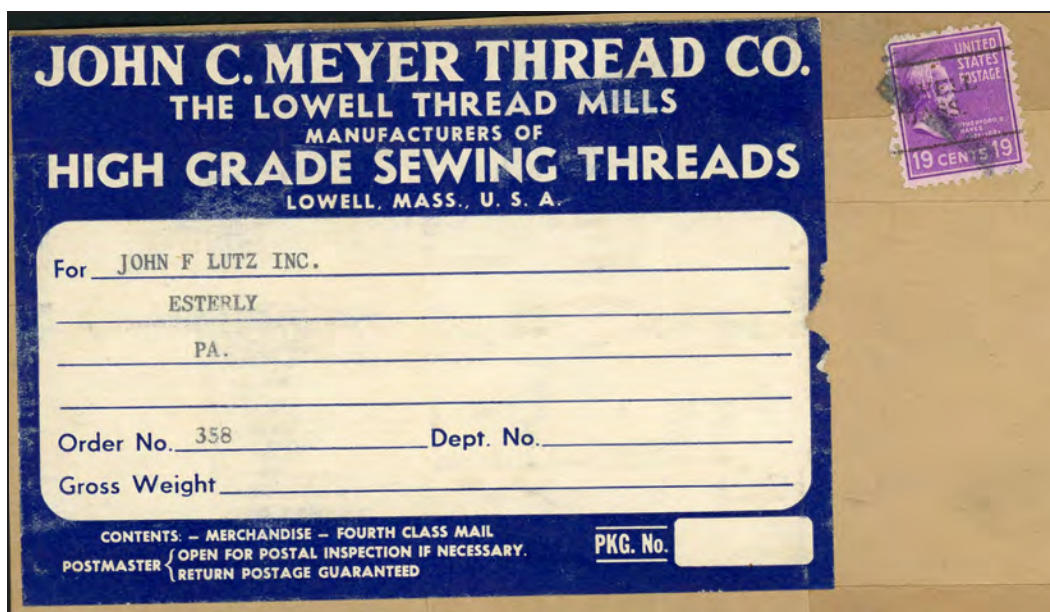


Figure 6.

would give postage of 10 cents for the first pound and 3.5 cents for the next two pounds, for an even 17 cents.

The mailing from Cleveland, Ohio, Zone 4, (Figure 5) could only have been done between March 26, 1944 and January 1, 1949 for 18 cents. Ten cents for the first pound and 3.5 cents for each of the next two adds to only 17 cents, so the 1-cent surcharge is needed to make the total.

One further example is this Zone 4 mailing from Lowell, Massachusetts (Figure 6). No rates before January 1, 1949 would work out, but between then and October 1, 1951 a two-pound package would have cost 14 cents for the first pound and 4.5 cents for the second pound, rounded up to 19 cents.

How nice that an employee of the Lutz firm was a philatelist!

## Dickson Preston Prexie Collection Up for Sale at ARIPEX 2015

When thinking about the early Prexie collectors, the names Suffet, Neil, Shapiro, Helbock, and Piskiewicz, immediately come to mind. Dickson Preston should be added to the list.

Dickson started collecting Prexies in 1986, after becoming an APS accredited judge. The Prexies became his first area of U.S. interest. He began exhibiting them in 1991. Because he found his main interest to be in the uses of the stamps, he structured his exhibits by denominations instead of rates. His exhibits were noteworthy by the presence of unusual or peculiar items, like mishandled mail, incorrect

postage applied by postal clerks, and arcane aspects of the postal regulations. Viewers and judges could also count on a touch of whimsy.

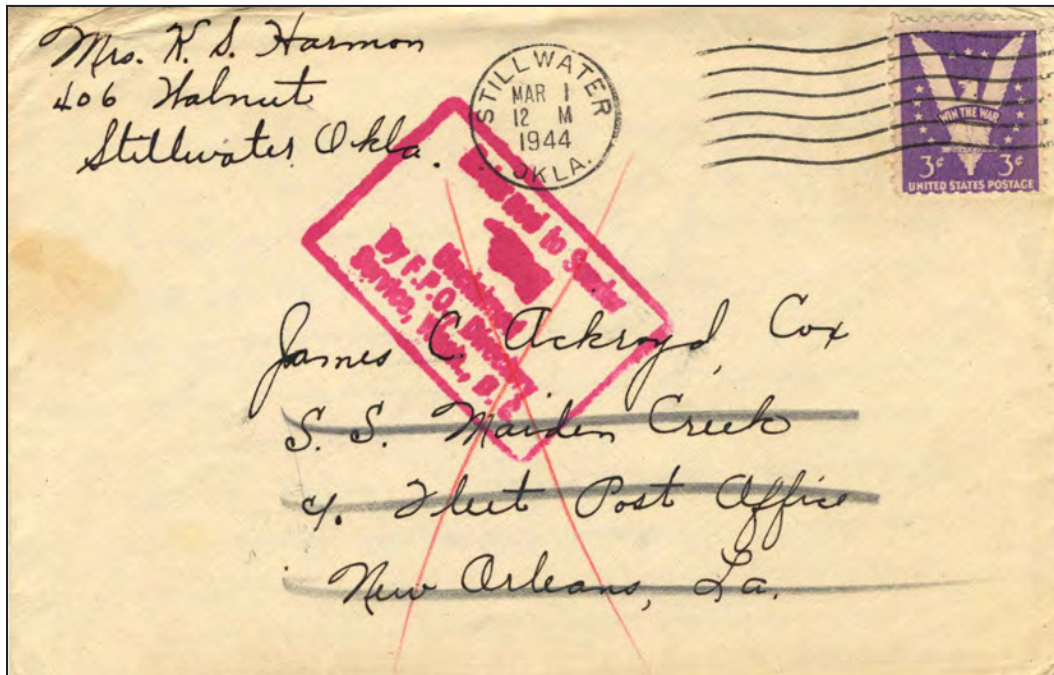
Dickson exhibited his Prexies 12 times, winning two vermeils and ten golds, plus numerous special awards, including several USSS Statue of Freedom Awards,

Although the exhibit has now been disassembled and will be sold by Arizona dealer, David Grossblat, starting at ARIPEX 2015, for posterity he has reproduced it in electronic format.

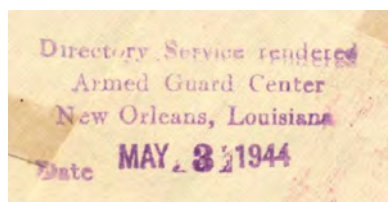


## Mail to A Killed Naval Seaman, “Unclaimed”

by Jeffrey Shapiro



Letters from family members were important in maintaining morale during World War II. In this example, the sister of coxswain James C. Ackroyd sent a newsy letter from home to her brother who was serving with the US Navy Armed Guard aboard the freighter SS *Maiden Creek II*. Because the location of ships in World



War II was secret, Ackroyd's mail was sent to it's assigned Fleet Post Office at New Orleans, LA. Markings on both sides of the cover show it was mailed from Stillwater, OK on March 1, 1944 and, after directory service was rendered, as indicated on the back of the cover, returned by the Fleet Post Office on May 3, 1944 **Unclaimed**. This is shown in red on the cover's face.

The SS *Maiden Creek II* was built in 1943 by the Gulf Shipbuilding Corporation at Chickasaw, AL and sold to the Waterman Steamship

Company of Mobile, AL.

On March 17, 1944, while en route to Oran, Algeria from Naples, Italy, as part of Convoy SNF-17 carrying war materiel, *Maiden Creek II* was torpedoed by the German submarine U-371 in the Mediterranean Sea about 30 miles north of Bougie, Algeria. The freighter was crippled by two attacks, killing 11 of the crew of 77. Ackroyd was one of the crewmen who perished and never saw his sister's letter.

The ship remained afloat, and efforts soon began to tow her to Bougie for salvage. However, a violent storm broke the ship in two, and it was declared a total loss. The ship's bell was retained and now is on display at the Connecticut War Memorial, in West Hartford.

The German submarine U-371 was launched in January 1941 and joined the German First U-Boat Flotilla in July 1941. Operating mostly in the Mediterranean Sea, the U-371 participated in 19 patrols, sinking 13 Allied

ships, including the destroyer, USS *Bristol*, and damaging six others. The *Maiden Creek II* fell victim as part of the submarine's 18th patrol.

U-371 met her fate on May 4, 1944 when she

was sent to the bottom 30 miles off the Algerian coast by an Allied submarine hunting operation known as "Swamp." Ironically, this was near the spot where the *Maiden Creek II* had met her fate seven weeks earlier.

## Last Prewar Flight of the *Pacific Clipper*

by Bob Hohertz



Figure 1.

This cover was mailed from New York to Auckland, New Zealand on November 19, 1941 at twice the 50 cents per half-ounce airmail rate. It was posted too late to catch the *California Clipper*, which left San Francisco for Los Angeles on November 17, but in plenty of time for the *Pacific Clipper* flight leaving San Francisco December 1.

This flight departed Honolulu on December 4 for Canton Island, where it remained the night of December 5. Stopping at Suva, Fiji, the flight went on to Noumea, New Caledonia, leaving there the morning of December 8 for Auckland. Since by then the International Date Line had been crossed, this was the morning of December 7 in Honolulu. A notation in ink on the cover by its recipient, A. D. Baldwin,

shows that it was delivered promptly: "Arrived Auckland Dec 9<sup>th</sup> – Japan Declares War."

The tale of the historic round-the-world flight of the *Pacific Clipper* to return home is told in great detail in "Pacific Pioneers – The Rest of the Story" by Jon Krupnick. In effect, flight Captain Robert Ford was told on December 14 that he should not try to return via the Pacific, but go west until he reached New York. This he did, on a route through Australia, Java, Ceylon, India, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, the Belgian Congo, Brazil, Trinidad, and, finally, New York.

Though unintended at the outset, the flight set a record as the first commercial flight around the world.

# Diagnosing World War II Covers

by Louis Fiset

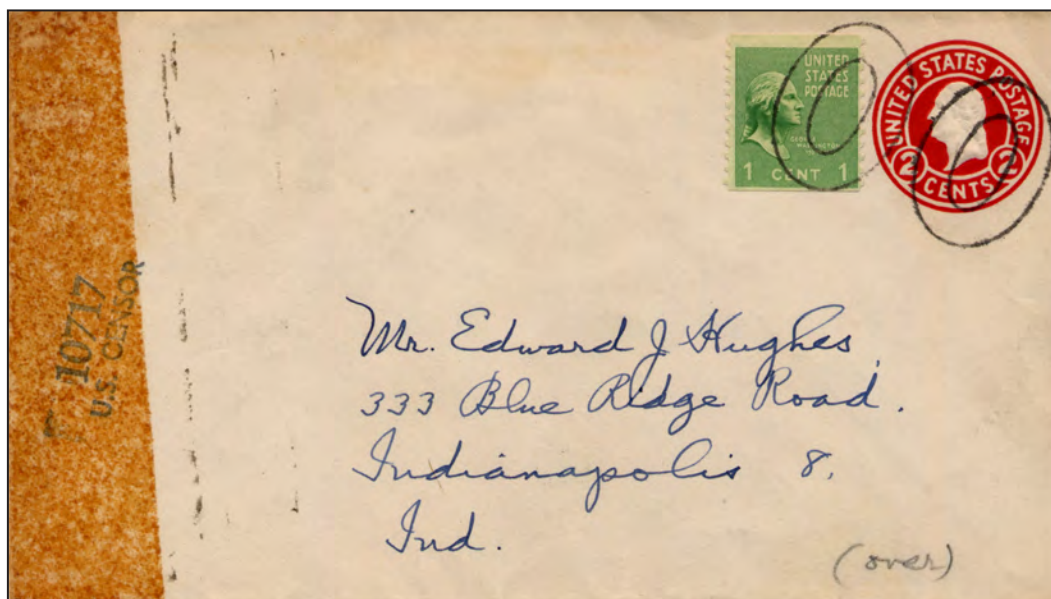


Figure 1.

In a recent Linns publication, Ken Lawrence (November 17, 2014) provides readers with a multitude of resources to analyze covers from World War II, some of which have not been published and/or are difficult to access. Focusing on rates and routes, answers are available, for example, to thorny questions involving airmail service to Australia, and rates and routes to Turkey in 1941.

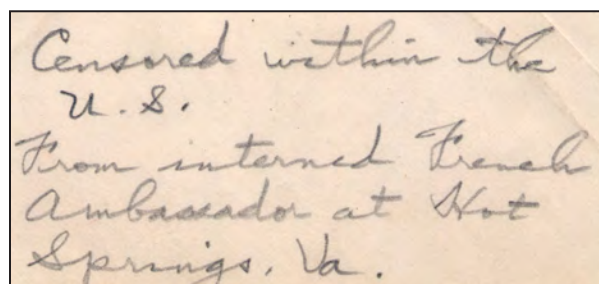
Near the end of his article Lawrence makes the following statement:

“ [N]o single source can tell us everything we want to understand about our covers, and information about wartime mail can be exceptionally challenging to locate.”

This article offers additional resources that extend beyond rates and routes and are accessible to most collectors of World War II postal history. Accompanying Lawrence's references the resources illustrated here may help bring greater vitality and interest to many of the covers currently residing in our

collections.

**Civil censorship markings:** Most non-military, international mail was subject to civil censorship, and most countries throughout the world examined incoming and outgoing mail. Broderick & Mayo (1981) continues to be the standard reference on censorship by the U.S. Office of Censorship, even though the catalog is due for a revision. As the example in Figure 1 will show, censor markings can sometimes help date covers for which postmarks are smudged or absent, altogether.



This cover caught my eye because it was a piece of domestic mail that was censored



and with a mute cancel applied. A pencil notation on the back reads: "From interned French Ambassador at Hot Springs, Va." This information likely came from the now missing contents since no direct corroborating evidence can be found on the cover.

From data gleaned from the *New York Times* and elsewhere I have documented the Vichy France Ambassador Gaston Henry-Gaye and his entourage of 93 were detained at the

this correspondence indeed originated with the Vichy ambassador. However, the date range provided by the censor mark provides evidence to support the information on the back of the cover, and adds interest to the story it tells.

**Ancestry (ancestry.com):** This database is a favorite of genealogists for the wealth of personal information it provides on immigration and travel, vital statistics, military, census, and other data that help unravel the mysteries of

families. Postal historians can learn a lot from this database, as the following example illustrates.

The domestic air-mail cover in Figure 2 also caught my eye because of domestic censorship by the POW Unit in New York (268) and locally (5), and the manuscript notation,



Figure 2.

Cascades Inn, at Hot Springs, Virginia for nearly five months awaiting repatriation on the third exchange voyage of M.S. *Gripsholm*, that left New York harbor on February 15, 1944.

All domestic correspondence of detained diplomats, their staffs, and families, was subject to censorship by U.S. censors. The censor marking on the cover's face was in use by the New York field office's POW Unit from February 1944-June 1945. Likely this cover was sent by pouch from Hot Springs, Virginia to New York, examined by a POW Unit censor, who then placed it in the mail stream at Morgan Annex where it was postmarked with a mute cancel.

Of course, it remains impossible to know if

"Written in English." Also, I knew that PO Box 119, Kenedy, Texas, was an undercover address for an internment camp that held internees brought to the U.S. from Latin America. Here is what I learned from Ancestry about the writer of the letter, Hans Schwerdtfeger:

Hans Schwerdtfeger was a 33-year old, unmarried banker from Hamburg, who had been issued a visa at Medellin, Colombia. He was apprehended in early April and placed aboard the USAT *Etolin*, an ocean liner chartered to the U.S. Army, which departed from Buenaventura, Colombia on April 10, 1942. Bound for San Francisco, it arrived there on April 20. He was accompanied by 460 other enemy aliens who boarded the ship at Callao (265), Guayaquil (44) and Buenaventura (151).

Other sources indicates the contingent left San Francisco by train on the same day, arriving at the former CCC camp on April 21. This was the first group of enemy aliens to arrive. By the end of the month the population stood at 620. When the camp closed on September 18, 1944 and the internees were dispersed to other camps, a total of 2,000 had passed through Kenedy's gates.

**Digitized daily U.S. Postal Bulletin (www.uspostalbulletins.com):** The U.S. daily

*Postal Bulletin* has been available to researchers on microfilm for many years. Recently the complete run has been digitized and can be accessed on line at no charge. One advantage is being able to search by key word, a tool that has helped me greatly in my research related to the resumption of mail service at the end of World War II.

For example, between September 6, 1944 and August 28, 1945, the Post Office Department issued 17 directives related to the resumption of service to France, one of three European countries to which mail service resumed while German troupes still occupied parts of the country.

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the value of this easy access to the digitized format. The map, shown here highlighted in red showing the geographic location of first resumed service on September 5, 1944, was produced from text contained in *PB* 18751. It clearly shows the site of the June 6th Normandy invasion area. The non-illustrated, uprated postal card in Figure 3 addressed to Paris was postmarked September 9,

1944, four days after postal card service to Normandy only was first authorized. It was returned to the sender, but then re-posted on September 22, with the RETURN TO SENDER marking

scratched out. The postcard was censored at New York (7734) and Paris (075). According to *PB* 18757, postal card service to Paris resumed



Figure 3.

on September 23, 1944.

Figure 4 shows a letter postmarked Lexington, Kentucky April 29, 1945 and sent by surface to Villé in the department (state) of Bas-Rhin, located in France's northeast region. By now, French citizens in all but three of France's 96 departments, were able to send and receive



postal card and surface letter mail with correspondence in the U.S. However, heavy fighting still existed in the Bas-Rhin area. The map shown here, derived from *PB* 18804, highlights the





Figure 4.

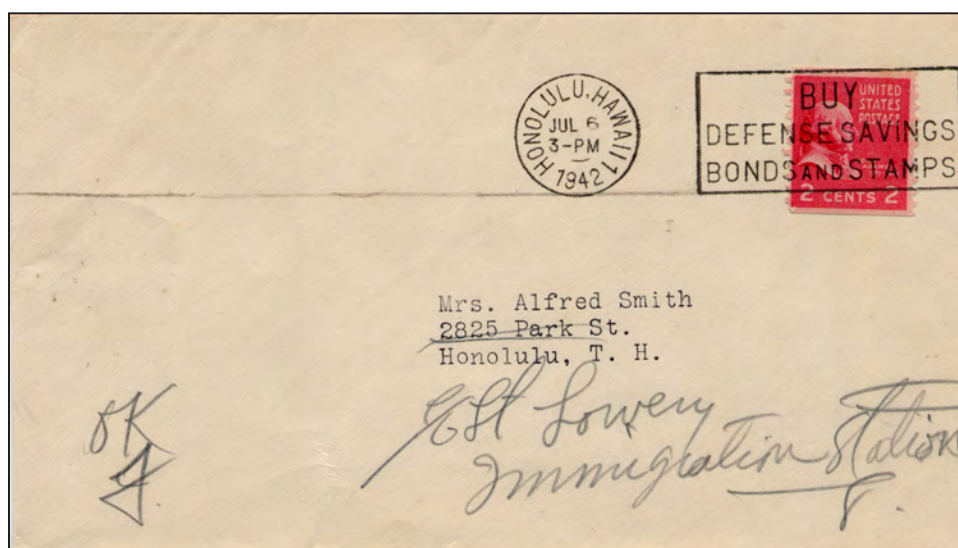
small geographic area in France not yet liberated from German forces. The cover has an enclosure slip attached to the front directing the sender to the daily *Postal Bulletin* of March 9, 1945 (PB 18804), which continued to exclude mail service to Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin, and Mo-

linns article. Certainly other databases are easily accessible, such as the *New York Times*, as well as shipping news records inside this and other port-city newspapers that published right up until the U.S. entered the war. Who among us can suggest other resources?

## 2-Cent Prexies Scarce on Internee Mail

Illustrated here is a cover showing an in-city rate addressed to a German-American naturalized citizen at her home in Honolulu. On December 7, 1941, Susan Smith was arrested by FBI agents as a potential threat to national security. The letter was forwarded to her in care of an army officer in charge of internment operations and censored there ("OK/T").

Because most internees were held in remote



locations, in-city rates rarely applied. Where applicable, the 2-cent Defense Issue stamp was usual. Any internee related mail bearing the 2-cent Prexie is scarce and sought after.

selle departments. Postal card service to these departments would resume on March 29, 1945 (PB 18810).

The three databases highlighted here represent several of the online resources available to diagnose World War II covers, complementing Ken Lawrence's contribution in his





No. 68 Winter 2015

# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
fiset@uw.edu

## Airmail Forwarding in the U.S.

by Tony Wawrukiewicz



*Fig. 1:* One peso per half ounce airmail rate from the Philippines to the U.S. mainland, and forwarded with 6 cents per ounce postage for airmail to Canada.

### Introduction

This article discusses airmail forwarding of U.S. related mail using Prexie-era frankings. The discussion and illustrations below show a mix of international and domestic uses dating from 1941 until 1957 falling under the rules and regulations published from 1927 through 1954. It reveals complex rules and regulations governing the process of domestic and international airmail forwarding that were followed inconsistently.

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Fig. 2: International mail incoming to Puerto Rico, then forwarded to the U.S. at the 10-cent airmail Caribbean airmail rate.

The first example, in Figure 1, is a June 1941 airmail letter posted from the Philippines to Alhambra, California. From there it was forwarded via airmail to Victoria, B.C., Canada.

Specifically, *Postal Bulletin (PB) 14560* (Dec. 10, 1927) announced provisions adopted on September 10, 1927, effective January 1, 1928, by the International Air Mail Conference of the Hague. Pertinent to this article are the following provisions concerning the redirection and return of airmail articles:

“Air-mail articles from foreign countries addressed to persons who have changed their residence are forwarded to the new destination by the ordinary means, unless the addressee, has expressly requested their redirection by air mail and has paid in advance, to the forwarding office, the aerial postage for the new route. Undeliverable air-mail articles are returned to origin by the ordinary means. If the redirection or return is made by the ordinary means, every annotation relative to the transmission by the air-route must be cancelled officially by means of two heavy transverse lines.”

It appears this regulation was in place from January 1, 1928 until the July 1950 *U.S. Official Postal Guide (PG)* announcement, to be mentioned below.

The letter shown in Figure 1 was sent with the one peso Philippines issue affixed paying the half-ounce airmail rate to the U.S. It was forwarded to Canada via airmail with six cents U.S. postage affixed, in compliance with the airmail treaty rate between the two countries stipulating six cents be paid for the one ounce U.S. domestic rate.

The second use, seen in Figure 2, is a December 1942 airmail letter from a civilian contractor working on the army base at Trinidad (APO 868), writing to a refinery worker in Coloso, Puerto Rico. From October 21, 1942, civilian contractors received APO mail service privileges to and from any location where U.S. mail services were in operation. Instead, the writer paid the Trinidad & Tobago 24-cent half-ounce international airmail rate directly to Puerto Rico. En route, the letter was censored by a British examiner (I.E./8006) at the Trinidad censor station.

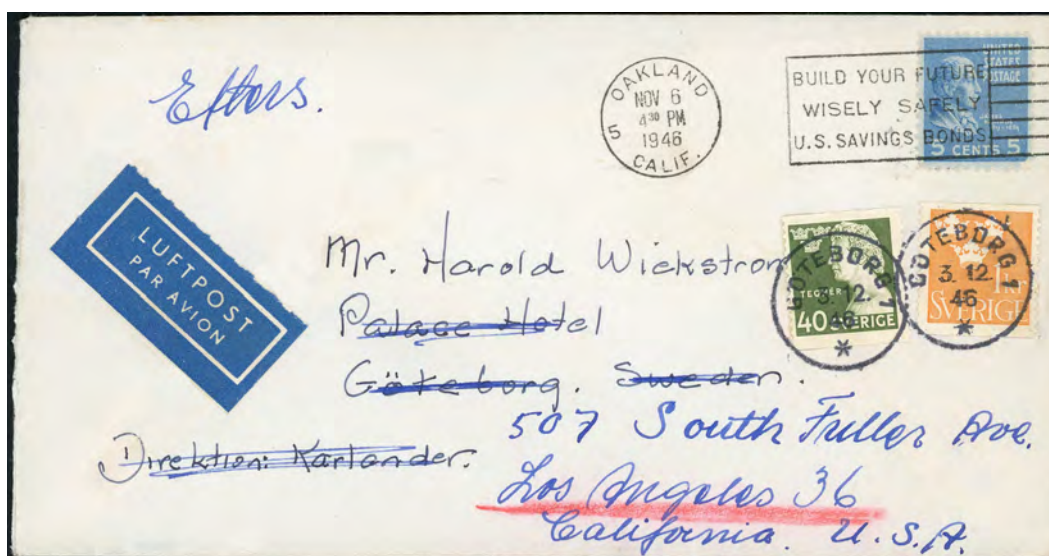


Fig. 3: 1946 surface letter to Sweden, return to the U.S. by airmail with payment of correct Swedish airmail surcharge postage.

After arriving in Puerto Rico, the letter was forwarded by air to Villanova, Pennsylvania, after censorship at the Miami field censor station (14594). Since Puerto Rico was a U.S. possession, U.S. domestic rates applied. The *U.S. Official Postal Guides* from July 1930-1937 state: "Matter sent by air mail may be forwarded to the addressee by the same means without additional charge when delivery of the matter will be expedited if carried by airplane (not present in 1929 PG)."

The regulation changed considerably, according to the July 1939-1945 PGs, with the following statement:

"Matter sent by air mail may be forwarded to the addressee by the same means when delivery of the matter will be expedited if carried by airplane, provided the air-mail rate to the new address is no higher than that originally applicable. No additional charge will be made for such forwarding, regardless of the number of the air-mail routes over which the mail may be carried. For instance, an air-mail letter prepaid 6 cents originally sent from New York to Chicago may be forwarded to San Francisco without additional charge; but it could not be forwarded to Hawaii by trans-pacific air mail

without additional charge. Letters sent as ordinary mail may be forwarded by air mail upon payment of the difference between the postage originally paid thereon and the air-mail rate."

Likely, the additional charge to Hawaii would be the difference in the airmail rates. Thus, in this case the 10-cent Transport airmail stamp was used for the forwarding service. That is, the additional charge was added (10 cents for a half-ounce instead of 6 cents) for the airmail forwarding from Puerto Rico to the U.S.

Note all the different ways airmail is spelled over the years. This means a search for airmail uses requires the search terms "airmail", "air mail", and "air-mail").

Figure 3 shows yet another example of international airmail forwarding. In this case a 5-cent Prexie mails a 1946 letter from Oakland to Sweden at the prevailing one-ounce surface rate. Once the letter reached Sweden, per the *PB 14560* announcement quoted above, it was forwarded to the U.S. by air ('LUFTPOST') at the 140 øre rate for a 5-gram airmail letter.

Regulations became more complicated between





Fig. 4: Third-class mail forwarded by airmail from Honolulu to Delaware. Forwarding postage correctly paid by the 5-cent airmail stamp.

1946 and 1948. By 1947 (*PG* published in July 1947) the postage rate for domestic airmail originating at any U.S. post office, including territories and possessions, had been reduced to 5 cents per ounce.

The next cover, illustrated in Figure 4, follows the new rate structure. In this 1948 example, the 1.5-cent *Prexie* paid the domestic up-to-two ounces single-piece third-class rate. It was then forwarded by airmail from Honolulu to Delaware with the 5-cent airmail stamp. For this forwarding to occur on this third-class item, 3.5 cents additional postage was due, the difference between 1.5 cents paid thereon and the new continental 5 cents airmail rate, plus an added single-piece 1.5 cents for third-class forwarding. Therefore, this airmail forwarding was correctly paid by the 5-cent airmail stamp.

Regulations also changed in 1948 as the new air parcel post rates were introduced. The 1948-1953 *PG*, Section 21, states: “Air mail

weighing up to 8 ounces will be forwarded by air when expedited. No additional charge will be made for such forwarding.”

The next example of international airmail forwarding, a 1951 domestic letter forwarded to New Zealand, shown in Figure 5, also demonstrates a possible incorrect interpretation of the rules of the time. The new set of rules in place was first stated in the July 1950 *PG* (approximately 23 years after the first set of rules that I am able to document). It states the following:

“44. **Forwarding.** [First appearing in Part II of the July 1950 *PG*.]

(ii) An article which is redirected to a third country or to the country of mailing may be forwarded by air, provided the addressee, or someone acting in his behalf pays in advance to the forwarding office an amount sufficient to prepay the United States air mail postage to the new destination. In such cases, the required



Fig. 5: 1952 letter postmarked New York forwarded by air to New Zealand. Forwarding postage overpaid by 3 cents.



Fig. 6: 1951 international surface letter from France, forwarded by airmail in the U.S. Likely underpaid by 1 cent.

postage shall be affixed to the article, and the stamps canceled by the forwarding office.

(iii) An air mail article which is redirected to an address in the United States will be forwarded by air without additional postage.

(iv) Ordinary air mail and surface letters (except

those which appear to contain merchandise) and post cards may be redirected and forwarded to foreign countries by air, provided the sender or addressee, or someone acting in his behalf, requests that such articles be forwarded by air mail and pays in advance to the forwarding

office an amount sufficient to prepay the necessary additional air mail postage to the country concerned. In such cases, credit shall be allowed for the amount of United States postage originally prepaid on the articles.”

In summary, forwarding of mails of foreign origin out of the country required prepayment of U.S. airmail postage to the new destination, while forwarding of mails of domestic origin out of the country required prepayment of only the difference between U.S. airmail postage to the new destination minus the surface domestic postage already paid.

As Figure 5 shows, these complex rules were not always followed. It shows a 1951 U.S. cover affixed with a 3-cent Prexie paying the one ounce rate. The letter was then forwarded by airmail to New Zealand with the full, but incorrect, 25 cents per half-ounce airmail rate paid. The airmail forwarding was overpaid by 3 cents, according to the new rules of 1950.

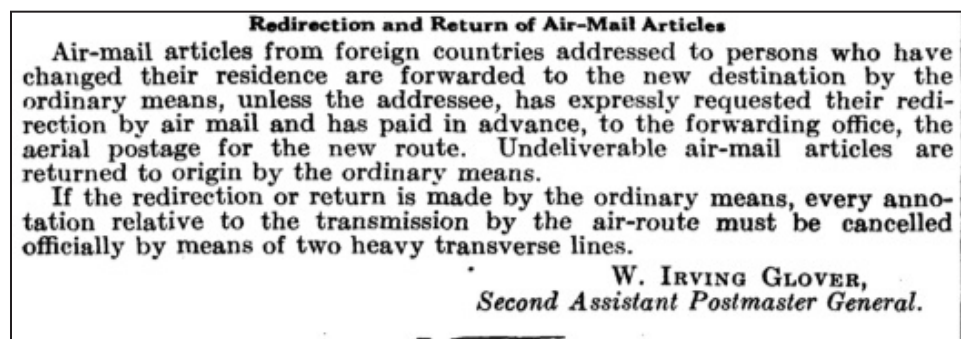
The last Prexie-era international airmail forwarding example follows in Figure 6. This letter was mailed from France to San Francisco with postage affixed overpaying by 1 franc the UPU 20-gram surface rate of 35 francs. It

was then forwarded by airmail to Arlington, Virginia. This example appears to be a hybrid of sorts. Had it been an airmail foreign letter forwarded by air within the U.S., additional postage would not have been required. However, since only the surface international rate was paid, some amount of added postage seemed necessary for the airmail forwarding.

According to my interpretation of the rules of the time, only the difference between the surface rate (8 cents for up to one ounce) and the European airmail rate of 15 cents per 5 grams was due (assuming it was a letter weighing less than a half ounce.) Therefore, the 6 cents airmail postage stamp used to forward this letter probably underpaid the necessary forwarding postage by one cent.

This article demonstrates the inconsistency in interpretation of existing rules and regulations governing the forwarding of U.S. domestic and international mail. The rules were complex and may well have been followed incorrectly as often as they were correctly.

I am grateful to Bob Hohertz for providing scans of four covers allowing me to present the results of this research.



Detail from *Postal Bulletin* 14560 (December 10, 1927)



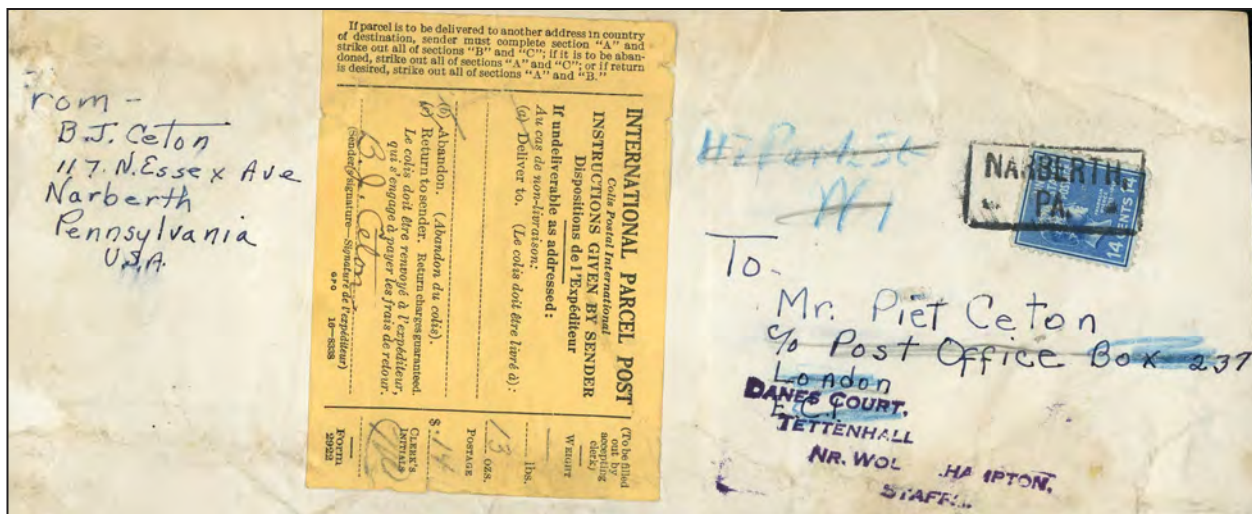
## 2015 Subscriptions Payable Now

The Fall 2014 issue was the last in the quartet of The Prexie Era for 2014. This means it is time for readers to renew your subscriptions for the upcoming year. Rates for 2015 remain the same as for last year: \$5 for the electronic version, \$10 for the color “snail-mail” version. Unless prior arrangements have been made, please send payments and/or questions to Jeff Shapiro directly.

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

## An Interesting 14-Cent Prexie Use

by Bob Hohertz



This part of a wrapper from a one-pound or under package sent to England provides an example of a long-lasting, but seldom seen, postal rate.

In the 1913 PL&R a rate of 12 cents per pound for international parcel post, to those countries which accepted it, is mentioned. The daily *Postal Bulletin* of November 5, 1924 contains a table of foreign parcel post rates that varies somewhat by country, and includes information as to which ones added transit charges and terminal charges. Great Britain, like most other countries, charged a 2-cent terminal charge on packages received from the United States. From what I can determine, this rate of 14 cents for the first pound of parcel post mail to Britain lasted until 1961.

The wrapper shown above must have been from a package weighing one pound or less. It was sent to Post Office Box 237 in London, which was an undercover address for the Dutch Army.

The reason I believe that it was sent in 1945 is that the recipient, a Dutch Army Officer, had moved, and there is no sign of censorship, although that may have been on a different part of the package and not preserved. After mid-1945 there wouldn't have been much need for use of an undercover address, anyway.

How nice that the sender, apparently a relative of the officer who was to receive the package, used a solo 14-cent Prexie. And that someone saved enough of the wrapper for us to treasure today.

## Combined 4.5-Cent First/Third Class Postage Paid

by Louis Fiset

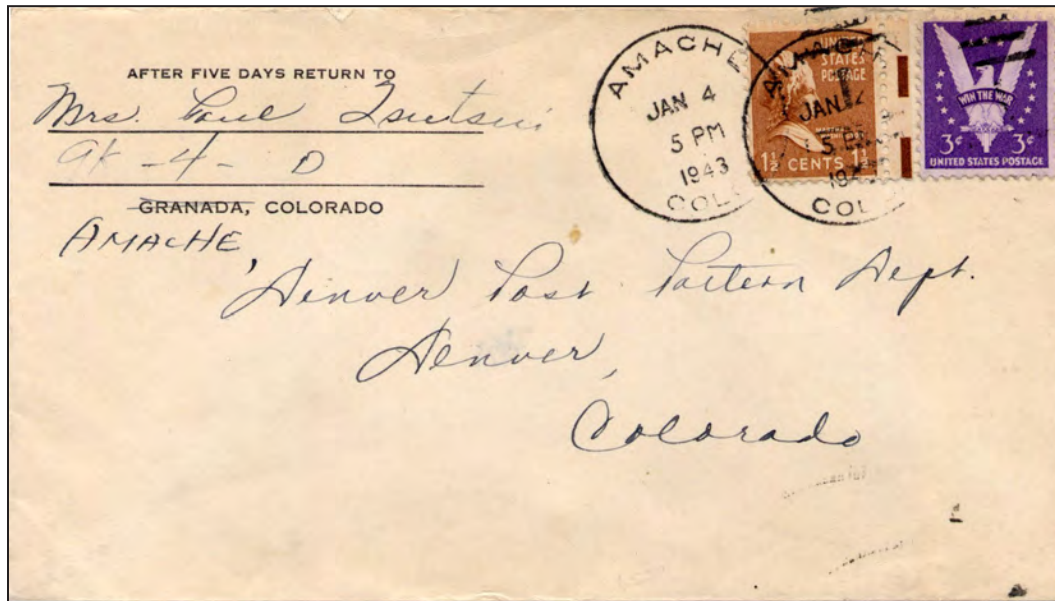


Fig. 1. Combined first/third class postage to the *Denver Post* Pattern Department.

**Junior Miss Will Adore  
Dress With Military Air**



There's a military-trim air to this fitted junior miss style, Pattern 4221. Anne Adams has given it "front line" novelty in a smart side-front buttoning that squares off into the skirt panel. Match the buttons with a bright pocket "hankie." The back-draped calot completes this smart date-time ensemble.

Pattern 4221 is available in junior miss sizes 11, 13, 15, 17. Size 13 takes 3 yards 39-inch.

Send **SIXTEEN CENTS** in coins (no stamps), to **DENVER POST Pattern Department** for this Anne Adams pattern. Write plainly **SIZE, NAME, ADDRESS and STYLE NUMBER**.

Our Spring Pattern Book is ready! It contains a **FREE** dicky pattern; a special salvage design; smart, easy-to-sew spring outfits for the entire family. Send **SIXTEEN CENTS** for your copy now!

Allow ten to twelve days to fill orders. If you live in Colorado, send tax.



4221

The cover shown here, bearing 4.5 cents franking, was sent from the Granada Relocation Center (Amache) to the *Denver Post* Pattern Department. It was postmarked Jan 4 1943, a Monday. The writer, a Japanese American woman incarcerated at this War Relocation Authority center, was responding to one or more "Anne Adams" pattern display advertisements appearing weekly in the women's section of the Saturday edition. An example, from the January 16, 1943 issue, may be seen to the left.

Each pattern cost 16 cents in coins, plus state sales tax. Payment for three patterns cost 48 cents plus several tax tokens, bringing the weight of the envelope's contents to just over one ounce. At this weight, first class postage would have been six cents. Because coins could be sent at the third class rate, which in 1943 was 1.5 cents per 2 ounces, thrifty correspondents ordering multiple patterns could save money by using the combined first/third class postage rate.

Most combined first/third class franking is

found on package mail, with a first class letter taped to the box. That such franking is found on envelopes from centers where Japanese Americans were incarcerated may relate to the postal employees at these camps. The post master/mistress was a bonded civil servant employed by the Lamar, Colorado parent post office. The clerks and mail carriers, however, were drawn from the inmates, themselves. Likely, they put the interests of the patrons ahead of the Post Office Department. So, when a “loophole” was discovered, word passed quickly whenever a cost savings was possible.

Examples with this franking to the *Denver Post* have been reported from both the

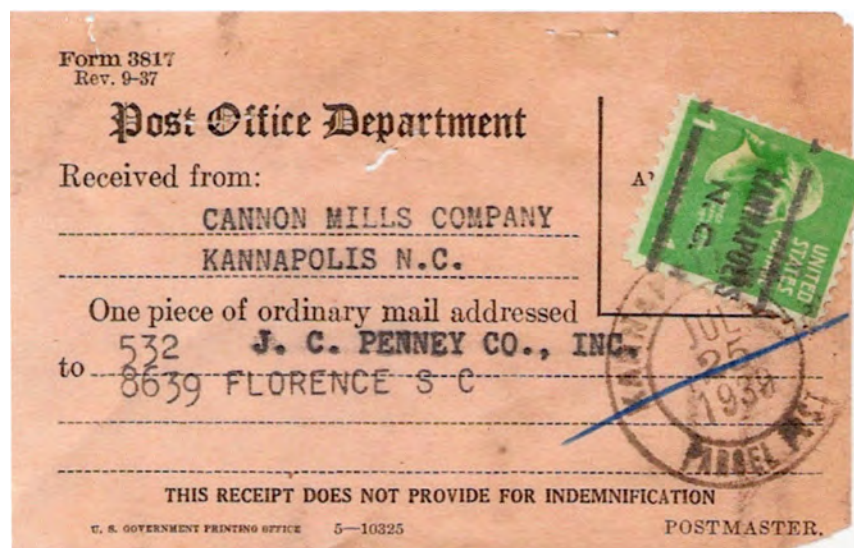
Granada and Heart Mountain Relocation Centers. Many Japanese Americans here were prewar Coloradans and subscribed to the paper throughout the incarceration years. However, because the Anne Adams patterns in the *Post* were syndicated, it remains possible that other metropolitan newspapers offered similar patterns for sale, and inmates at other relocation centers may have responded to them.

Collectors should be on the lookout for combined first/third class mail from the other eight relocation camps scattered throughout the country that were in operation from 1942-1945.

These covers are scarce.

## Precancel Stamp on Form 3817

by Stanley Sablak



The Certificate of Mailing Form 3817 shown here is rather common, to be sure. Affixed is a 1-cent Prexie stamp paying the correct certificate of mailing fee. However, on closer examination the stamp, which is tied with a double circle Parcel Post canceler dated July 25, 1939, has a local towns type precancel, Kannapolis, N.C.

The stamp may have been put on the form by a Cannon Mills Company employee, since precancel stamps are rarely seen on these forms.

Can readers else show another Form 3817 franked with a precancel stamp?



## Presidential-Era Committee Convention at ARIPEX 2015 A Success

The Presidential-Era Committee of the USSS was the principle convening society at ARIPEX, a World Series of Philately show held in Phoenix, AZ on 20-22 February. To our knowledge, this is the first time a committee of the Society has held its own convention.

Committee members contributed 14 competitive single and multi-frame exhibits, with Prexie-era traditional philately and postal history filling 84 frames. Also, each judge contributed a single frame exhibit of Prexie-era material to the Judges' Court of Honor. All jury members are current members of the Committee; John Hotchner, Liz Hisey, Dickson Preston, Jeffrey Shapiro, and Bob Hohertz.

Joe Bock gave a talk on the development of the atomic bomb on Saturday, while Louis Fiset was the principle speaker at the Committee's formal meeting on Sunday morning, discussing the resumption of mail service to Europe at the

end of World War II.

Because a prominent collector had made his Prexie collection available to the market prior to the show and dealers knew of the Prexie event well in advance, considerable Prexie-era postal history was available at dealers' tables.

The organizers of the convention, Dickson Preston and Jeff Shapiro, also arranged two dinners during the show, enabling fellow collectors and exhibitors to meet and share mutual interests. In the evenings, collectors swapped covers at the Committee's hospitality suite, made available thanks to the generosity of Albert "Chip" Briggs.

Preliminary planning for a second Presidential-Era Committee convention is underway for two years from now. The Committee has had invitations from FLOREX and Rocky Mountain Stamp Show to convene at their 2017 shows.

### Presidential-Era Committee Roland Rustad Memorial Award

Albert L. Briggs, Jr. Domestic Rates and Usages United States Presidential Series

### Single Frame Grand Award

Joseph G. Bock Uses of the 50-Cent Value U.S. Transport Air Mail Series

### Gold Medal

Albert L. Briggs, Jr.	Domestic Rates and Usages United States Presidential Series
Albert L. Briggs, Jr.	Three Cent Thomas Jefferson Stamp of 1938
Stephen L. Suffet	The U.S. 3¢ Letter Rate: Domestic 1932-1958, International 1931-1958
Bill DiPaolo	Usages of the 15¢ James Buchanan Stamp of the 1938 Presidential Series
Bill DiPaolo	Stamps & Usages of the Coil Format Stamps in the 1938 Presidential Series
Ralph H. Nafziger	The 3¢ 1948 Oregon Territory Issue
Louis Fiset	Censored, Rerouted, Suspended, Resumed: US International Mail in WWII
Ronald Strawser	Postal History of the United States Famous Americans Issue
Robert Schlesinger	The 1938 Presidential Issue - A Survey of Rates

### Vermeil Medal

Stanley Sablak	The 18-Cent Ulysses S. Grant Pays Rates and Fees
Dr. James Mazepa	The United States Overrun Countries Series

### Silver Medal

Albert L. Briggs, Jr.	The Five Cent Prexy and the UPU International Surface Mail Letter Rate
Joseph G. Bock	Uses by U.S. Allies during WWII Using U.S. Military Airmail



# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

No. 69 Spring 2015

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
fiset@uw.edu

## **Twilight of the Prexies: Air Mail to Pitcairn Island**

by Stephen L. Suffet



Figure 1: Double 25-cent per half ounce air mail rate to Pitcairn Island via New Zealand. Onward service to Pitcairn was by steamship.

This article is the first in a series that looks at usages of the United States Presidential Series stamps after the Post Office Department (P.O.D.) introduced the Liberty Series beginning with the release of the 8-cent value on April 9, 1954.

Except for the two **CANAL ZONE** overprinted stamps, P.O.D. issued all the basic denominations and formats of the Prexies within a nine month period during 1938-1939. This, of course, does not include production varieties, such as the stamps with the electric

### ***Inside***

<b>Survived at Pearl Harbor, Sunk in the Falklands War</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>A Circuitous and Expensive Route to South Africa</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A Top Secret Mission to Eritrea - "Project 19"</b>	<b>6</b>
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eye markings in the sheet margins or the dry-printed \$1 stamp. Even counting the **CANAL ZONE** stamps, the entire process of releasing the Prexies took less than 17 months.

By contrast, it took 11 years to do the same for the Liberty Series. Even ignoring the 25-cent Liberty Series coil stamp of 1965, which had no equivalent in the Presidential Series, it still took seven years to phase in the Liberty Series. During that time, many Prexies remained in current use. Each of the Presidential stamps continued to be produced and distributed to post offices during at least part of that period, some even after equivalent stamps in the Liberty Series had been issued. Many Prexies remained in post office stock for sale to customers after production and distribution had ended, and many others remained in the hands of the public after post office stocks ran out.

Figure 1 shows a pair of 25-cent Prexies paying two times the 25 cents per half ounce air mail rate to Pitcairn Island in 1959. The cover was postmarked Grapevine, Texas, a small city in the Dallas - Fort Worth metropolitan area, on July 27 of that year. A receiving postmark on the front of the cover shows it reached Pitcairn Island 17 days later, on August 31.

Located in the South Pacific approximately midway between New Zealand and South America, Pitcairn Island is one of the most remote inhabited places on earth. It was first settled in 1790 by nine of the *H.M.S. Bounty* mutineers along with six Tahitian men and eighteen Tahitian women they had cajoled, bribed, tricked, or forced into coming along. In 1959, the population of Pitcairn Island was only 149. Since then it has declined by about

two-thirds.

Although the general U.S. air mail rate to most of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific had been set at 25 cents per half ounce as of November 1, 1946, there is no indication that rate had applied to Pitcairn Island until March 22, 1949, when the notice, shown in Figure 2, appeared in *The Postal Bulletin*.

According to the notice, "air-mail articles will be dispatched via New Zealand for onward

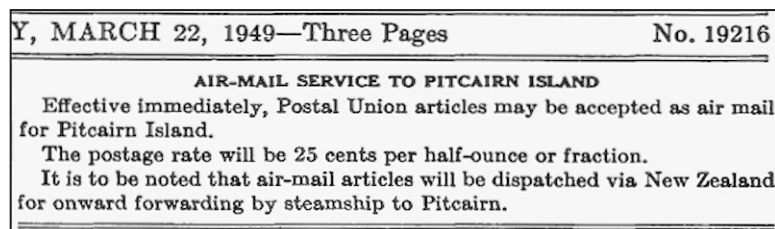


Figure 2: Detail from *The Postal Bulletin*, March 22, 1940.

forwarding by steamship to Pitcairn." The air mail rate to New Zealand at the time was, of course, 25 cents per half ounce, but *The Postal Bulletin* is silent on whether this forwarding by steamship was a new service or simply an official acknowledgement of a practice already in place.

In either case, the extension of the 25-cent rate to Pitcairn Island does not appear in *U.S. International Postal Rates, 1872-1996*, by Anthony S. Wawrukiewicz and Henry W. Beecher. In fact, the only air mail rate to Pitcairn Island they list is one via the Canal Zone that appeared in the July 1939 edition of the *United States Official Postal Guide*. That rate was 15 cents per half ounce, the same as the air mail rate from the U.S. mainland to the Canal Zone, and it provided air mail service only as far as Cristobal, the port on the Atlantic side of the Panama Canal. Transport from Cristobal to Pitcairn was by surface means. See Figure 3.

Wawrukiewicz and Beecher do not say when this 15-cent rate via the Canal Zone ended, nor do they indicate if any service to Pitcairn Island via New Zealand became available in July 1940 when U.S. Foreign Air Mail Route 19 from California to the South Pacific was



inaugurated. The rate from the U.S. mainland to New Zealand was set at 50 cents per half

colony, now a British overseas territory, included three other islands, all uninhabited; Henderson, Ducie, and Oeno.)

Pitcairn Islands (airmail letter rates)			
(In cents); Shaded area = absence of route/rate; Arrow (→) = continuance of rate.			
Route	Terms	Unit	1
a. FAM from Miami to Cristobal	C	per 1/2 oz.	1939 15¢

S = surcharge; C = rate is inclusive of both ordinary postage and that for airmail service; FAM = foreign airmail route; oz. = ounce.  
a. 1: USOPG (Jul 1939).

Figure 3: Table from *U.S. International Postal Rates, 1872-1996*.

ounce at that time. Presumably no additional postage would have been required for onward transportation by steamship to Pitcairn, provided such service actually existed.

(New Zealand, at the time, maintained a postal agency on Pitcairn Island to handle the island's postal affairs. Pitcairn Island didn't even issue its own postage stamps until October 15, 1940, and when it did, those stamps were inscribed Pitcairn Islands, plural. That is because the

cent Prexies during Fiscal Year 1959, which began July 1, 1958, and ran through June 30, 1959. Finding 25-cent Prexies used on cover in 1959 or later is not at all unusual, and the author has even obtained one used in 1970 on a cover that appears to have no philatelic connection.

Finding an air mail cover used to Pitcairn Island, however, is highly unusual. The one illustrated here would make a worthy addition to any Presidential Series collection.

## Complete Run of *The Prexie Era* Available

A complete run of *The Prexie Era* newsletter, from No. 1-68, is currently available on CD. Send Jeff Shapiro \$10 and your street address. Your editor will burn a copy and put it in the mail. Jeff can be reached at the following address:

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

# Survived at Pearl Harbor, Sunk in the Falklands War

by Jeffrey Shapiro



While many collectors are familiar with the battleships U.S.S. *Arizona*, U.S.S. *Pennsylvania* and U.S.S. *West Virginia*, all destroyed during the December 7, 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, more than 120 other vessels were present at the Hawaiian Naval Base that day.

One of them was the U.S.S. *Phoenix* (CR 46), a Brooklyn class light cruiser named after the mythical bird that arose from ashes and, specially, the capital city of Arizona.

Launched in March 1938, the *Phoenix* saw service prior to World War II while on patrol off the West Coast of the United States. Based at Pearl Harbor, the *Phoenix* survived the Japanese attack and various other encounters with the Japanese in the Pacific Theater of

War. After winning eleven battle stars for WWII service, the *Phoenix* was decommissioned in July 1946.

In 1951, the ship was sold to the Argentine government and renamed the A.R.A. *General Belgrano*, after

the founding father of Argentina, Manuel Belgrano (1770-1820). On May 2, 1982, during the Falklands War, the *General Belgrano* was attacked by the British nuclear submarine, *Conqueror*, and sunk with the loss of 323 of her crew. The *General Belgrano* gained distinction as the first ship to be sunk by a nuclear powered submarine.

The registered official cover shown here was sent from the *Phoenix* while at Pearl Harbor, on June 22, 1941 and received at San Diego, CA three days later. It is franked with two 20-cent Clipper airmail stamps paying two times the 20 cents per half ounce airmail rate, plus a 15-cent Prexie paying the registration fee for indemnity less than \$5.

## A Circuitous and Expensive Route to South Africa

by Bob Hohertz



This cover exhibits an interesting sequence of events, none of which appear to have been correct or intended.

First mailed on January 3, 1940 from New York to Johannesburg, South Africa, the sender affixed 70 cents postage. The airmail rate to South Africa at that time was 25 cents per half ounce from Europe if the letter reached there by sea or 55 cents per half ounce if it went all the way by air. There is no notation on the cover as to whether the sender expected the letter to get to Europe by sea or air.

It is likely the sender knew the letter weighed more than a half-ounce and was trying to pay enough to cover the cost. They could not have been trying to pay double the rate for air all the way, which would have been \$1.10, but postage for one-half to one ounce by sea and air would only have been 5 cents for sea passage and 50 cents for double air, leaving 15 cents overpayment. No prior rates could explain the amount paid, either.

The sender would have been fine, except a postal clerk weighed the letter and found it



between one and one-and-one-half ounces. Interestingly, the clerk quoted a rate of 30 cents per half-ounce, which is correct for neither air all the way nor sea and air. The latter starts out at 30 cents for the first half-ounce, but as 5 cents sea postage is good for up to and including one ounce, the second half-ounce only costs 25 cents. The second ounce going by sea is only 3 cents, so the third half-ounce should have been 28 cents, not 30 cents.

Since the sender had already paid what the postal clerk believed was 10 cents too much (actually 15 cents too much) he asked only for



an additional 20 cents, perhaps failing to note the destination. The sender affixed a 30-cent stamp bringing payment to one dollar for 83 cents postage owed.

The story might have ended here, were it not for the backstamps. These show the letter, originally mailed January 3 and remailed January 4, reached Lisbon on January 15. So far, so good. The next backstamp, however, shows it reaching Tananarive, Madagascar on February 20. Surely, even irregular air transport should not have taken forty days. It

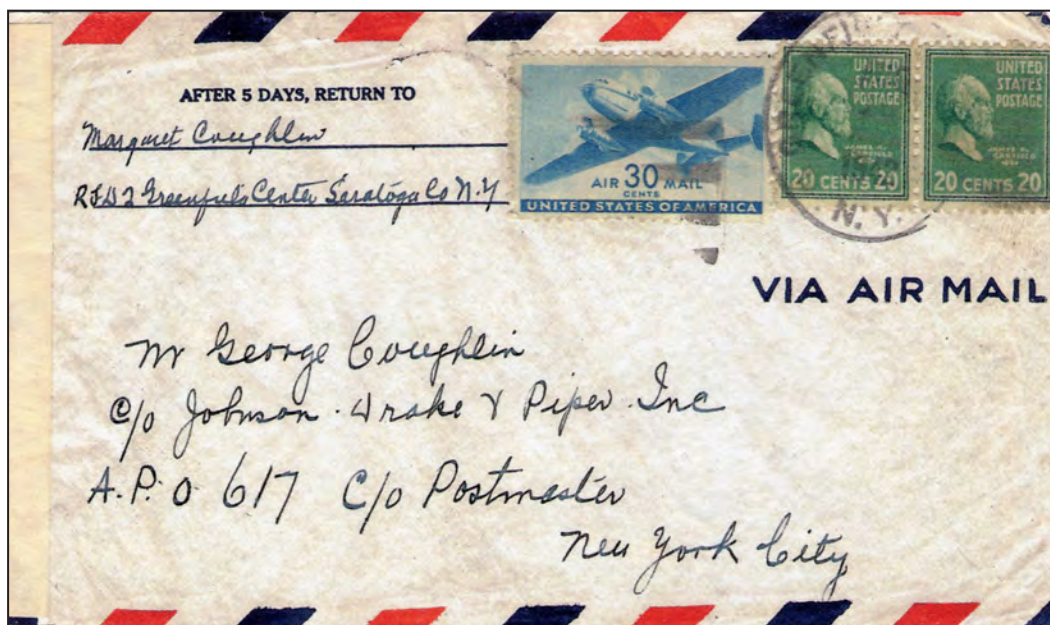
would appear to have gone by sea.

The next backstamp is difficult to read, but the letter seems to have reached Mozambique sometime in late March, though the date could be read as late May, which seems unlikely. There is no record of when it finally reached South Africa.

Could the letter have gone to Lisbon via FAM 18 and onward by sea, just the opposite of expected treatment? If not, this letter, which was overpaid for partial air service, may never have seen the inside of an airplane.

## A Top Secret Mission to Eritrea - "Project 19"

by Stanley Sablak



This correspondence, between spouses, was addressed to a civilian worker on an air base at APO 617 - Gura, Eritrea. The addressee appears to have been an employee of Johnson, Drake, and Piper, Inc., an engineering and construction firm under contract to the Army Corps of Engineers to build runways, bridges, and roads.

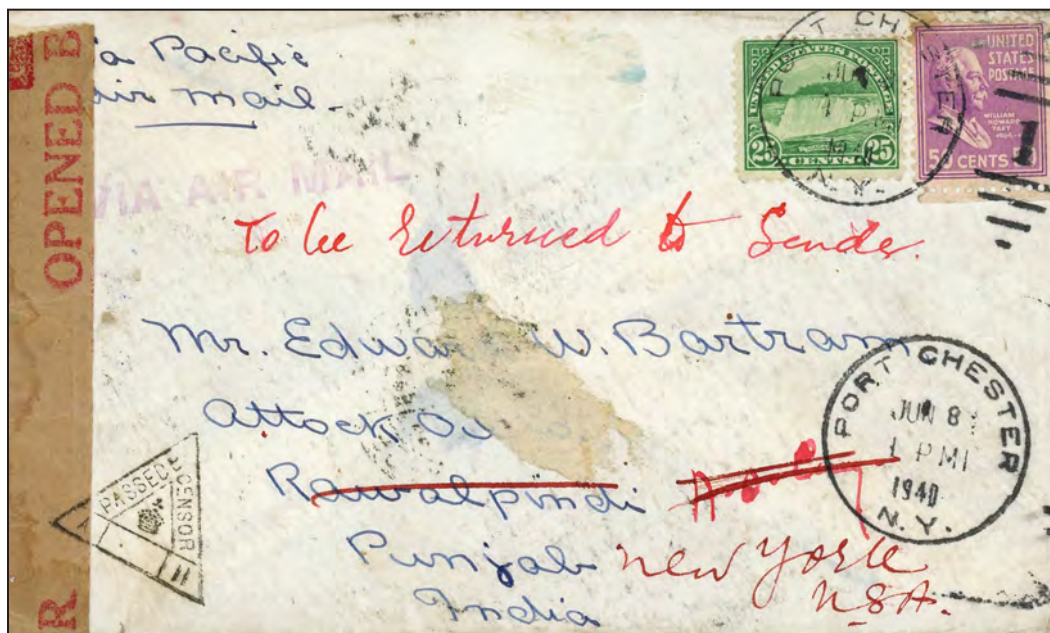
During the summer of 1941 British forces were facing disaster in North Africa. The Royal Air Force desperately needed a repair base in

the region to return its damaged air fighters to battleworthiness. Calling on the U.S., which was not yet in the war, "Project 19", as it became known, was a top secret program in which Boeing and Douglas machinists, sworn to secrecy, were recruited from Seattle, Southern California and Midwest airplane manufacturers and brought to an abandoned Italian airplane plant in the Eritrean hills.

The project continued until General Rommel abandoned North Africa in Spring 1943.

## Held Six Months by Italian Censors

by Bob Hohertz



Back in the days when I was a practicing actuary I attended a Society of Actuaries meeting in New York City. When I arrived at the airport to return home I was quite early, and when I checked in to get my boarding pass the nice lady behind the counter told me that there was an earlier flight with open seats if I would like to take it. I certainly preferred that to sitting in the waiting area for several hours, so I accepted. To keep a long story short, after everyone was on the plane it was announced that the airplane had developed a problem, which would soon be fixed. After several hours and a round of free drinks we all deplaned, and though I found my original flight had left, there was another one with available seats leaving an hour or two later.

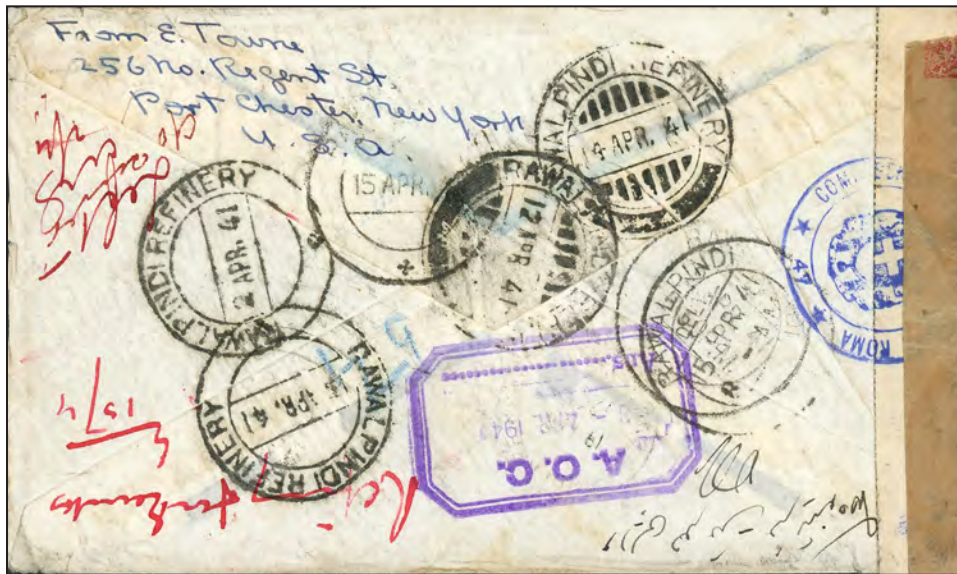
When I finally arrived home my wife asked me why I was so late, and I cheerfully told her, "Oh, I was able to catch an earlier flight."

What does that have to do with this cover to India? Well, it had a similar experience.

The sender mailed the letter on June 8, 1940 from Port Chester, New York, destined for Rawalpindi, India, and indicated it was to go "Via Pacific Air Mail." The 70-cent Pacific route postage was overpaid by five cents. However, a postal clerk must have noticed a flight from New York to Horta leaving on June 8 and a subsequent flight from there to Lisbon on June 9. From there the letter would travel to Rome to meet the Empire Route service on to Athens, Alexandria, Tiberias, Baghdad, Basra, Bahrain and Karachi. Surely this was a faster route than dispatching the letter first to San Francisco, then island-hopping it across the Pacific to Hong Kong for the better part of a week until it could join the Empire Route for onward dispatch to Bangkok, Rangoon, Calcutta, Allahabad, Gwalior and Karachi.

The problem was that Italy declared war on England on June 10 while the letter was in transit to Rome. The western end of the Empire Route was collapsing rapidly. The last flight crossed France on June 11 and surely did





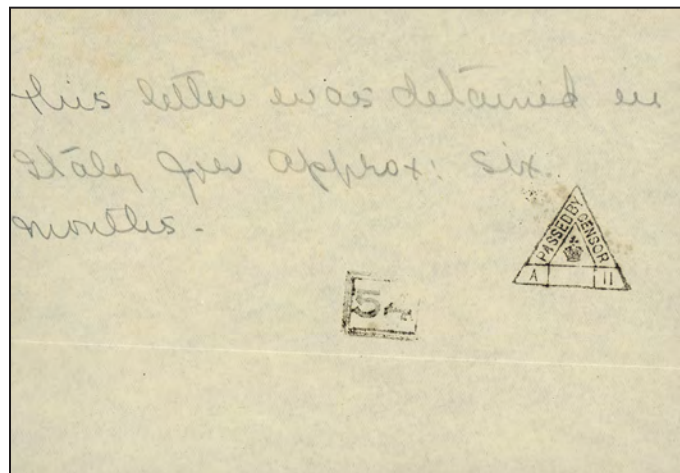
would not think it had languished in their office for almost a year.

Conflicting instructions may be found on the cover: “to be returned to sender” and a change of address to New York for the addressee. None of the back stamps shed any light as to which of these alternatives

not stop at Rome, where the letter ended up on June 9 or 10.

En route to someone working at the Attock Oil Refinery in India (now Pakistan,) the most logical occurrence would have been for Italian censors to destroy the letter or return it to the sender. But they didn't. The contents must have been innocuous enough to arouse no suspicion that they would aid an enemy war effort, so, amazingly, it was held for at least six months and then somehow sent on to the addressee. (There must have been some procedure for exchange of mail of this sort between countries at war, and if anyone knows how this letter passed from Italy to some point where it could be sent to India, I'd like to know what that was.)

was followed, or when. I'd like to think it got to the addressee, and when he asked what happened, it told him, “I was able to catch an earlier flight.”



The letter did not reach the Rawalpindi Refinery until April 2, 1941, by which time the addressee must have returned to New York. There are Rawalpindi back stamps dated April 14 and 15, as well. The envelope did not retain its letter when I came into possession of it, but it did contain one sheet of paper explaining, “This letter was detained in Italy for approx. six months.” The enclosure slip was apparently added by the Indian censor so the recipient

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## “DEPT. RULING No. 2 COMPLIED WITH”

by Louis Fiset



The two covers shown in this article both have rubber stamp markings on their fronts bearing similar wording; “Department ruling #2 complied with.” I have seen this marking applied in various formats on a number of wartime covers sent to international destinations that originated at financial institutions throughout the United States. Until now, the meaning of this text has remained unclear. A recent search on the online version of the *U.S. Postal Bulletin* using the search term, “Neutrality Act”, has now clarified its meaning.

In September 1939, after the invasion of Poland, Great Britain and France declared war on Germany. President Roosevelt was barred by the existing Neutrality Acts from selling arms to the Allies now in desperate need of them. So, he asked Congress to lift the ban. The resulting Neutrality Act of 1939 allowed belligerents to purchase arms on the same cash-and-carry basis that the earlier Neutrality Acts had established for the sale of nonmilitary

materials.

To prevent U.S. businesses from providing credit to any belligerent country, financial institutions were required to file a declaration under oath that all rights, titles, and interests pertaining to articles or materials being shipped had been transferred to foreign ownership. Isolationists in Congress had feared extending credit would allow businesses to invest in the success of any belligerent, and would eventually draw the nation into participat-

ing in the war.

For purposes of administration, mailing postmasters required senders to certify on the address side of the cover **“DEPT. RULING No. 2 COMPLIED WITH”** so the contents would not be held for inquiry by the Post Office Department. However, no such articles or materials were allowed to be dispatched by transatlantic air transport, only by ship or transpacific air transport.

The cover shown above, sent by transatlantic air service to occupied Czechoslovakia, seems to fly in the face of the airmail ban. However, the contents would have been too lightweight to contain banned legal or contractual documents. Alternatively, the letter might simply have been referencing such materials sent by ship. Stamping the cover with the required marking would have alerted P.O.D. inspectors the correspondence was in compliance and the letter therefore should be allowed to pass.



The second cover, to the Dutch East Indies, illustrates another aspect of Department Ruling No. 2 requirements. The declaration was not required on articles or materials dispatched by the transpacific air service, presumably because no country in the Pacific was yet at war with the Allies nor subject to the cash-and-carry limits imposed by the Neutrality Act. It has \$2.95 postage affixed, paying four times the 70 cents per half ounce rate, plus 15 cents for minimum indemnity registry service. The two-ounce weight and registry service demanded suggest the contents would have been banned if sent to a European country via transatlantic air service.

The compliance markings, designed to avoid inspection by P.O.D. inspectors and certain delay in mail transmission disappeared once the U.S. entered the war in December 1941. But the markings did not protect the contents from inspection by Allied or Axis censors.

German censors intercepted the cover to Czechoslovakia at Frankfurt who subsequently sent it on to its final destination. In Prague, the letter received within-city service by pneumatic mail and has a receiving mark dated January 15, 1941. The transit time was 50 days.

The cover to the Dutch East Indies, bearing a \$2 Prexie stamp, was posted at New York on October 20, 1941, with a transit marking applied at San Francisco two days later. On Wednesday, October 22, the letter was carried by the *China Clipper* on FAM 14 to Singapore where it was off-loaded on November 4 and passed through Singapore censorship. The last leg of the journey, from Singapore to Medan, likely occurred on one of KNILM's scheduled flights. A Medan backstamp dated November 23 appears on the back, approximately a month after this business correspondence was posted.

Since prewar transit times from San Francisco to the Dutch East Indies averaged 9-11 days, a delay of approximately three weeks ensued for this correspondence. Having passed through censorship both at Singapore and in the Dutch East Indies, this likely contributed significantly to the cause of the delay.

Evidence of censorship may be seen on the face of the cover. The purple circled D and circled 16 are routing markings placed by Singapore censorship. It appears the letter was passed, but not examined there. However, censors at Medan opened the letter, as seen by the transparent resealing tape, which covers the censor's identification mark (DEV. 14).



No. 70 Summer 2015

# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

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## Twilight of the Prexies - Certified Mail

by Stephen L. Suffet



Figure 1: 10-cent Prexie pays 3-cent first class letter rate + 7-cent return receipt fee.

Certified mail service was on its way in at the same time the U.S. Presidential Series was on its way out.

Originally conceived by Assistant Postmaster General Joseph Cooper as a less expensive alternative to domestic registered mail when neither indemnification for loss nor high security handling was required, Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield first officially proposed certified mail service on February 15, 1955. After the Post Office Department (P.O.D.) held hearings and promulgated the necessary regulations, the service came into

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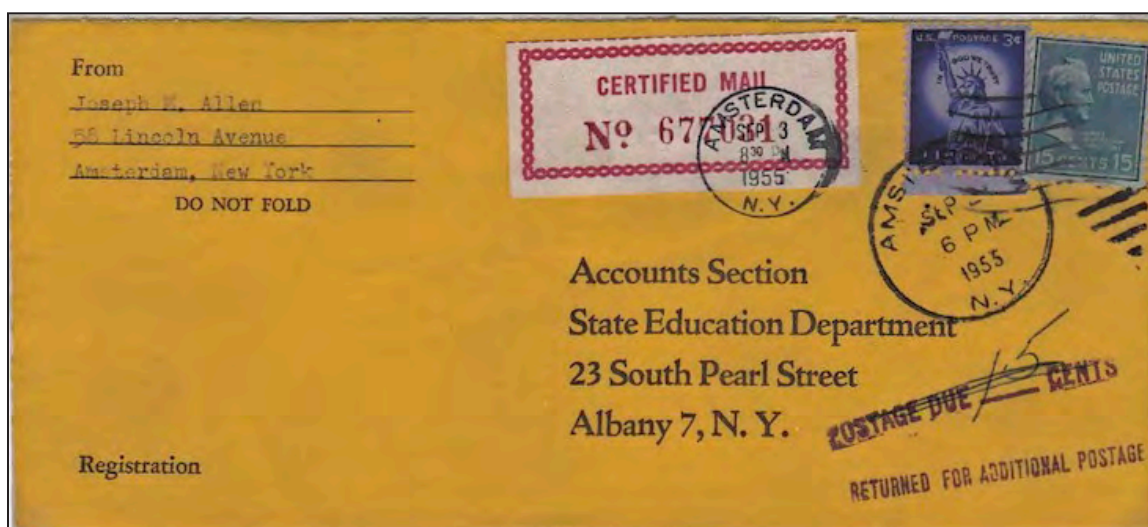


Figure 2: A 15-cent Prexie added to pay the certified mail fee after the article had been returned. 3-cent Liberty paid the first class letter rate.

effect on June 6, 1955, in Washington, D.C., and on the following day throughout the rest of the United States. The initial fee for certified mail was 15 cents in addition to the postage, either surface or air mail. The zero indemnity registered mail fee, which was then discontinued, had been 30 cents in addition to the postage, so the launching of this new service amounted to an immediate fee reduction of 50 per cent.

Meanwhile, P.O.D. had begun to phase in the Liberty Series with the release of the 8-cent value on April 9, 1954. Unlike 1938-1939, when P.O.D. issued all the basic denominations and formats of the Prexies within a nine-month period,\* it took P.O.D. 11 years to do the same for the Liberty Series. During the first six or seven of those 11 years, a significant number of Prexies were still in current use. It is thus not difficult to find certified mail covers where one or more Presidential Series stamps paid at least part of the postage and fees.

Among the most common examples are covers like the one in Figure 1, used from Blissfield, Michigan, on December 19, 1956. It shows a 10-cent Prexie paying the 3-cent one-ounce first class letter rate plus the 7-cent return receipt

fee, while a 15-cent certified mail stamp (Scott no. FA1) paid the fee for that service.

Nearly as common are covers where a solo 25-cent Prexie paid for everything: 3 cents first class postage + 7 cents return receipt fee + 15 cents certified mail fee. Also plentiful are covers where either a 3-cent Liberty Series stamp or a 3-cent stamped envelope paid the first class letter rate, a 15-cent certified mail stamp paid the certified mail fee, and a 7-cent Prexie paid the return receipt fee.

By contrast, the cover in Figure 2 is relatively uncommon and for two reasons. First, a 15-cent Prexie rather than a certified mail stamp paid the certified mail fee. P.O.D. strongly encouraged use of the specially designed stamp rather than an ordinary definitive throughout the 1955-1957 period when the original 15-cent certified mail fee was in effect.

Second, the mailer initially neglected to pay the certified mail fee at all, depositing the article into the mail with only a 3-cent Liberty Series stamp. The post office in Amsterdam, New York, canceled that stamp with a steel duplex hand stamp on September 2, 1955, and then returned the item to the sender for the missing

15 cents. The mailer then added the 15-cent Prexie in a space in the upper right corner of the cover where he might have intended to put a stamp in the first place. He then crossed out the **POSTAGE DUE 15 CENTS** marking and posted the item again. On September 3, 1955, the Amsterdam post office applied a machine cancellation and sent it on its way to the Accounts Section of the State Education Department in Albany, about 40 miles to the southeast.

It is worth noting that the 7-cent, 10-cent, 15-cent, and 25-cent values were among the Liberty Series stamps that had not yet been issued at the time certified mail service went into effect in 1955. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing was still producing and P.O.D. distributing the Presidential Series stamps in those denominations, along with many others.

Along with many other fees for special postal service, the certified mail fee increased to 20 cents on July 1, 1957. By that time the transition for the Presidential Series to the Liberty Series was two years farther along, and certified mail covers showing Prexies paying part or all of the postage and fees are not at all scarce, but a little harder to find.

The cover in Figure 3, with a September 13, 1957, machine cancellation from Narberth,

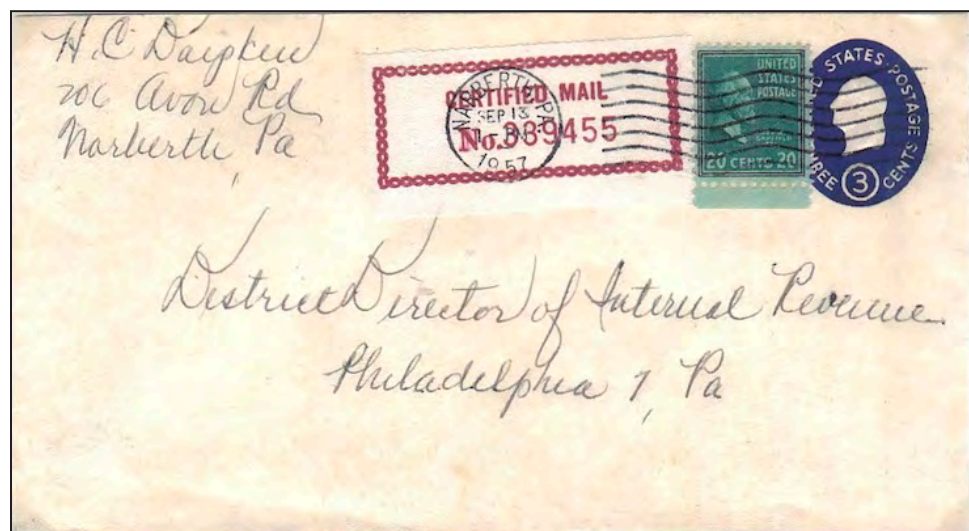
Pennsylvania, is one typical example. The 20-cent Prexie paid the certified mail fee, while the 3-cent stamped envelope accounted for the first class letter rate postage. The 20-cent Liberty Series stamp had already been issued in 1956, but 20-cent Prexies were still being distributed to post offices in Fiscal Year 1958, which ran from July 1, 1957 through June 30, 1958. The 20-cent Prexie was therefore still a current issue when this item was mailed.

The next change in the certified mail fee occurred on March 26, 1966 when it rose to 30 cents. Do certified mail covers with Prexies exist from that 30-cent rate period or later? Undoubtedly they do. However, by that time the transition to the Liberty Series was complete, and introduction of the subsequent Prominent Americans Series, which began in 1965, was well underway.

Although exceptions can be found, it is the author's experience that the vast majority of Prexie covers from the end of 1962 onward appear to be to or from philatelists. So, while it is somewhat arbitrary, December 31, 1962 is as good a point in time as any to mark the end of the Prexie era.

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\* Even if we consider the two stamps overprinted CANAL ZONE, the entire process of releasing the Prexies took less than seventeen months.

*Figure 3: A 20-cent Prexie paid the certified mail fee on a 3-cent stamped envelope.*



## Resumption of Parcel Post Mail to Finland, 1945

by Louis Fiset



Figure: \$1.40 pays the 10 pound parcel post rate to Finland. Resumption of parcel post service began September 17, 1945.

The parcel tag shown here documents the restart of parcel post mail to Finland at the end of World War II. It is postmarked East Willston, NY, December 13, 1945, three months after the Postmaster General's September 17, 1945 order authorizing the resumption of parcel post mail. A second order, published in the same *Postal Bulletin* (PB 18859), authorizes postal clerks to accept all classes of mail to Finland -- post cards, letter mail, air mail, and mail with registry and special delivery service

The \$1.40 franking affixed to the tag correctly paid the postage for a package weighing up to 10 pounds (14 cents per pound), per *The U.S. Official Postal Guide*. The PMG imposed an initial 11 pound weight limit (prewar weight limit was 44 pounds.) Postage for parcel post and all other classes of resumed mail was payable at the international rates in effect at the beginning of the war.

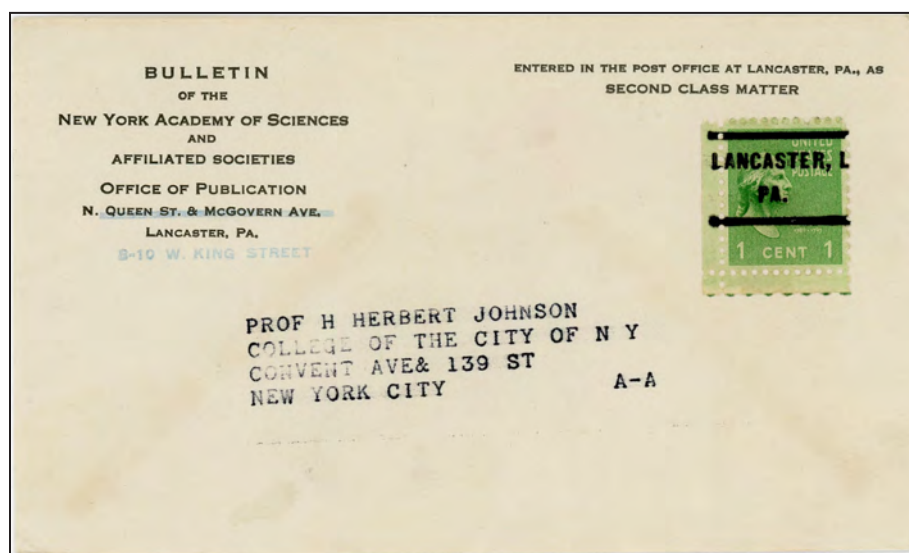
On June 15, 1940 parcel post service had been suspended to Finland and 29 other countries owing to disruptions in transportation resulting in the early days of the war. On December 11, 1941, following Germany's declaration of war on the U.S. (PB 18343), all mail service to Finland was suspended. Having gone to war in 1940 against the Soviet Union, a U.S. ally, Finland became a belligerent nation on the side of the Axis.

Resumption of parcel post service to countries in Europe occurred as soon as shipping became available and infrastructure -- post offices, rail lines, harbor facilities, personnel, etc., restored. Packages containing food and comfort items became lifelines to people living in destitution in countries ravaged by the war. In the case of Finland, correspondents in the U.S. could send one 11-pound package per week.



## Second Class Mail

by Bob Hohertz



*Figure 1: Sent out of state, this mailing can only be an example of the transient second class rate. [In Beecher & Wawrukiewicz, p. 107.]*

One of the more difficult areas to get our heads around for us Prexie era collectors is second class mail. Conventional wisdom is that we don't need to worry about it, since very little of it used stamps to pay the postage. There is a lot of truth in this, but there are those occasional instances where stamps were used to send second class materials, and some of these are not easy to fit into our generalization.

The most prominent exception to the no-stamps rule is the transient second class rate. In the 1940 Postal Laws and Regulations one can find a fleeting reference to the transient rate:

The rate of postage on publications entered as second-class-matter, when sent by others than the publisher or news agent, shall be 1 cent for each 2 ounces or fraction thereof, except when the rates prescribed for fourth-class matter is lower, in which case the latter rate will apply: Provided, that these rates shall also apply to sample copies of publications entered as second-class matter mailed in excess of the quantity entitled by law to be sent at the pound rates, and to copies mailed by

publishers to other than subscribers or to persons who are not properly includable in the legitimate list of subscribers required by law.

Note – The transient second-class rate above referred to is to be computed on each individually addressed copy, or package of unaddressed copies, and not on the bulk weight of separately addressed copies, including those intended for delivery to boxholders. See sec. 579 as to mailings without stamps affixed.

Section 579 deals primarily with meters and permits, and need not concern us here. But note that this section contemplates stamps being affixed.

A classic cover sent from Pennsylvania to New York and appearing on the second page of The Transient Second-Class Rate chapter in Beecher and Wawrukiewicz, is shown in Figure 1. It isn't immediately clear why this mailing wasn't made in bulk, as it was mailed by the Philadelphia Office of Publication of the New York Academy of Sciences. Perhaps Professor Johnson wasn't a member of the group that would normally receive the letter, or the fact



Figure 2: Magazine sent in 1942. Weight of 13.1 ounces, rounded to 14, results in seven cents postage at one cent per two ounces.



Figure 3: Weight of 20.8 ounces, rounded to 21, results in 11 cents postage at one cent per two ounces.

it was being mailed from a different address in Lancaster than that on file with the Post Office (new address is handstamped) caused a technical difficulty.

My other examples of the transient second-class rate are a series of *Life* magazines sent from Chicago to Wichita over a period in the 1940's. Two examples are shown in Figures 2 and 3. These magazines are too heavy to have been sent as third class, and the transient rate used was less than the Zone 4 fourth class rates.

*Life* was entered as second class matter in Chicago. However, it is unlikely the sender

was an agent of *Life* rather than a secondary provider, or there would not have been any reason not to include these mailings in the regular shipments in bulk.

Not all second class uses bearing stamps fit into the transient rate schedule. Section 543 of the 1940 PL&Rs provides another such use.

Publications of the second class, one copy to each actual subscriber residing in the county where the same are printed, in whole or in part, and published, shall go free through the mails; but the same shall not be delivered at letter carrier offices,





Figure 4: Cropped from the cover of a 5-ounce *Science and Mechanics* magazine. Sent for two cents with a weight over four ounces, this cannot be a transient rate.

or distributed by carriers unless postage is paid thereon at \* \* \* (the cent-a-pound rate). The rate of postage on newspapers, excepting weeklies, and periodicals not exceeding two ounces in weight, when the same are deposited in a letter-carrier office for delivery by its carriers, shall be uniform at one cent each; periodicals weighing more than two ounces shall be subject, when delivered by such carriers, to a postage of two cents each, and these rates shall be prepaid by stamps affixed (except as provided in sec. 579).

The important part of that section for our purposes is the bit about 1- and 2-cent rates,

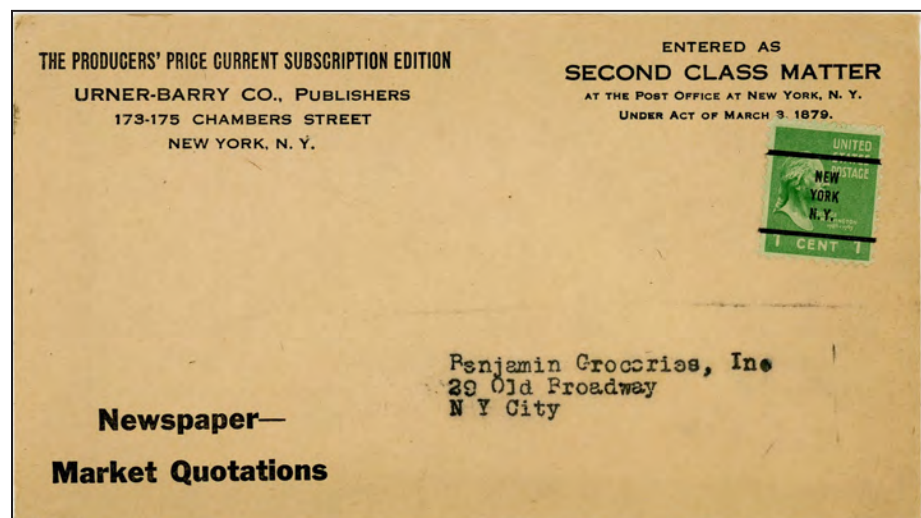
to be prepaid by stamps. This explains several other second class publications in my collection that bear stamps, but do not fall under the transient rate schedule.

Figure 4 shows an example of this rate on a five ounce October, 1945 copy of *Science and Mechanics*, a bi-monthly magazine entered as second class material at Chicago, and mailed to a local subscriber for two cents. It would have cost three cents if mailed under the transient rate of 1-cent per two ounces or fraction thereof. But it was in-county, so the mailer could take advantage of the 2-cent maximum.

Figure 5 is interesting in that it could have been sent under the transient rate schedule since it probably weighed less than two ounces, or under the in-county schedule since both sender and addressee were in New York City. For all practical purposes, for four ounces or under, the rates are the same, and both normally would be paid using stamps or meters.

If anyone has a different slant on how these second class items came to be sent using stamps, or the rates used on them, please let me know.

Figure 5: Sent in-county for one cent, this mailing could fit under either the transient or in-county rate schedules.





## Certificate of Mailing Fees

by Robert Schlesinger

6337-25883

Post Office Department

Received from:  
Heco Envelope Co.  
4500 Cortland St.

One piece of ordinary mail addressed  
to Lumbermens Mutual Cas. Co.  
306 S. Adams St.  
Peoria Illinois

UNITED STATES  
CHICAGO  
ILL.  
3 CENTS 3

THIS RECEIPT, WHICH MAY BE USED FOR DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL MAIL,  
DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR INDEMNIFICATION

POD Form 3817 (5-54) GPO 06-16-69310-2 POSTMASTER.

The last issue of *The Prexie Era* included a discussion of precanceled stamps on Post Office Department Form 3817, the Certificate of Mailing form used as proof of mailing, but not to provide indemnity of any kind.

Originally instituted for parcel post use in 1915, its use expanded on July 1, 1929 to include all classes of mail. The fee had been set at 1 cent per piece of mail.

Form 3817 was to be used as proof of mailing for individual pieces, whereas the sheet sized Form 3817a, popular among Prexie collectors, was for multiple pieces of mail up to 15, with a stamp affixed corresponding to the total number of pieces rated at 1 cent per item.

On February 1, 1954 the 1-cent fee on Form 3817 was raised to 3 cents. The figure shows the 3-cent rate with a precanceled stamp affixed.

## The Famous Americans Issue in Wartime, 1940-1941

by Louis Fiset

The Famous Americans issue consists of 35 commemorative stamps issued over the course of 1940, with the 1-cent Washington Irving stamp coming first, on January 29th, and the 10-cent Alexander Graham Bell stamp the last, on October 28th. The series remained in popular use until the end of 1941 when the U.S. entered the war against Germany and its allies.

During this two year period war was raging in Europe, North Africa, and the USSR. But at home the war was far off in a distant place, and the America First movement was active trying to keep the nation out of the conflict.

Some cover collectors have noted an apparent schizophrenic existence for this series. Domestic correspondence rarely reveals a reference to the war. Patriotic covers are uncommon, and even labels on mail promoting America First are difficult to come by. A close examination of domestic mail involving the Famous Americans might lead one to think there was no war going on at all.

International correspondence, on the other hand, shows an entirely different picture. All outgoing mail was subject to British, French, and German censorship, with most

Figure 1: Up-rated government issued postal card paying the international post card rate to Germany, Postmarked January 4, 1941. Censored at Bermuda showing a scarce censor marking. Examined by German censors at Frankfurt. No receiving date.



Figure 2: Transatlantic airmail to Lisbon, with onward air connection to England intended. Inadvertently sent on Ala Littoria from Lisbon to Rome where the contents were examined by Italian censorship. The letter was then returned to the writer, likely by surface route.

other countries in Europe and beyond in various stages of examining the mail. As a result, correspondents could expect delays in transmission caused by censorship, rerouting, and even suspension of their mail, altogether.

Shown above are two international covers bearing the Famous Americans issue that

illustrate the impact of the war on transmission of the mail prior to the U.S. involvement.

The next page shows two third-class single piece items requiring fractional postage to correctly pay the rate. Since no fractional values exist for this issue, convenience franking or mixed franking often becomes necessary.



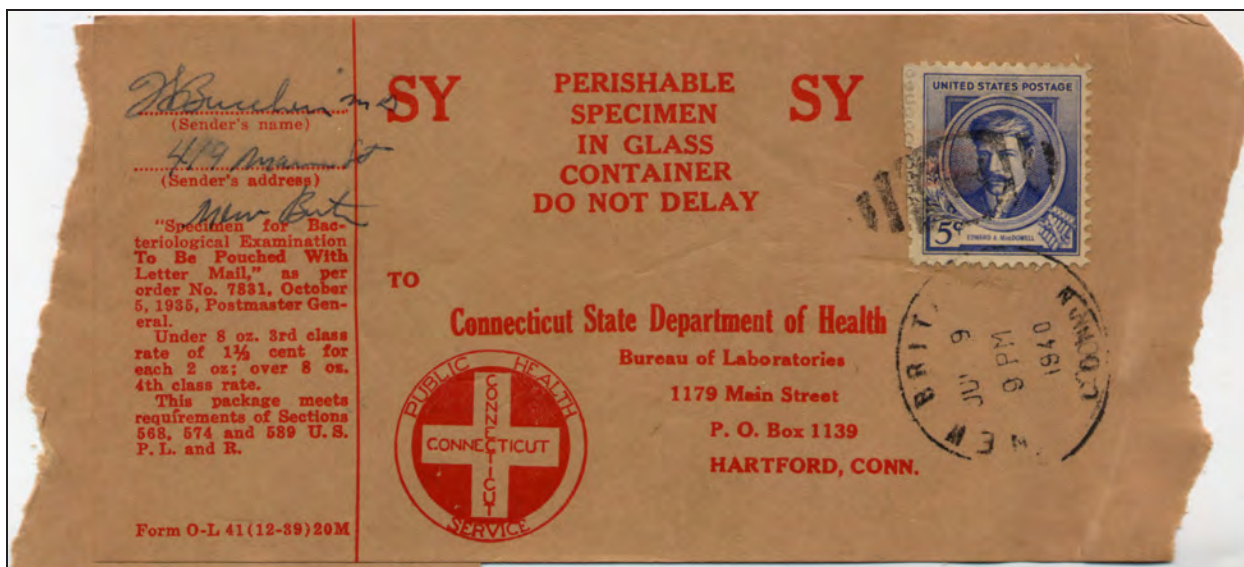


Figure 3: Specimen bottle with contents for bacteriological examination of suspected syphilus (SY). Six-ounce weight required 4.5 cents (1.5 x 3) postage. Half-cent convenience franking paid.



Figure 4: Third-class correspondence (Christmas card) accepted, then re-mailed via third class. Half-cent convenience franking paid.





No. 71 Autumn 2015

# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
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## **The Twilight of the Prexies - Rate Changes of July 1, 1957**

by Stephen L. Suffet



*Figure 1:* 10-cent Prexie helped pay the 30-cent special delivery fee. A 3-cent envelope paid the first class letter rate for one ounce.

This article is the third in a series that looks at usages of the United States Presidential Series stamps, often affectionately called Prexies by philatelists, after the Post Office Department (P.O.D.) began to introduce the Liberty Series with the release of the 8-cent value on April 9, 1954.

As previously noted, the P.O.D. took eleven years, 1954-1965, to issue all the basic stamps in the Liberty Series, not counting tagging and gum varieties that came out later. Even if we ignore the 25-cent Liberty Series coil

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Figure 2: Two 15-cent Prexies paid the 20-cent certified mail fee plus the 10-cent return receipt fee. 3-cent Shipbuilding commemorative paid the first class letter rate for one ounce.



Figure 3: Prexies paid the 20-cent numbered insured mail fee plus 6 cents third class postage for 6 ounces. The U.S. Treasury Department used such covers to send mint sets of uncirculated coins.

stamp of 1965, which had no equivalent in the Presidential Series, the P.O.D. still took the seven years, 1954-1961, to phase in the Liberty Series. During that time, many Prexies remained in current use.

It was during this long transition period that two major groups of rate changes took place. On July 1, 1957, the fees for many special postal services (e.g. special delivery, registered mail, certified mail) increased, or in one case decreased, while basic postage rates remained unchanged. Then 13 months later, on August 1, 1958, many basic postage rates increased,

while the fees for special postal services remained unchanged. This article will look at a few Prexie covers that demonstrate only that first group of rate changes, the ones that took place in 1957.

Figure 1 pictures a 3-cent envelope postmarked July 24, 1957, with a 10-cent Prexie and 20-cent special delivery stamp added to pay the 30 cents minimum special delivery fee that went into effect 23 days earlier. The minimum fee, which had previously been 20 cents, applied to first class articles weighing up to two pounds. The 3-cent envelope paid the first class letter

rate for one ounce. While the 10-cent stamp in the Liberty Series had been issued a year earlier on July 4, 1956, the P.O.D had enough Prexies on hand that they were still being distributed to post offices during Fiscal Year 1958, which ran from July 1, 1957, through June 30, 1958. This 10-cent Prexie was, therefore, a current issue when the 1957 rate change took place.

Figure 2 shows two 15-cent Prexies paying the 20-cent certified mail fee and 10-cent basic return receipt fee on a cover postmarked September 23, 1957. These new fees, which had previously been 15 cents and 7 cents respectively, went into effect on July 1, 1957. A 3-cent Shipbuilding commemorative paid the first class letter rate for one ounce. The 15-cent stamp in the Liberty Series would not be issued until December 12, 1958. Until that time the Bureau of Engraving and Printing kept producing the 15-cent Prexie, which was still being distributed to post offices as late as Fiscal Year 1960.

Figure 3 illustrates four Prexies (two 1½-cent, one 11-cent, one 12-cent) used on a cover postmarked May 29, 1958. The U.S. Treasury Department used covers such as this one to mail mint sets of uncirculated coins to collectors. In 1958, the mint set consisted of twenty coins: two of each denomination (1-cent, 5-cent, 10-cent, 25-cent, 50-cent) from each of the two mints (Philadelphia with no mint mark, Denver with the mint mark D). The total face value added up \$3.64, but the Treasury Department charged collectors \$4.40. The extra 76 cents covered the cost of the packaging, the handling, and the postage. In this case the 26 cents postage represented the 20-cent minimum fee for numbered insured mail plus 6 cents for six ounces third class postage, calculated at 2 cents for the first two ounces plus 1 cent for each of four additional ounces. Although the cover bears the printed endorsement **FOURTH CLASS MAIL**, the article was actually sent as third class mail. At the time, third class mail

included merchandise or miscellaneous printed matter weighing up to eight ounces, while heavier pieces were classified as fourth class mail.

The minimum fee for numbered insured mail increased from 15 cents to 20 cents on July 1, 1957. At that time the minimum fee for unnumbered insured mail, which had increased from 5 cents to 10 cents on January 2, 1957, did not change. That 10-cent fee provided indemnification for up to \$10 in case of loss or damage, while the new 20-cent fee provided indemnification for up to \$50. Since the Treasury Department charged only \$4.40 for a mint set, the 10-cent fee would apparently have been sufficient. Why then did it choose to purchase more insurance coverage that was needed?

The answer is that the letter carrier was not required to obtain a signature from the recipient when delivering unnumbered insured mail. That package of coins, with the Treasury Department return address, could have made a tempting prize for thieves if left in an unguarded delivery box. On the other hand, postal regulations required the carrier to obtain the recipient's signature when delivering numbered insured mail, so paying the 20-cent fee provided much greater security and greatly reduced the chance that the article would be lost or stolen.

The 11-cent and 12-cent stamps in the Liberty Series were issued June 15, 1961, and June 6, 1959, respectively. While neither was still being printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing when the cover in Figure 3 was mailed, the 11-cent Prexie had been distributed to post offices during Fiscal Year 1957, and the 12-cent to post offices during Fiscal Year 1956. Although the 1½-cent Liberty Series stamp had been issued on February 22, 1956, 1½-cent Prexie sheet stamps continued to be distributed to post offices during Fiscal Year 1958. (1½-



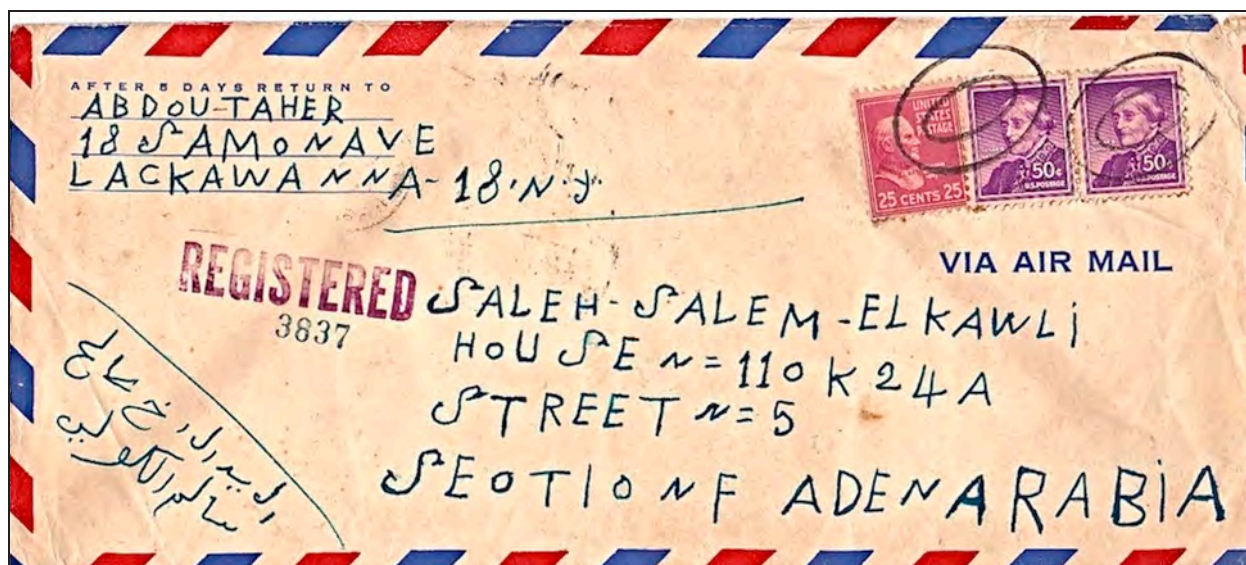


Figure 4a: A 25-cent Prexie and two 50-cent Liberty Series stamps paid the 50-cent registry fee plus three times the 25 cents per half ounce air mail letter rate to Aden.

cent Prexie coil stamps, for which there were no equivalents in the Liberty Series, were still being distributed in Fiscal Year 1959.)

While the 12-cent Prexie and perhaps the 11-cent Prexie were arguably obsolete by the time this cover was sent, the Treasury Department apparently had a supply of these and other Prexies on hand, since similar covers from this era with various Prexie frankings are fairly common.



Figure 4b: A September 26, 1958, postmark on the reverse of a cover to Aden.

in Figure 4b, the cover was mailed from Buffalo, New York, on September 26, 1958. Aden is now part of Yemen, but at the time it was a British Crown Colony. The \$1.25 total postage represented the 50-cent registry fee

plus three times the air mail letter rate of 25-cent per half ounce.

This 50-cent registry fee, which went into effect on July 1, 1957, was somewhat of an anomaly. That's because previously it had been 55 cents, so the rate change represented a reduction rather than an increase. Just prior to the new rate, the U.S. registry fee to member states of the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain, other than Canada, had been 40 cents, the same as the minimum domestic registry fee. However, the registry fee to all other foreign countries, including Canada, had been 55 cents. P.O.D. ended this confusion on July 1, 1957, when it set the registry fee to all foreign countries at a uniform 50 cents. At the same time it also set the minimum domestic fee at 50 cents, raising it from 40 cents.

(Note: At the time there was no graduated schedule of fees for registered mail to foreign countries, other than Canada, as there was for domestic registered mail. The 50-cent registry fee applied to all foreign countries, except Canada, regardless of declared value, and indemnification was limited to \$3.17. The 50-cent fee to Canada provided indemnification

up to \$10, and a 75-cent fee to Canada, which also went into effect July 1, 1957, provided indemnification up to \$25, the limit available. The exhibitor would like to find examples of each of these registry fees to Canada, paid in whole or in part with Prexies.)

The 25-cent stamp in the Liberty Series was issued on April 18, 1958, just five months before this cover was sent. The 25-cent Prexie would continue to be distributed to post offices during Fiscal Year 1959, and many would remain in post office stock for several years

thereafter. Therefore, this cover is clearly an in-period Prexie usage.

In addition to the special delivery, certified mail, return receipt, numbered insured, and registry fees (both domestic and foreign), the rate changes of July 1, 1957, included the fees for special handling and for certificates of mailing. Do any items exist with Prexies paying these new fees? They probably do, but the author has yet to find any for his collection. Can you help?

## Would You Look Twice At This Cover?

by Bob Hohertz



This rather bedraggled cover was posted on eBay rather recently. Would you have given it a second look?

I wouldn't have, except that the seller had put a date in the auction title – December 17, 1941. I've never seen a date for resumption of commercial airmail between Hawaii and the mainland, but was aware that some military flights resumed quite soon after the bombing. Having seen a similar cover (not for sale)

posted on Frajola's Board for Philatelists I've been watching on the off-chance that I'd find an example.

There was only one other bidder on the cover, but they obviously knew what it represented as well, having put in a bid for a bit more than \$150. Is the cover worth that much? I suppose it depends on what you're looking for. Two of us obviously thought it is.



# How the War Department Stole Christmas

by Bob Hohertz



Figure 1.

This is the tale of two Christmas cards that were never delivered, due to government regulations. The War Department was central in both instances

The card (still in the envelope—quite innocuous) in Figure 1 was mailed to a family in care of the American Legation in the Dominican Republic in 1943. The envelope was sealed, so first class postage was paid at the PUAS rate of three cents. It appears that the addressee was a family connected with the American Legation,

but somehow the army became involved.

It isn't easy to tell the sequence of events. The Ciudad Trujillo handstamp on the back is dated February 9, so the card spent significant time somewhere else. There is no obvious sign of censorship, but it's unimaginable, with all of the attention given it, that none was applied.

It appears the Kerr family could not be located in the Dominican Republic, as the address was crossed out and an arrow referred the





Figure 2

card to the mercies of the Civilian Personnel Directory of the Office of the Secretary of War in Washington. At some point it was referred to the A.A.F., where it received a “NOT HQ. A.A.F.” handstamp sometime after February 21, 1944.

Somewhere in this sequence of events the envelope picked up the admonition, “Addressee not listed as a key civilian in Locator Section Directory, A.G.O. War Dept., Wash., D.C. Suggest sender address all correspondence to residence address of addressee.” I seem to recall that personal correspondence was not accepted for routine civilian employees of Foreign Service offices abroad, but have been unable to locate the reference. Whether this is the same situation is not clear, since most of the notations on the cover involve the War Department. What is clear is that the card was not delivered to the Kerrs.

Three years later a card (Figure 2) was mailed sealed with first class postage affixed to Brigadier General Loomis, who had been serving as Ground Fiscal Officer in the Army Ground Forces earlier in the year. However, he had retired by the time the card was sent.

As Loomis had served in helping the Free French rearm earlier in the War he must have had connections in Paris, and left Washington for France before Christmas. The address on the card was duly changed, and judging from the handwriting and color of ink this was done before the card was sent. As a result the card picked up a ten centimes postage due marking, since the sender did not increase the postage when changing the address.

From the notation on the back of the envelope the card was being tracked in Washington by January 9, and probably never got to France. Instead, it received a detailed handstamp reading, “INSTRUCT CORRESPONDENTS AND PUBLISHERS TO USE RESIDENCE ADDRESS ON ALL PERSONAL MAIL. (WD Memo. 600-950-5, 9 Sep 46)”

One would think that once Loomis had retired his mail would not have been sent to a military address, but the particular one where the card was sent appears to have been the headquarters of the Rockefeller Foundation in France. Perhaps Loomis had some remaining duties that kept him within the War Department postal orbit, to the detriment of his Christmas cards.

## A 50-Cent Full Pane, Then Some

by Mike Ley



This large cover front to Honolulu was postmarked at Guam on December 2, 1941. The \$51.60 franking includes a full pane of 100 plus vertical strip of three 50-cent Prexies and a 10-cent air mail stamp. The possession-to-possession air mail rate from Guam to Hawaii was 20 cents per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. Therefore this mailing must have weighed 129 oz. or 8 lbs 1 oz.

The sender was Contractors, P. N. A. B. at Agana, Guam and the addressee, the Chief Accountant of the same at Honolulu. In 1939 a contract had been awarded to a consortium of firms to build air bases in the Pacific. The consortium came to be known as Contractors, Pacific Naval Air Bases (PNAB). In 1940 Guam was added to the list of their projects.

This item was no doubt carried on the last clipper flight out of Guam. The *China Clipper* had arrived at Guam from Manila on December 1, but did not depart until December 2. After

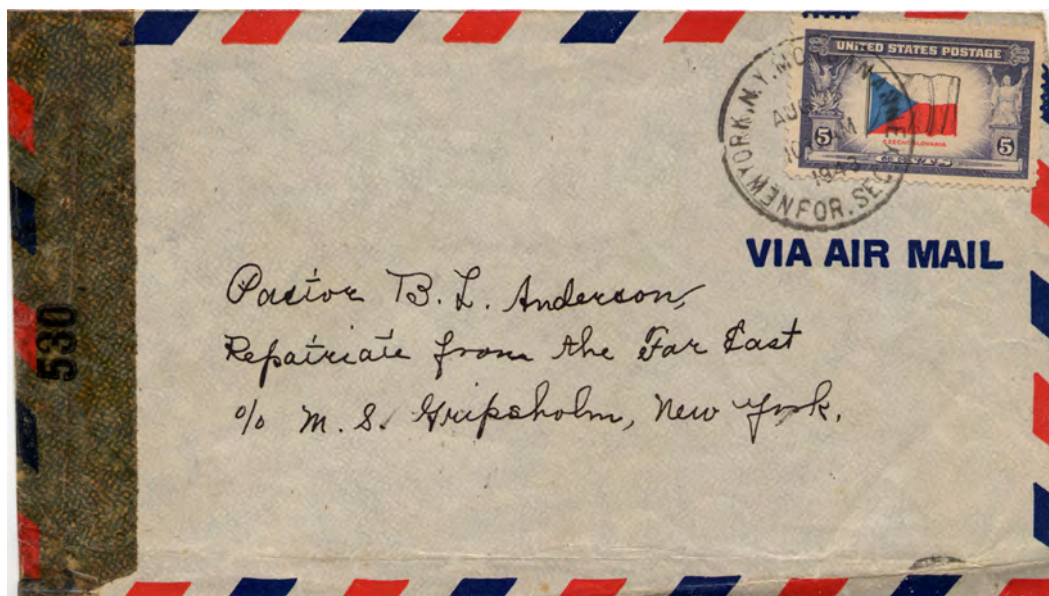
stops at Wake and Midway, it arrived at Honolulu on December 4 where the package was off loaded. The plane then left for San Francisco on December 6, the day before the Pearl Harbor attack, arriving on December 7. The attack on Guam occurred December 8, and island defenders surrendered to the Japanese on the morning of December 10.

This full pane qualifies as the largest multiple of the 50-cent stamp on cover. Rich Drews found this piece 25 years ago when he was still a dealer and an active Prexie collector. He had asked a dealer friend for any unusual Prexie covers. The dealer told him about a cover he found in a pile of stuff on the floor of his back room. It was dusty, a bit soiled, and rumpled. Rich took time to dust it off, gently use a white eraser to lift the grime, and followed with a large cover press to flatten it out. Thanks to his efforts this piece was saved for us to enjoy today.



## “Received . . . Under Cover” Mail

by Louis Fiset



The cover here was addressed to a Protestant missionary interned by Japanese forces in China who was repatriating on the mercy ship, MS *Gripsholm* due to depart from New York harbor on September 3, 1943. The ship would rendezvous with a Japanese exchange ship at Mormugao, Goa on October 16th. This was the second exchange voyage to trade Japanese nationals held in the U.S. for westerners held in Asia.

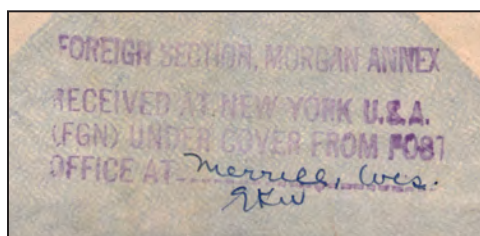
Shown is an airmail envelope with insufficient postage for domestic airmail transmission. It has a New York postmark, dated August 25, 1943. On the back side a purple rubber stamp marking reads: FOREIGN SECTION, MORGAN ANNEX/ RECEIVED AT NEW YORK U.S.A. (FGN) UNDER COVER FROM POST/OFFICE AT . . . . ., the space being filled in by pen with “Merrell, Wis.” What is the story, here?

This cover was found among a small horde of correspondence received by the addressee at Mormugao. We know from the handwriting

that the writer was Pastor Anderson’s wife, Julia, herself a missionary who repatriated on *Gripsholm*’s first exchange voyage. She was writing from the couple’s home, in Merrill, Wisconsin.

A Merrill post office employee noticed the deficiency in postage and, recognizing the time sensitive nature of the correspondence, enclosed the cover in a separate envelope and dispatched it by expedited mail to New York in time for it to be censored by a POW Unit censor (530) and placed aboard ship. The marking on the back was applied at New York’s Morgan Annex, which was located in the same building with the New York field censor station.

Much mail intended for repatriates, both air and surface, arrived in New York after *Gripsholm*’s departure. Thus, a military transport plane was dispatched to Rio de Janeiro, and this late mail reached the ship ahead of arrival at its first port of call, occurring on September 16th.





A second cover, illustrated below, bears an almost identical auxiliary marking indicating received under cover and applied at the Foreign Section of Morgan Annex indicating. Unfortunately, it is too faint to reproduce, here.

Postmarked July 5, 1940, the cover is franked with U.S. postage paying the 30-cent transatlantic airmail rate to Europe, in this case, Germany. The cover bears a return address of Havana, Cuba. A New York postal employee has written in manuscript, "Habana, Cuba," to indicate the originating post office.

Unlike the first cover that was sent under cover to expedite time, in this case the writer may

have thought service originating in the U.S. was more reliable than in Cuba, or that less chance existed of German censorship. In any case, the directive "With the Clipper to Lissabon" suggests the writer had some knowledge of postal routes.

As for censorship, the letter was flown from Lisbon to Frankfurt and censored there before onward transmission by air to Berlin.

Can anyone provide additional information about this auxiliary marking and examples of other applications?



### Special Supplement to Accompany This Issue

This issue of *The Prexie Era* marks a milestone in its history. For the first time subscribers will receive a supplement to No. 71, thanks to censorship expert, Dann Mayo.

Dann has written a three part essay that contributes to the understanding of censorship

and censor markings that may be found on Prexie era postal history. Part I, in the 13 page supplement, covers the period before the U.S. entered the war on December 7, 1941. Parts II and III will appear in future regular issues of the newsletter.



# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

No. 71 Autumn (Supplement) 2015

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
fiset@uw.edu

## Postal Censorship During the Prexie Era

### Part I: Prior to Pearl Harbor

By Dann Mayo



Figure 1: Currency control tape used to reseal a letter opened by German censors during the last quarter of 1939.

Herewith the first of several articles dealing with censorship of mail during the Prexie era, the beginning of which, April 25, 1938 (issue date of the 1-cent Washington) is easy enough to define. The end date remains open to debate.

Solely for purposes of the present discussion, I am adopting November 17, 1961 (issue date of the last untagged value to be added to the Liberty Issue), as the ending date of the Prexie era.



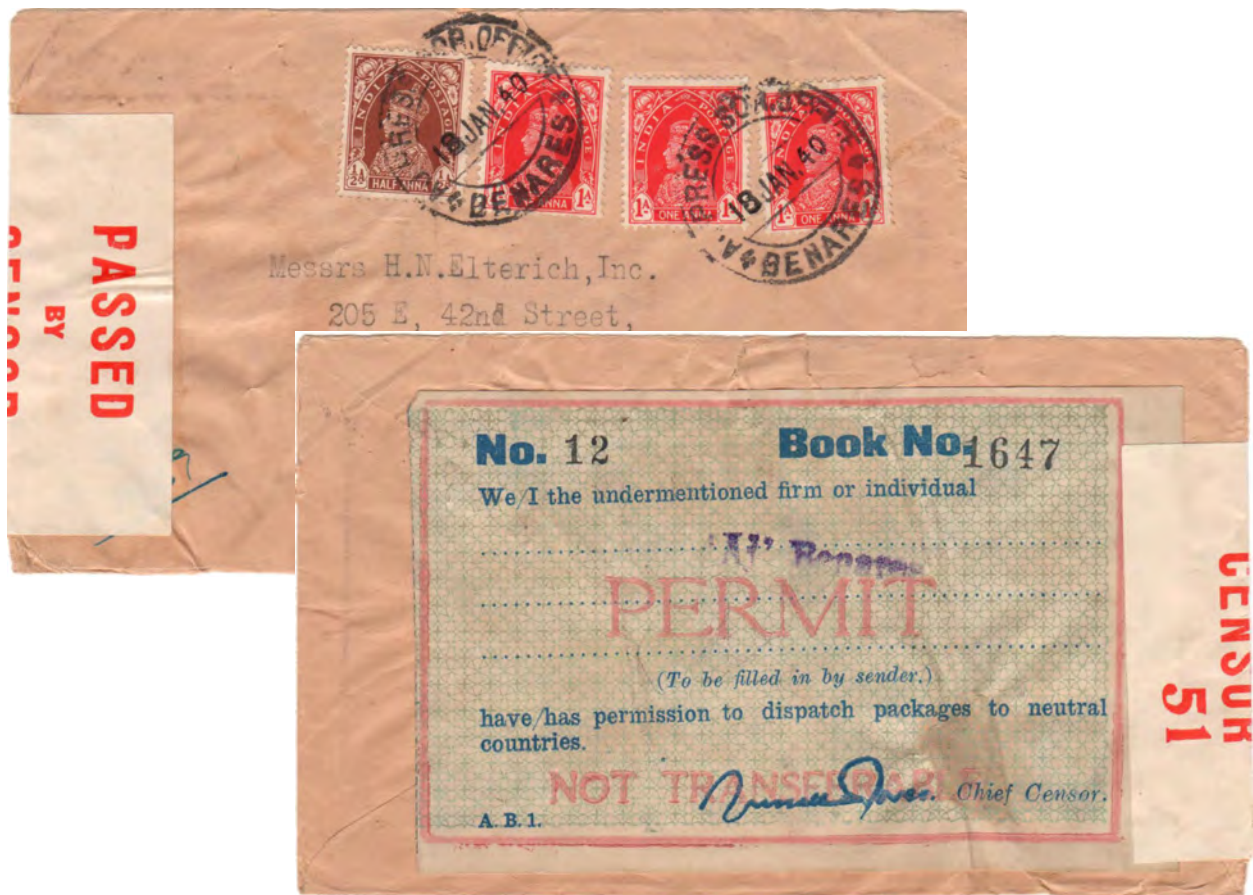


Figure 2: Only a few countries used permit forms. Most, including those in the U.S., were indicated by handstamp or manuscript notations.

The second parameter is “Postal Censorship.” The “Postal” part is fairly straight-forward: a piece of (actual or potential) mail has to be involved. The “Censorship” part may be a little tricky, as we get into issues such as “Is currency control censorship?” and “If it left no marks, was it censored?” Here again, the definition remains open for debate. For purposes of these articles, a liberal approach to almost any issue of inclusivity will be used.

A third parameter is “by Dann Mayo.” My approach vector is Postal Censorship, more particularly civil censorship, rather than Prexies. So, while I am talking about the Prexie era, much of what I show will not involve Prexie covers. In a perfect world there should be Prexie counterparts for almost everything that I show here, and if you do not already have them, good hunting.

### Non-U.S. Censorship

As Prexy collectors are unusually well aware, World War II did not begin in December, 1941, but in September, 1939, well within the Prexie era (though a good argument can be made for July, 1937). During those intervening 26 (or 52) months, approximately 100 entities – including nearly all of the countries in Europe, the overseas British, French and Italian possessions, and the odd independent country in Asia and Latin America – were at some time censoring mail.

Given how much effort went into German re-armament and plans for military operations, it is surprising that the standard Oberkommando der Wehrmacht printed censor tapes and handstamps did not begin to appear until November 1939 (later in many stations). From



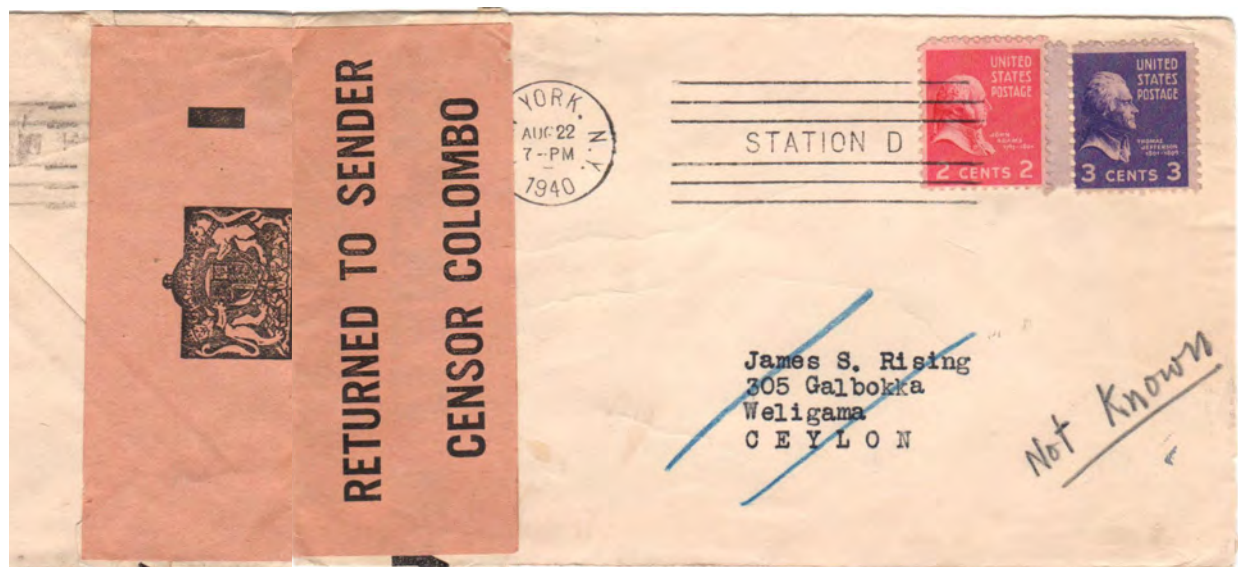


Figure 3: British Empire tapes tended to have letter codes to indicate the colony, etc. in which they were used. The British letter code for Ceylon was L. Early in the war Ceylon used the letters F though M, possibly to indicate different censors, since all civil censorship was done in Colombo.



Figure 4: Censorship sans censor device. The delay in transmission of this card was most likely caused by British censorship.

Figure 5a:  
Nationalist censor  
devices are much  
more numerous,  
and generally more  
attractive than  
Republican ones.

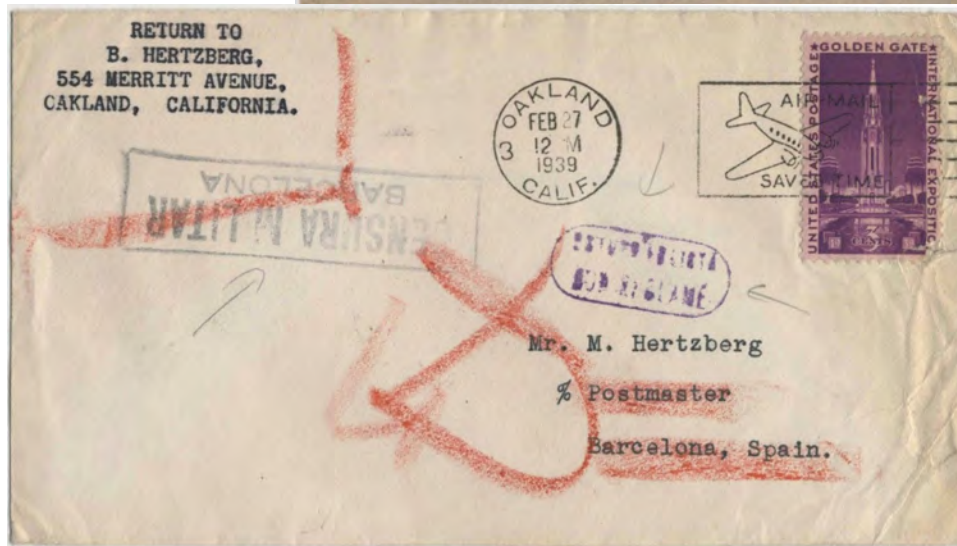


Figure 5b:  
Philatelic cover  
showing Spanish  
Civil War  
censorship and the  
PUAS treaty rate  
for regular mail to  
Spain.

September until the appearance of the OKW tapes, when the various civil censor stations had to re-seal a cover they usually employed the foreign exchange/customs tapes that had been in use since the mid-1930s, as shown in Figure 1. Such usages are uncommon,<sup>1</sup> suggesting that during this period the overwhelming majority of covers to foreign destinations were submitted open across the post office counter, thus obviating the need for re-sealing.

In addition to the more usual re-sealing tapes and handstamps, censorship involved itself in the enforcement of a system of permits and licenses required to send certain information and materials abroad. The Indian form shown in Figure 2 on a cover to the U.S. is one of

the most elaborate devices associated with this practice. Since these are export permits, occurrence of Prexies on such covers will be exceptional. Prexies to pay postage due, customs fees, or forwarding postage are logical possibilities, though I have not encountered any. (US permits and licenses do exist on Prexie covers, and these will be dealt with in a later article.)

Shown in Figure 3 is an unusual use of a Return to Sender censor tape, here used to re-seal the cover. The more usual use of this sort of form was to cover the address, making it impossible to send the cover on. Only two examples of this type of Ceylonese form are recorded,<sup>2</sup> both used in this manner.



Sometimes the censor left no markings. In Figure 4 we have a card mailed from Germany in November, 1941, duly censored in Berlin, but not delivered in the U.S. until April 1943. Where did it spend the intervening 17 months? It seems impossible the Germans would have released it in the middle of the war, and the U.S. Office of Censorship routinely released mail only after V-E and V-J Days. This leaves either the British censors or later discovery in a supposedly empty piece of postal equipment as the likely culprits. My money is on the British censors who may have had no compunction about holding mail to a neutral United States in 1941, but who felt it better to send it on without any overt indication they had held it, to an allied United States in 1943. (This, of course, is speculative, but another piece of mail held without initial censor marking is shown below. Censors did not always make tracks. In fact, the first thing they did was check covers against watch lists and, if no suspect names appeared, many covers were released without further treatment.)

### But Wait, There's More!

World War II was not the only source of foreign censorship on outbound and inbound mail at the beginning of the Prexie era, as Figures 5-10 show.

The Spanish Civil War, lasting from July 17, 1936 to April 1, 1939, just makes it into the Prexie era. But what a great war for censorship! Heller<sup>3</sup> shows markings from “only 1,100” of Spain’s 10,000 villages. Figures 5a and 5b show mail to and from the U.S. with censor markings collectors should expect to find on examples from the early Prexie era.

Brazil has a long history of revolution and dictatorship, resulting in a relatively huge amount of censorship.<sup>4</sup> Of importance to the Prexy Era is the Estado Novo decreed by Getúlio Dornelles Vargas in November 1937 and the resulting censorship that segued into an even larger World War II. operation (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Pre-World War II censorship on March 26, 1938 correspondence under the Vargas government. Brazil undertook large censorship operations during the war.



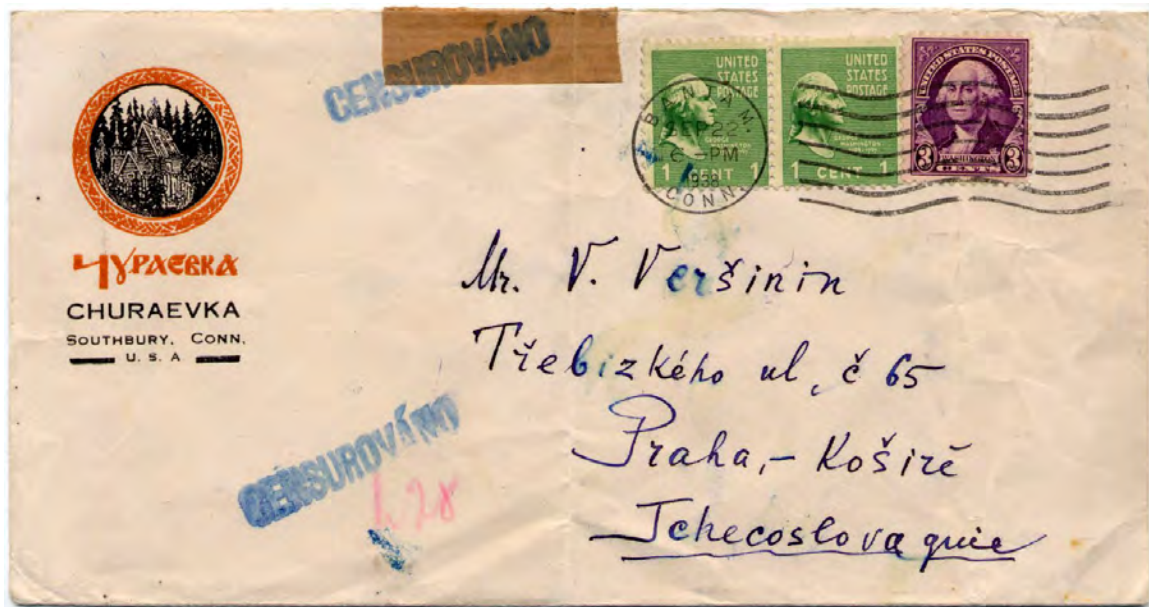


Figure 7: To Prague, postmarked September 22, 1938. Czech censorship, which began on September 17th.



Figure 8: While the label says currency control, the censorship seems more likely to have been for political purposes.



Figure 9: Imagine owning a Prexie cover with censorship from the Rashid Ali revolt. Okay, now start looking!

On September 15, 1938 the UK agreed to the cession of the Sudeten territories to Germany. Czechoslovakia began censorship of domestic and international mail two days later. The cover in Figure 7 was postmarked one week after the territories were annexed to Germany and censored upon arrival in Prague.

There was no legal provision for general postal censorship in Lithuania in 1940, so (as the Germans and Greeks had also done in the 1930s) the increasingly beleaguered government there resorted to the use of customs examination when it wanted to examine mail. It would seem much more likely that this cover to a Latvian newspaper might contain politically interesting information than money for a subscription. (Figure 8.)

On April 1, 1941, a coup in Iraq overthrew the pro-British regent (who fled Baghdad to the protection offered by a British warship off Basra) and installed Rashid Ali as head of the

National Defense Government. British Indian troops landed in Basra on April 18, and the revolt was put down by the end of May. The NDC censored mail with a tape distinguishable from that used by the royalist regime by its spacing. The cover to Iraq, shown in Figure 9, appears to have arrived in Basra while under control of the NDC and censored by both sides. The paper tape is the NDC's, while the cellophane tape and handstamp are British/royalist. It appears to have been delivered after that city was returned to British control. Since that happened to a South African cover, it could have happened to a Prexie cover as well.

### U.S. Censorship

It is generally believed among censorship collectors that U.S. censorship began in the second week of December, 1941. However, December 12-13 just marked the beginning of the censorship of civilian mail by what would soon become the Office of Censorship in most



of that Office's field stations. Limited military postal censorship had been going on for some time prior to that. Figure 10 shows that mail censorship was on the minds of some postal patrons before the country's entry into the war.

Before getting into wartime U.S. censorship, I will mention another form of censored covers (aside from outright fakes) that produces the occasional puzzlement -- resulting from prison

censorship. When you come upon a censored cover that does not seem right -- wrong date, unknown marking -- before consigning it to the fakes box it would be a good idea to check the address and return address to see if either of those matches up with a jail or prison. The cover shown in Figure 11 was sent to and censored at the Raiford State Penitentiary, Florida's oldest and largest, and home of that State's notorious "Old Sparky" electric chair.

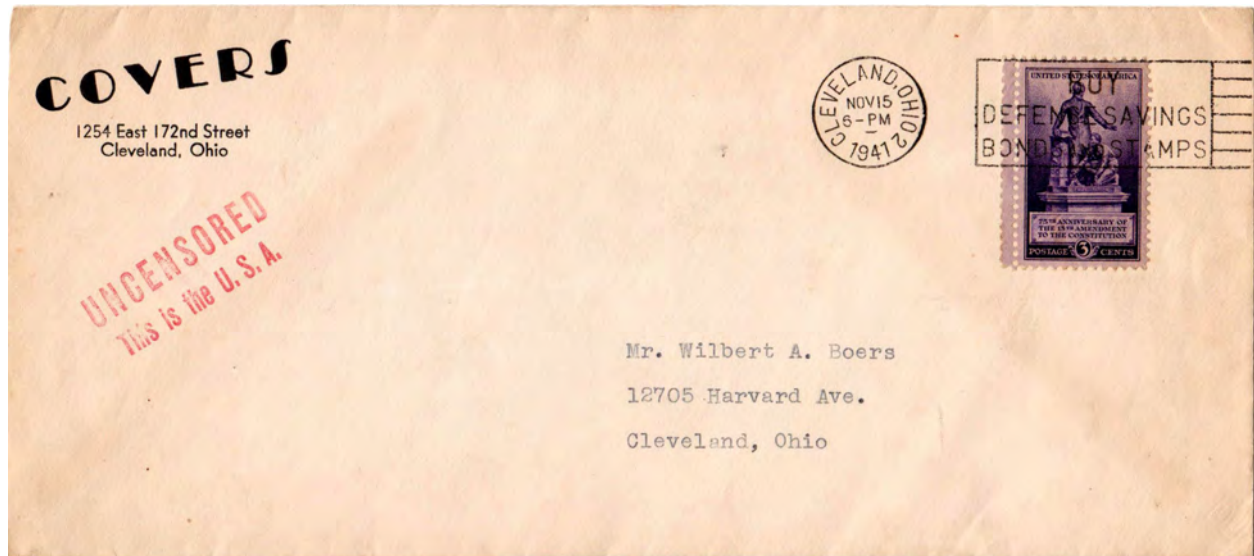


Figure 10: A naive patriotic message one month prior to initiation of the largest civil censorship operation in the history of the nation.

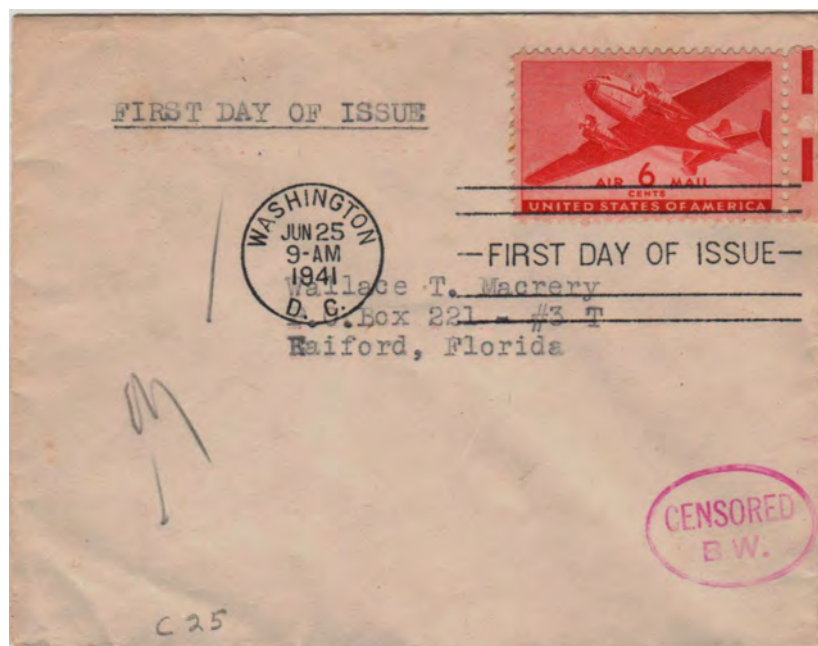


Figure 11: Philatelic mail to an inmate at the Raiford State Penitentiary, Florida. Censored at the prison before delivery to the addressee.





Capt. Marvin Tipton Starr, USMC, became a POW when Guam surrendered on December 10, 1941,

Figure 12: Censorship on Guam, initially limited to military mail, the was eventually extended to civilian mail as well. [Collyer Church collection]

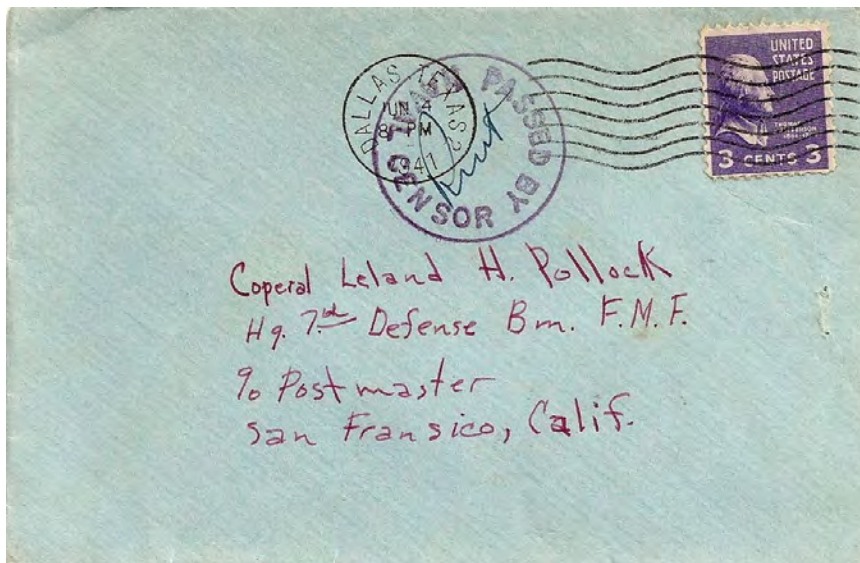
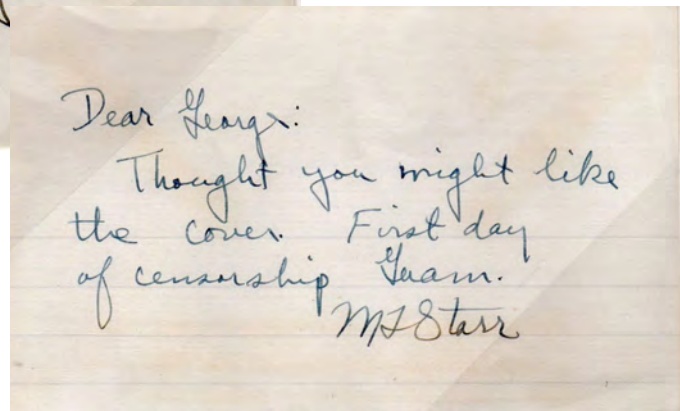


Figure 13: Incoming mail to an Army corporal on American Samoa one month before the Pearl Harbor. attack [Peter Glover Collection]

Until recently it was not appreciated that U.S. censorship began on the remote Pacific possessions of Guam and American Samoa well before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Such pre-war covers are scarce, though awareness of their existence has resulted in several recent finds. See Figures 12 and 13. From the covers seen, some question exists as to whether Guam stocked Prexie stamps at this time. The 1.5-

cent Prexie on the Penguin cover illustrated in Figure 14 may well have been sent from the U.S. on the cover to be postmarked on Guam. Please have a look at your covers and see if you can shed any further light on this subject.

Awkwardness arose from the fact that the British, formally at war, wanted to censor mail from U.S. warships in British ports even

Figure 14: USS *Penguin*, scuttled at Guam during the Japanese attack. She did not have a ship-board post office. Did the Guam post office stock Prexies?



Figure 15: Censorship on outbound mail from the USS *Denebola*, in Halifax to help prepare the transfer of 50 destroyers for the British Navy. Postmarked September 14, 1940. [Peter Glover collection]

though the U.S. was formally neutral. The sovereignty of U.S. ships had been a touchy one since before the war of 1812, and the U.S. position was essentially “No way in Hell.” So, a compromise was agreed upon, under which the U.S. Navy censored such ship’s mail to satisfy the British requirement for censorship, and the British kept their hands off – except, of course where that mail ended up in a British mail system, in which case it was fair game for the local censors.

The USS *Denebola* was an older destroyer tender that was in Halifax, NS between September 6 and late October, 1940 preparing various of the Famous Fifty destroyers for transfer to the British Navy. She made two more trips to Halifax to process additional transfers. See Figures 15 and 16.

The flip side of the Lend-Lease program under which the 50 four-stack destroyers were loaned to the (and never returned by) United Kingdom





Figure 16: Late Halifax correspondence censored on the *Denebola* during the Lend-Sease operation. [Peter Glover collection]

was that the U.S. obtained basing rights in various British colonies. This produced the same problem regarding censorship of mail from the U.S. service personnel and the U.S. civilians who built the bases: the British wanted it done, and the U.S. did not want the British to be doing it. As with the U.S. warships, the solution was U.S. military censorship of U.S. mails. The covers in Figures 17 and 18 from APO 803 (Trinidad) and APO 805 (St. Lucia) bear an early version of the standard U.S. Army racetrack censor handstamp that was used throughout World War II. In my experience, there is a notable lack of Prexie frankings on such covers in the pre-Pearl Harbor period.

The U.S. occupation of Greenland was not part of the the Lend-Lease deal. In fact, it was an effort to forestall both British and German occupation as an extension of the Monroe Doctrine and, coincidentally, to secure Greenland's cryolite mine, which was vital to aluminum production. This arrangement was formalized in an agreement April 9, 1941 that allowed the stationing of U.S. troops in Greenland. See Figure 19.

In contrast to the situation in Greenland, British

forces voluntarily relinquished the defense of Iceland to U.S. forces on July 7, 1941. The initial force, composed of U.S. Marines, was followed on July 27 by U.S. Army personnel. The USAT *American Legion* carried equipment for the 33<sup>rd</sup> Pursuit Squadron (the Squadron itself was carried aboard the carrier USS *Wasp*) and U.S. APO 810. The use of the Army censor marking while still in a U.S. port is unusual, presumably reflecting heightened security for the convoy. See Figure 20.

With Figures 21 and 22 we have examples of the invisible censor. U.S. ship collectors were the bane of Navy Intelligence. Bill Broderick related to me that D.C. Bartley, one of the heavy hitters in this field at the time, said that he had been visited by the FBI who told him they could not figure out what he was up to, but whatever it was he should stop it.

At first it would appear a little mind-boggling that ONI had the foresight to start intercepting philatelic covers two months before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. However, when you add to the story the information that "On 4 October, [USS *Algorab*] proceeded to Little Placentia Harbor, Newfoundland. There



she joined an Iceland-bound convoy, sailed on 12 October, and reached Hvalfjörður on 9 November.” Good reason exists for the cover in Figure 21 to disappear into the bowels of the Office of Naval Intelligence where it was held for the duration of the war. In contrast to the post-Pearl Harbor cover, the cover to the *Algorab* from Trinidad in Figure 22, similarly condemned, never received a Navy censor handstamp in 1941, since there was no war on.

## Endnotes

1. In, Landsmann, Horst. *Die Zensur von Zivilpost in Deutschland im 2. Weltkrieg*. Self

published, 2008.

2. The other one, with code F, is listed in Morenweiser, Konrad. *British Empire Civil Censorship Devices WWII; British Asia*, 6<sup>th</sup> revised edition. Civil Censorship Study Group, 2011.

3. Heller, Ernst. *Town Censor Marks f Spain, 1936-1945*. Spanish Philatelic Society, 1982.

4. Superbly documented in Meifert, Jürgen. *Zensurpost in Brasilien*. Arbeitsgemeinschaft Brasilien e. V. im BDPh e.V., 2012.



Figure 17: From APO 803 (Trinidad). Much of the mail during this period is from civilian base contractors who were allowed APO privileges.

Figure 18: From APO 805 (St. Lucia), These two covers went at the same rates, whether from military or civilian senders, and were equally subject to U.S. military censorship.



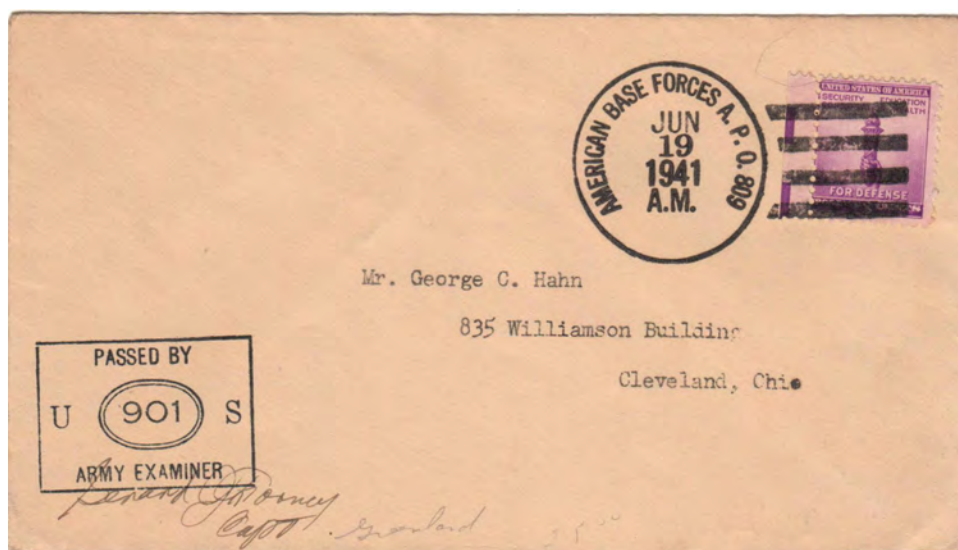


Figure 19: Quite a lot of mail from the “American Base Forces,” whether Lend-Lease or otherwise, is to philatelists, with much of it on patriotic covers

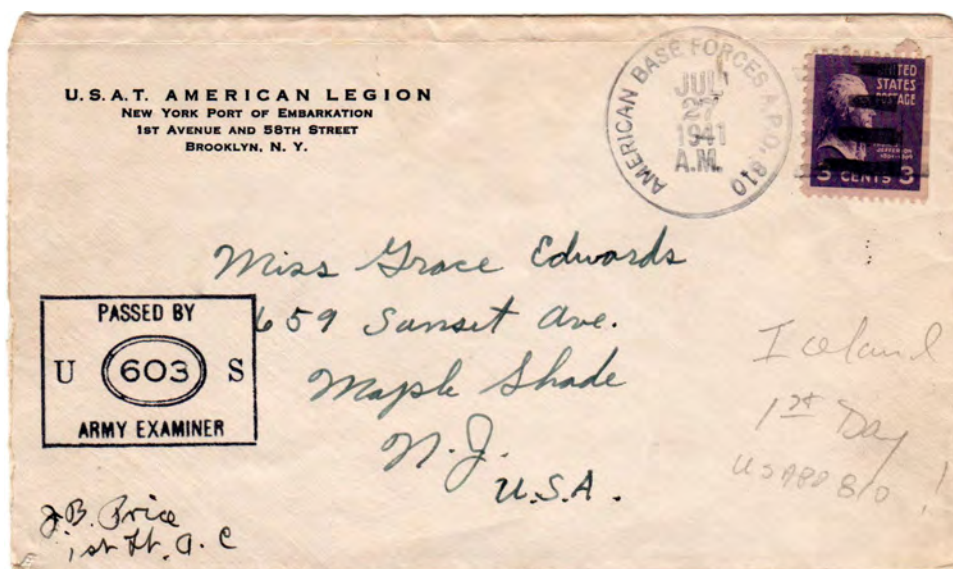


Figure 20: Posted aboard the USAT American Legion, headed for Iceland, on the day APO 810 was authorized.

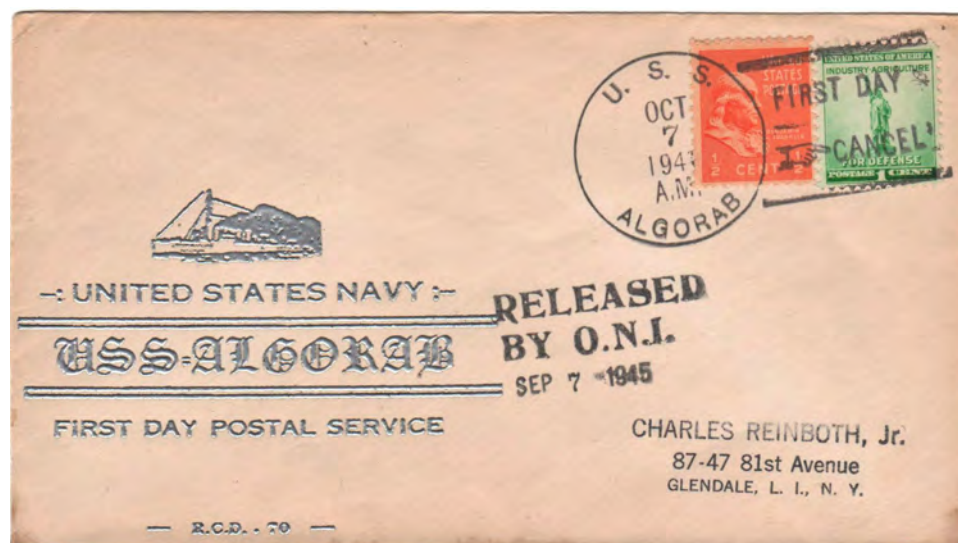
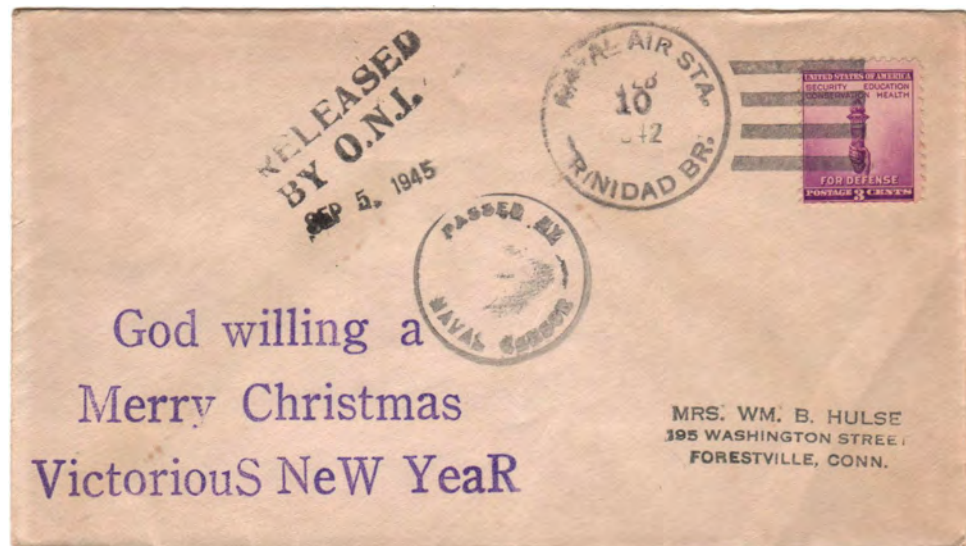


Figure 21: Held by ONI censors for four years. Philatelic mail was confusing to censors who often thought envelopes might contain secret code or messages on those with no inside content.



*Figure 22:* Held by ONI censors until the end of the war with Japan, in September 1945.







No. 72 Winter 2016

# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
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## Twilight of the Prexies - Rate Changes of August 1, 1958

by Stephen L. Suffet

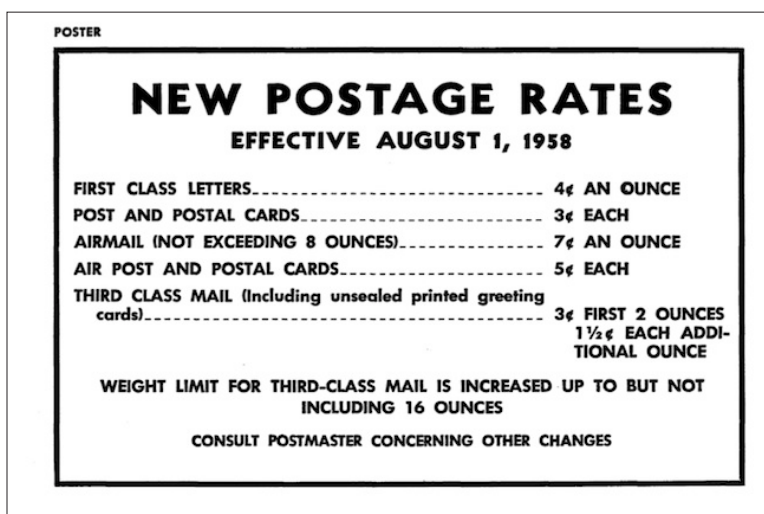


Figure 1: Rate chart poster from the June 19, 1958, *Postal Bulletin*.

This fourth article in a five-part series looks at usages of the Presidential Series (Prexie) stamps after the Post Office Department (P.O.D.) began to introduce the Liberty Series with the release of the 8-cent value on April 9, 1954.

At the request of the P.O.D., Congress passed Public Law 85-426 on May 27, 1958, which among other things increased many postal rates. President Eisenhower signed the act into law right away, and the first notice of the new rates appeared in a special issue of *The Postal Bulletin*, just two days later, on May 29 (PB 20087). Most of the new rates were scheduled to go into effect on August 1, 1958,

while others would be phased in over time between January 1, 1959, and January 1, 1961. This article looks at covers and cards showing examples of the most common new rates that went in effect August 1, 1958. A poster

### *Inside*

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Figure 2: 1-cent Prexie and 3-cent Liberty Series stamps, both singles from booklet panes, paid the new 4-cent letter rate on its first day, August 1, 1958.



Figure 3: Complete booklet pane of six 1-cent Prexies, including the tab, helped pay the 7 cents per ounce airmail letter rate.

summarizing those rates appeared in the June 19 *Postal Bulletin* (PB 20090). See Figure 1. By mid-1958, stamps of the Liberty Series had been in use for four years. However, as noted in previous articles, the P.O.D. took 11 years to phase in the Liberty Series, not counting tagging and gum varieties. During the first seven or eight years of that period many Prexie stamps remained in use.

Figure 2 shows a remarkable cover, postmarked on August 1, 1958, the very day the basic first

class domestic surface letter rate increased from 3 to 4 cents per ounce. A 1-cent Prexie and 3-cent Liberty Series stamp teamed up to pay the new rate. The straight edge along the left side of each stamp tells us that both stamps are singles from booklet panes. This is significant since the 1-cent Liberty Series stamp was never issued in booklet format, so whatever 1-cent booklet stamps were still in use were Prexies.

The last 1-cent Prexie booklets were distributed to post offices during Fiscal Year 1956, which



Figure 4: 7-cent  
 Prexie paid the 7  
 cents per ounce  
 airmail letter  
 rate.

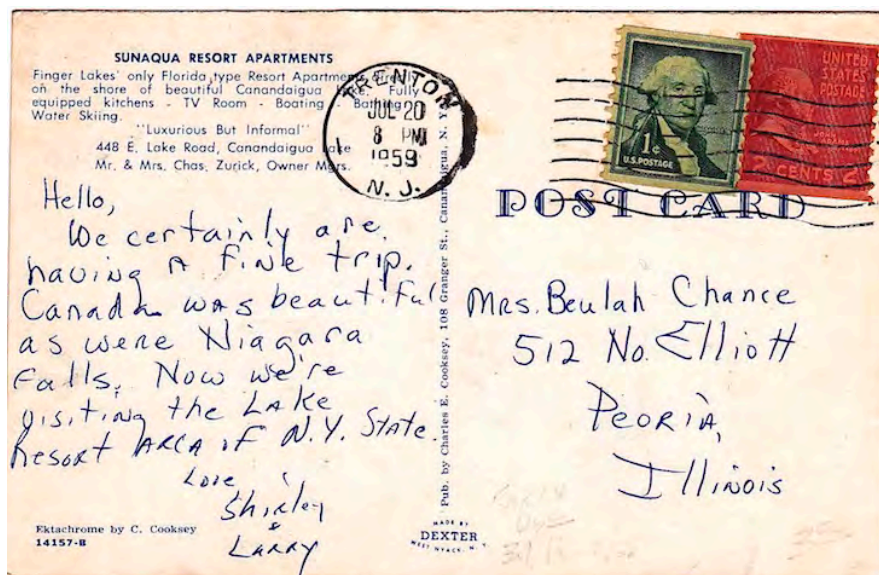
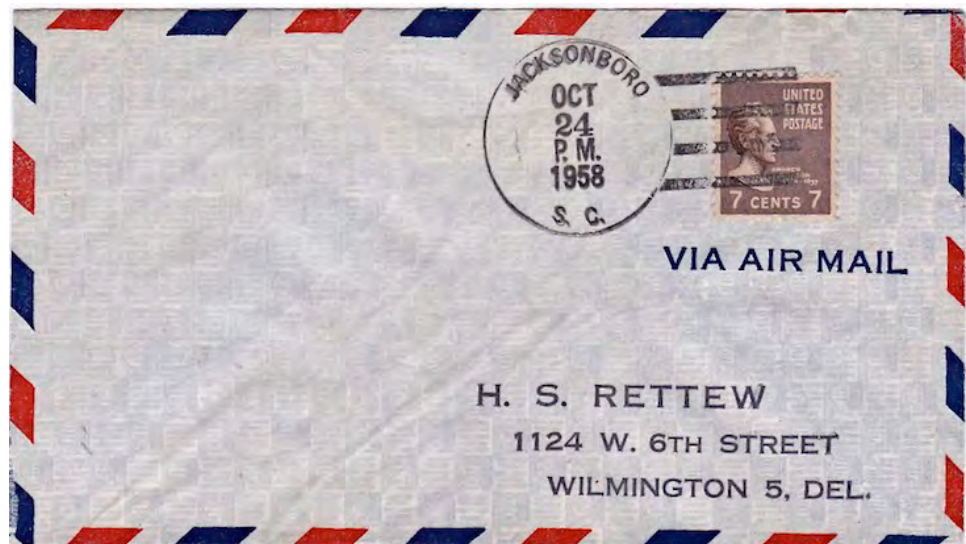


Figure 5: 2-cent  
 Prexie horizontal  
 coil stamp helped  
 pay the 3-cent  
 post and postal  
 card rate.

Figure 6: 1-cent  
 Prexie vertical  
 coil stamp helped  
 make up 5-cent  
 airmail post/  
 postal card rate.

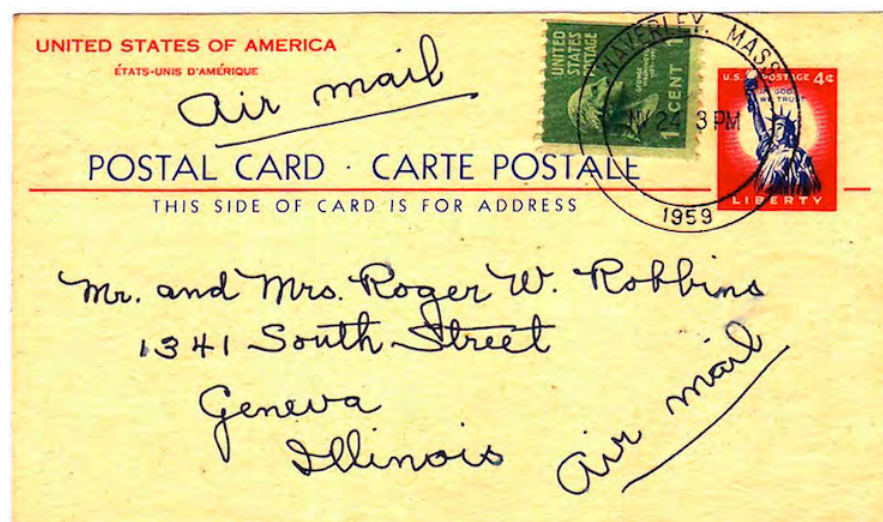






Figure 7: 4½-cent Prexie sheet stamp paid the single piece third class rate for three ounces.

ended June 30 that year. (Prior to 1976, the Federal Fiscal Year ran from July 1 through June 30.) Nevertheless, such booklet stamps, even complete panes of six 1-cent stamps, are not difficult to find used on cover for the next several years. The cover pictured in Figure 3 shows a complete booklet pane of 1-cent Prexies, including the tab, used along with a 1-cent Liberty Series sheet stamp to pay the domestic air mail letter rate that increased from 6 cents to 7 cents per ounce on August 1, 1958. The cover is postmarked September 12, 1961, more than three years after the rate change. The presence of the tab is evidence, but not conclusive proof, that the cover was from a philatelist. Removing the complete pane from the booklet required some effort, and it is unlikely anyone except a person with knowledge of stamp collecting would bother doing so.

Figure 4 shows another example of the 7 cents per ounce air mail letter rate, this one paid with a solo 7-cent Prexie, only issued in sheet format. The postmark date is October 24, 1958, not

quite three months after the new rate went into effect. The 7-cent value in the Liberty Series had been released in early 1956. However, 7-cent Prexies were still being distributed to post offices in Fiscal Year 1958, so there is no shortage of 7-cent Prexie usages from 1958 and beyond.

Figures 5 and 6 show examples of the two domestic post and postal card rates that went into effect on August 1, 1958. In Figure 5, a 2-cent Prexie horizontal coil stamp paid part of the 3-cent surface rate on a picture post card postmarked July 20, 1959. In Figure 6, a 1-cent Prexie vertical coil helped make up the 5-cent airmail rate on a 4-cent postal card postmarked November 24, 1959. Prior to the 1958 rate increases, the two rates had been 2 cents and 4 cents, respectively.

A 2-cent Liberty Series horizontal coil stamp had been issued in 1954, and the last shipment of 2-cent Prexie coils of either format were shipped to post offices in Fiscal Year 1955. So, the post card in Figure 5 represents a late

usage. The 1-cent Liberty Series stamp was never issued as a vertical coil, so whatever 1-cent vertical coils were still in use had to be Prexies. The last shipment to post offices of 1-cent Prexie coils, in either horizontal or vertical format, took place in Fiscal Year 1958. It undoubtedly took at least a year or two for post offices to sell all those stamps, so the usage in Figure 6 can be considered current.

Figure 7 pictures a 9-by-6-inch manila cover with a solo 4½-cent Prexie sheet stamp paying the single piece third class postage for three ounces. Effective August 1, 1958, the single piece third class rate, which applied to miscellaneous printed matter and merchandise, rose from 2 cents for the first two ounce plus 1 cent per additional ounce to 3 cents for the first two ounces plus 1½ cents per additional ounce. At the same time the weight limit for third class mail, which had been eight ounces, increased up to but not including sixteen ounces. Heavier pieces were considered fourth class mail and were charged parcel post rates. The machine postmark contains only a 1961 year date, so the precise date of mailing cannot be determined.

In 1959 the P.O.D. added 4½-cent stamps, both sheet stamps and coils, to the Liberty Series to pay postage on three-ounce third class articles, such as this one. The last 4½-cent

Prexie sheet stamps were printed in 1954, and the final distribution to post offices took place during fiscal year 1957, so this is a late usage. In addition, it has a philatelic connection, as many late usages do. Shelron Company, the mailer, was a New York City based stamp firm that advertised approvals in non-philatelic publications such as *Popular Mechanics*.

The July 10, 1958, edition of *The Postal Bulletin* (Issue 20094) announced that in addition to the foregoing domestic rate increases, certain international rates would also go up on August 1 of that year. Among them were the letter and post/postal card rates to Canada and Mexico, both surface and air mail, which were at the time identical to the equivalent domestic rates.

Another rate included in that announcement was the surface post/postal card rate to foreign countries other than Canada and Mexico. That rate rose from 4 to 5 cents. Figure 8 shows a pair of 1-cent Prexie sheet stamps used to make up the new 5-cent rate on a 3-cent postal card to West Germany, postmarked April 7, 1961.

Because the 1-cent Liberty Series stamps, both sheet and coil, were released in 1954, and the last 1-cent Prexie sheet stamps distributed to post offices during Fiscal Year 1955, this is certainly a late usage. However, it was mailed

*Figure 8:* Two 1-cent Prexie sheet stamps helped make up 5-cent international post/postal card rate, in this case to West Germany.



from the University of California at Los Angeles Medical School, and used to inform a German physician that reprints of a journal article he had requested were no longer available. The usage, therefore, appears to be non-philatelic. The seven items used to illustrate this article

are only a handful of the many this author has found with Presidential Series stamps paying in whole or in part U.S. postal rates that went into effect on August 1, 1958. By that time the Liberty Series had been in use for four years, but the Prexies were clearly not yet obsolete.

### Third Class Mail Forwarded to Japan

by Louis Fiset



This envelope, from a Nassau Street stamp dealer addressed to a local Japanese national, clearly dates to the months or weeks leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbor and the U.S. entry into World War II.

The cover contained third class material, probably a small catalog, thus making it eligible for the 1 cent per ounce rate for books, catalogs, and material for planting. This rate remained in effect from April 15, 1925 until January 1, 1949.

The piece was sent to an upscale address in upper Manhattan and subsequently forwarded to two other addresses in affluent neighborhoods of the city. A final attempt to forward the mail to

Japan failed because of the onset of war. A New York November 13, 1941 back stamp appears on the reverse. The Japanese writing to the left indicates a forwarding address to Osaka. Mr. Kichijiro Tanaka was likely a businessman returning to Japan in anticipation of the coming conflict between the U.S. and Japan.

An additional 1½ cents postage was added to pay the international printed matter rate then in effect. Likely, Mr. Tanaka provided his Osaka address and funds to pay the cost of forwarding his mail. By November 1941, however, surface mail to Japan had virtually stopped for lack of shipping. And on December 11, 1941, the U.S. formally suspended mail service, altogether.



## A Modern Turned Cover

by Albert "Chip" Briggs



Figure 1: Exploded cover to Hungary, postmarked January 29, 1946 and received March 30, 1946.

Postal historians of the Civil War era have long known about turned covers. This is a cover that, after initial use is turned inside out and postally used again. Turned covers have a sender and destination and evidence of payment of postage on the inside and the outside of the envelope or wrapper. The driving force in the creation of turned covers in the Civil War years was the paper shortage faced mainly in the Southern states. If similar social or economic circumstances exist in other time periods it

should be no great surprise to find covers used in a similar manner.

Figure 1 illustrates a cover (opened for display) mailed from Westport, Connecticut to Hungary on January 29, 1946. It has a 5-cent James Monroe stamp of the Presidential Series paying the Universal Postal Union surface mail rate. The letter was received in Budapest on March 30, 1946. The recipient turned the envelope inside out and mailed it back to the original

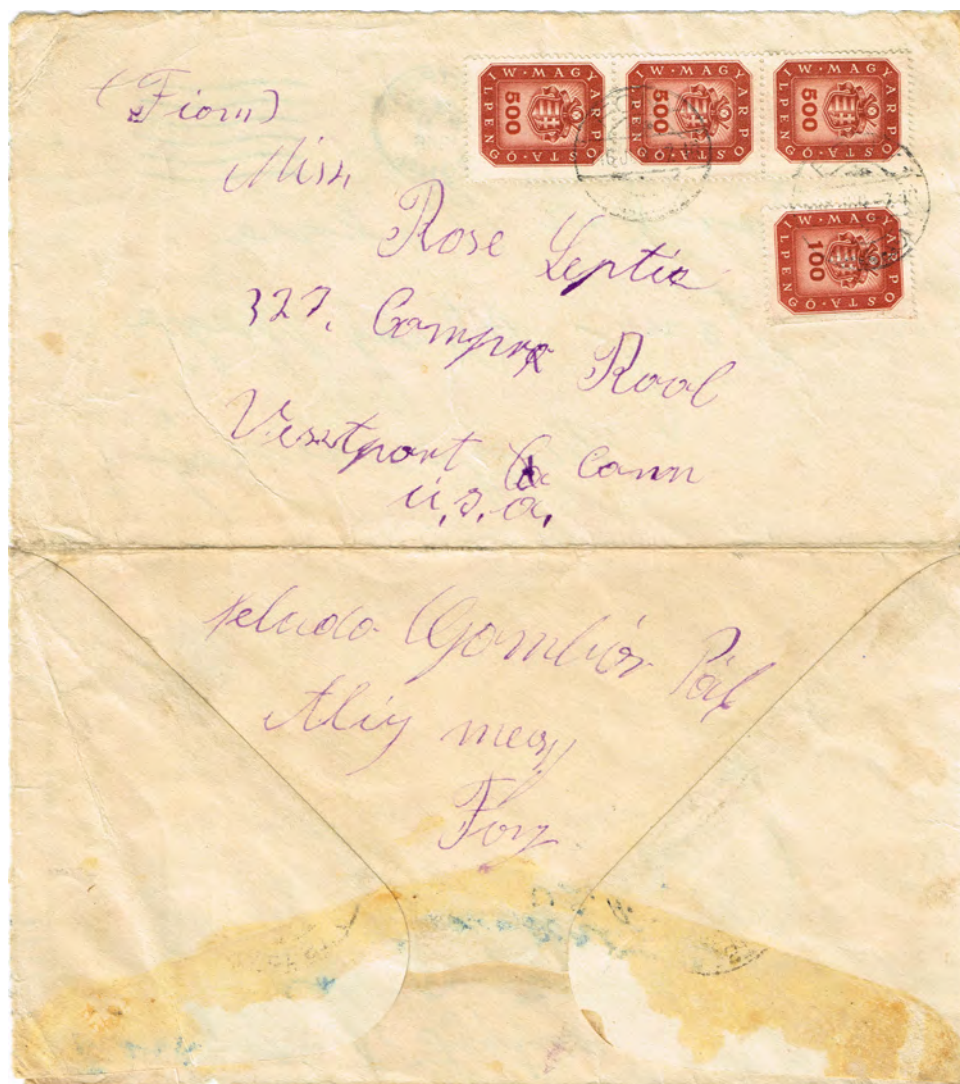


Figure 2: Reverse of the same cover illustrating a modern turned cover used during Hungary's hyperinflation period in 1946.

sender, Mrs. Rose Leptice, in Westport, Connecticut on June 2, 1946.

The return voyage use shown in Figure 2 was franked with three copies of the 500 mil pengos and one copy of the 100 mil pengos Hungarian Coat of Arms Issue paying the 1,600 mil UPU rate in effect from June 1-10, 1946 during Hungary's hyperinflation period,

Apparently paper and envelopes were in short supply or perhaps unavailable in certain times and places in early post-war Europe. That shortage prompted the Hungarian recipient of this letter to reuse the envelope for mail back to the United States, thereby producing this modern era turned cover.



## International Sample Post

by Robert Schlesinger



Figure 1: Undated sample mail likely posted some time after August 1, 1958, when the rate rose to 4 cents for the first 2 ounces, and 2 cents for each additional 2 ounces.

The ability to send samples (patterns) of merchandise through the international mail stream went back to the 1874 General Postal Convention held in Berne, Switzerland. Effective July 1, 1875, the rate was set at 1 cent per 2 ounces (50 grams), with a maximum weight of ten ounces (250 grams).

After two rate changes, in 1932 and 1953, on August 1, 1958 the rate for the first 2 ounces was again raised, this time to 4 cents for the first ounce, with 2 cents for each added 2 ounces (PB 20094). Figure 1 shows a tag with 50 cents postage paid to send a package weighing 25 ounces (4 cents + 2 cents x 23).

This samples category remained viable until the Tokyo Postal Convention of November 1969, which discontinued it as a separate category. Effective July 1, 1971, samples could be sent under other categories, such as single packets, letter-packets, or parcel post.<sup>1</sup>

There would never be any airmail rates for international sample post. Air service for "Other Articles" did begin on May 1, 1949, and would expand to only a limited number of countries.<sup>2</sup> This does not mean, however, that samples could not be flown. Figure 2 shows a sample addressed to Belgium utilizing airmail rates for letter mail. No restrictions applied so





Figure 2: Sample mail sent at the international airmail letter rate.

long as the mailer was willing to pay the higher rates that prevailed. In this example the \$1.80 postage represented a rate of 15 cents per half ounce, for a total weight of six ounces. The letter inside, of course, required no additional postage

There was an interesting anomaly in the “Other Articles” airmail rates. Like all other non-letter mail categories, such as books and printed matter, (with the exception of parcel post), the airmail rates for other articles were



Figure 3: “Other Articles” mail sent at the international airmail letter rate, which was less expensive.

based on 2 ounce increments (50 grams). The airmail letter rates were based on half-ounce increments. The cover shown in Figure 3 contained samples going to Switzerland, and weighed less than one full ounce (prepaid at 15 cents per half ounce). The 2 ounce “Other Articles” rate was 43 cents. In this case, it was cheaper to send these samples via letter mail than pay the “Other Articles” rate!

- 1 Wawrukiewicz and Beecher, *U.S. International Postal Rates, 1872-1996*, pg. 94.
2. *Ibid*, pg. 211.



# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

No. 72 Winter (Supplement) 2016

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## **Postal Censorship During the Prexie Era**

### **Part 2: U.S. Civilian Postal Censorship after Pearl Harbor**

By Dann Mayo

Part 2 deals exclusively with postal censorship of civilian mails carried out by the Office of Censorship and, for the week prior to its creation, the U.S. Army's Information Control Branch of the Military Intelligence Division (MID). This censorship began on a token basis at six field stations starting December 11-13, 1941. These stations were located at New York, Miami, San Antonio, San Francisco, San Juan, Balboa, and Honolulu.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Beginning of Censorship**

That censorship operations could begin so quickly following the attack on Pearl Harbor is due to planning that began almost a year earlier. During January and February of 1941, MID Captain Melvin Jacobus spent six weeks in Bermuda studying British censorship practices that started there the previous March. In June, President Roosevelt approved a plan for censorship and assigned postal censorship to the Army. In the Fall Army officers trained under Captain Jacobus and were sent to the six field stations, as well as Atlanta, Chicago, and Manila, to prepare for censorship of international mail, telephone and telegraph communications. Others went to Washington, D.C. to organize a supervisory office within the Intelligence staff (G-2) of the War Department.<sup>2</sup>

On December 5, two days before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Censorship Branch of MID was renamed Information Control Branch, and three days later FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover designated acting Director of Censorship. He authorized censorship to begin in all stations before midnight on December 13. On December 18 President Roosevelt signed the First War Powers Act resolution, which included censorship powers. The next day he signed Executive Order 8985 establishing the Office of Censorship and appointed newspaperman Byron Price as Director of Censorship. While Price's agency technically controlled civil censorship from this date, administration of postal and wire censorship remained with G-2 until March 15, 1942.

Figure 1 shows a mounted cover annotated by Clarence Dietz Brenner, one of the first examiners at the San Francisco field station. It represents one of the first letters to be processed by that station. During World War I Brenner, a language specialist, withdrew from graduate studies to go to Washington as special translator and censor with the F.B.I.<sup>3</sup> Due to his language proficiency (in 1941 he was an Assistant Professor in the French Department at the University of California at Berkeley, which

This is one of the several thousand covers that were censored at the San Francisco Censor Station on the first or second day of its operation, December 14 and 15, 1941. On many of these covers the word "censored" was written with a fountain pen or blue pencil. Beginning the third day a rubber stamp was used. The majority of the early covers censored at this station were in transit westward. Covers like the one below are probably among the scarcest of those censored in the United States.



Figure 1: A cover on part of a page originally typed by C.D. Brenner. Without Brenner's accompanying note the genuineness of this marking would be doubtful.

he would later chair), proximity and World War I censorship experience, Brenner was a natural to be chosen as one of the first examiners at the San Francisco civil censorship station. And his avocation as a collector of war covers made him document and save one of the first covers to be processed by that station.

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the rubber stamp markings that came into use shortly after censors at the San Francisco field station began examining the mail.

### How Postal Censorship Worked

Incoming mail from the post office to a field station was divided by type; registered, ordinary (usually further divided into business and personal), newsprint and parcel post. Before being passed to the examiners, each piece was checked against a watch list of names provided by various U.S. government agencies, British censorship, and from reports generated within censorship based on examination of earlier correspondence. There was also a list of addresses from or to which mail with



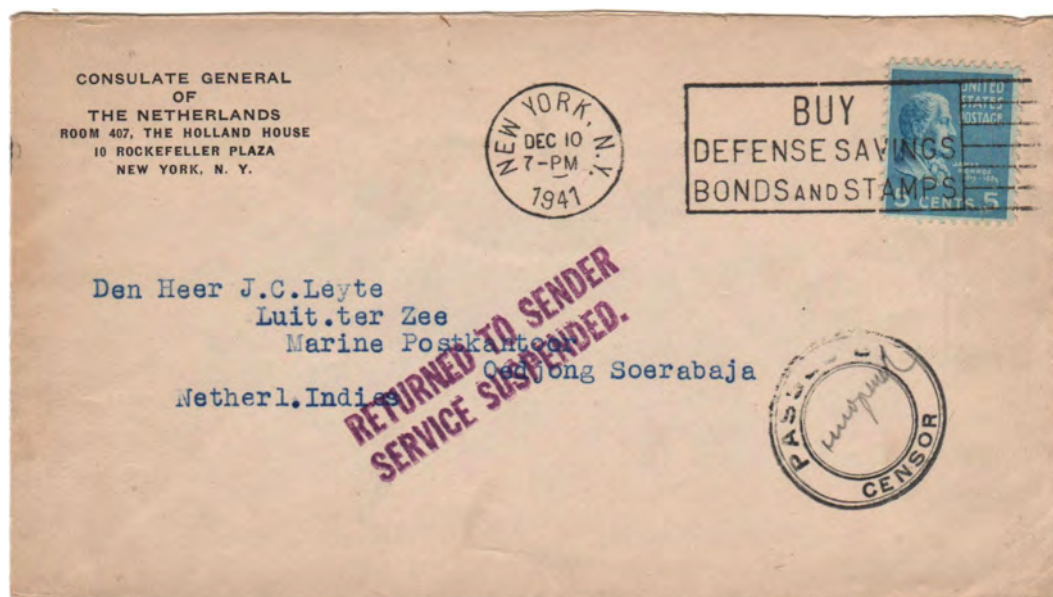


Figure 2: The hand stamps referred to by Brenner as becoming available on December 16. The manuscript “unopened” was placed for emphasis on mail considered entitled to diplomatic privilege is unusual.



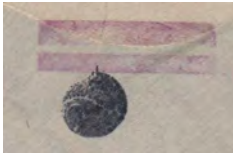
Figure 3: Only a handful of the **NOT EXAMINED** double circle hand stamp has been recorded.

any name would be of special interest. Mail associated with names or addresses on these lists would certainly be examined. Otherwise the target rates of examination were as follows: registered, transit and airmail, 100 percent; outgoing surface letters, 50 percent; incoming surface letters, 25 percent. Except for mail of exceptional interest, airmail was to be delayed for no more than 24 hours, and surface mail 96. In reality, the examination percentage targets

were missed or exceeded depending on the volume of mail and availability of staff.

Mail designated for examination passed to an appropriate examiner who opened it, noted on a submission slip any information of potential interest to the war effort for distribution within censorship and other interested agencies, and then sent the item on, returned it to sender, or condemned it for as long as necessary (usually

until September 1945). Mail passed after being checked against the watch list and released without further examination was usually, but not always, hand stamped by the censor's office.<sup>4</sup> Mail opened for examination was resealed with either a paper label or cellophane tape.



*Figure 4:* Dot and bar communication between examiners.

Mail entitled to be passed unopened due to diplomatic privilege posed a problem for examiners. In New York this resulted in a form of question and advice by "hand stamp," as shown in Figure 4.

When an examiner was uncertain as to whether to open the cover, (s)he put a black circle (likely using a pencil eraser) or a date stamp on the back of the cover and sent it off to a supervisor. If the cover came back with a red-violet bar over the circle it could be opened. This problem must have arisen in other field stations, but whatever the solution, it did not leave marks on the covers.<sup>5</sup>

## Censorship Devices

Through roughly the middle of 1942 officials at the various stations designed and procured their own hand stamps. This resulted in production of a wide variety of provisional designs, a few of which are shown here, in Figures 6-10.<sup>6</sup> Examiner numbers were assigned first on December 19, 1941, but some hand stamps continued to be used without examiner numbers into January 1942.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the hand stamps used to mark mail that had been examined (whether opened or not), other hand stamps were employed to convey various messages. See Figures 12-13.

While the ICB marking in Figure 6 used in Hawaii is relatively common, the one in Figure 14 is a rarity, with only two recorded examples known.

Hand stamps of a standard design began to appear in the summer of 1942 and continued into 1943. These involved a common overall design with assignment to each station (and its sub-stations) being distinguished by the use of different ornaments (the letters O and V and dash and star symbols, and combinations of these) at the foot. Identification to stations



*Figure 5:* Clearly the Balboa Field station was not equipped with the necessary tools of its trade on December 16. Whether it borrowed a US Navy handstamp or the USN filled a void at this time remains uncertain.



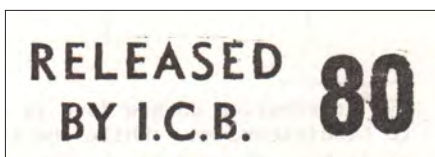


Figure 6: Honolulu



Figure 7: Los Angeles

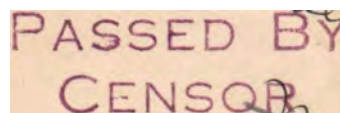


Figure 8: New Orleans



Figure 9: New York



Figure 10: San Antonio



Figure 11: Cover originating in Alaska and censored at the Seattle field station. Brown tape affixed by censor and marking with a provisional censor device.

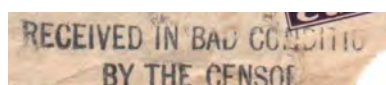


Figure 12: Bad condition

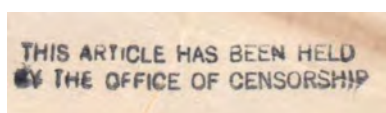


Figure 13: Article held



Figure 14: The discovery example and one of only two examples recorded after 30 years of searching.





Figure 15: Since Washington, D.C. was not on the normal mail route for this card, it was likely forwarded from one of the field stations (most likely New Orleans) to the CPC's office after it was noted the sender had published a book on Cocos Island. The U.S. eventually built an air field there.

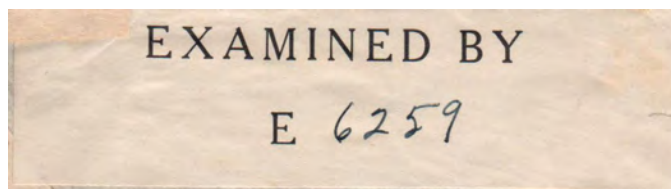


Figure 16: New York provisional resealing label with manuscript censor number applied.

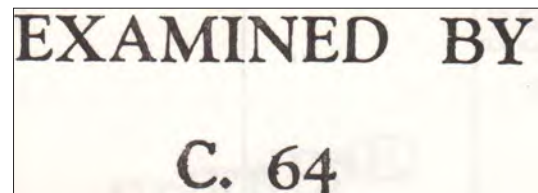


Figure 17: San Juan provisional resealing label, with diamond stop.

(and more significantly, to substations using the same design as the parent station) is also possible by reference to the examiner numbers incorporated into, but usually hand-written into the hand stamp.

The post card shown in Figure 15 reveals a standard design assigned to the Office of the Chief Postal Censor in Washington, D.C. It incorporates all the elements of the new design, which became the standard throughout the field stations..

Printed censor labels in a standard design began to appear in January 1942. Prior to that the usual practice for resealing covers involved use of brown paper tape either imprinted with or tied by an examiner's hand stamp. Figures 16 and 17 show provisional printed labels produced by the New York and San Juan censor stations, respectively.<sup>8</sup>

The standard-design printed paper labels shown on the 4½-cent Prexie wrapper below, come in a number of sub-types. These labels presented three problems to censors. First, they did not always fully re-seal larger covers. Second, sometimes text blocked by a label had to be re-entered by the censor. And third, labels, being individually numbered, resulted in too many for some examiners and numbers that were never used.

These problems led to their replacement by cellophane tape starting in the Fall of 1942. Produced in continuous rolls and more-or-less transparent, these cellophane tapes solved the first two problems caused by the paper labels. However, early versions of these tapes still incorporated individual censor numbers, thereby perpetuating the problem of the bad fit between supply and demand. A redesign



Figure 18: Two covers showing the evolution of clear cellophane tapes. The 1943 cover to Gold Coast shows the tape with a repeating, imprinted censor number. The 1944 cover shows a tape with a censor number applied separately.



Figure 19: A Press Division censor label for use on international mail to and from news outlets. Scarce on cover, but plentiful as note paper for censor personnel.



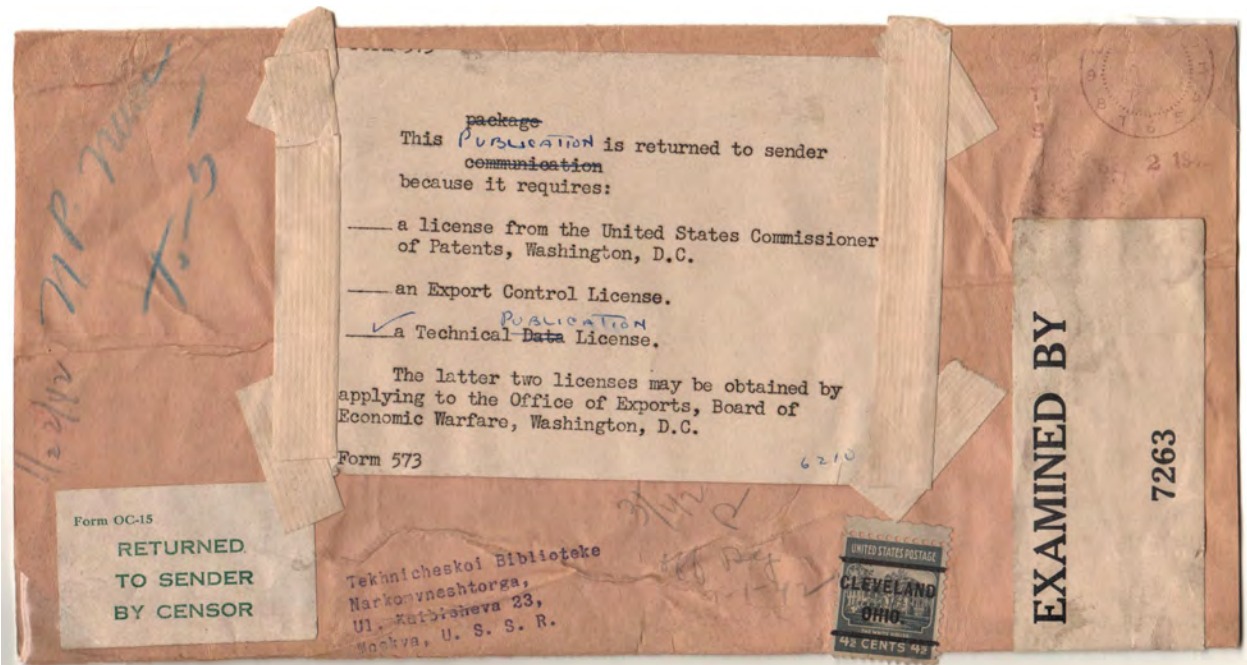


Figure 20: A remarkable cover bearing a non-sealing re-sealing tape, a **RETURNED TO SENDER** label not applied across the address as it should have been, and a non-enclosed enclosure slip. The dates noted on this cover are January, March and September 1942. The publication enclosed in this cover apparently was condemned in January 1942, and its return to sender permitted in September of that year. The significance of the March 42 notation remains unknown.

appeared a year later with the examiner number omitted. Instead, examiners now applied their numbers using individual hand stamps assigned to them. Widespread use of the revised cellophane tape did not begin until well within 1944. Examples may be seen in Figure 18, showing both versions.<sup>9</sup>

A special paper re-sealing label was produced for the Press Division. These labels are scarce on covers, but plentiful in the files of the Office of Censorship housed in the National Archives, where they were found often used for note paper. Figure 19 shows a cover with such a label addressed to a news outlet in Argentina. Most censor numbers on these labels will be found in the low 15000 range.

Censors returned to senders mail containing infractions precluding onward transmission. Enclosure slips were inserted into these covers explaining why an individual item was being rejected. This helped educate writers to

censorship practices. But often the slips helped censors avoid responsibility for mishaps, such as missing contents or envelope damage, with explanations using variations of “It’s not our fault.” A wide variety of enclosure slips were produced, and they have been extensively cataloged.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 20 shows a cover illustrating a number of the censorship elements described above, including a **RETURNED TO SENDER** label, a numbered resealing label, and an enclosure slip explaining why the item was returned.

### Travelers’ Censorship

Although charged with the responsibility to examine all communications (not previously censored by U.S. authorities) crossing the borders of the U.S. and its territories, the Office of Censorship initially did not have the personnel to staff even the major air and sea ports of the United States. To plug this gap, it delegated censorship authority to the U.S.



Figure 21: Crane Lake was and is a jump-off and re-entry point for fishermen boating and flying into Ontario. This cover was hand-carried into the U.S. where it was passed by a Customs Officer before being put into the mail.

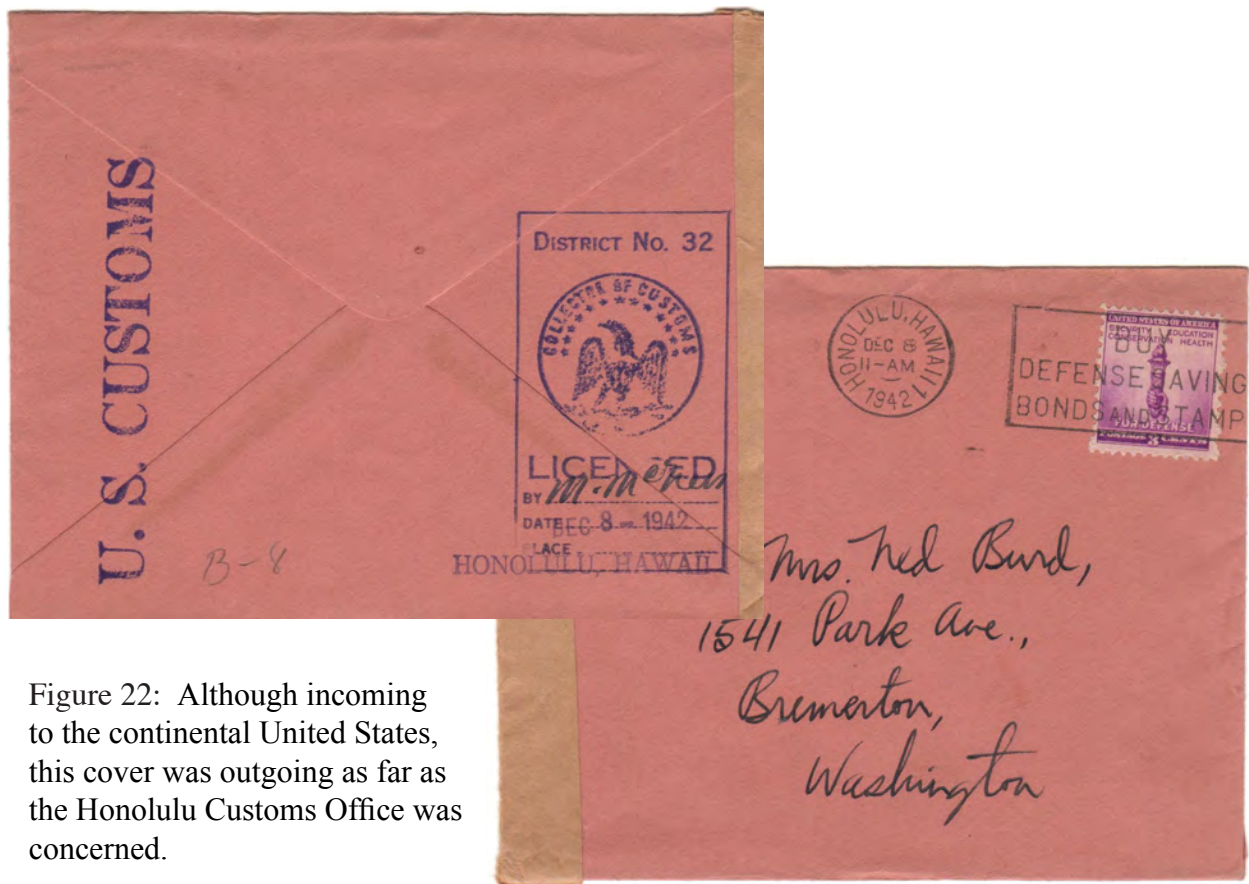


Figure 22: Although incoming to the continental United States, this cover was outgoing as far as the Honolulu Customs Office was concerned.

Treasury Department's Bureau of Customs. In some locations Customs examiners continued to be the delegated eyes of the censorship apparatus well into the war, though as time went on more mail was transferred from these Customs examiners to Travelers' Censorship (TC) examiners in the field stations, and in

additional TC sub-stations located in cities that had no other Office of Censorship presence. At least one TC unit was placed in a railway post office mail car.<sup>11</sup>

The standard Customs hand stamp found on incoming mail is shown on the Crane Lake

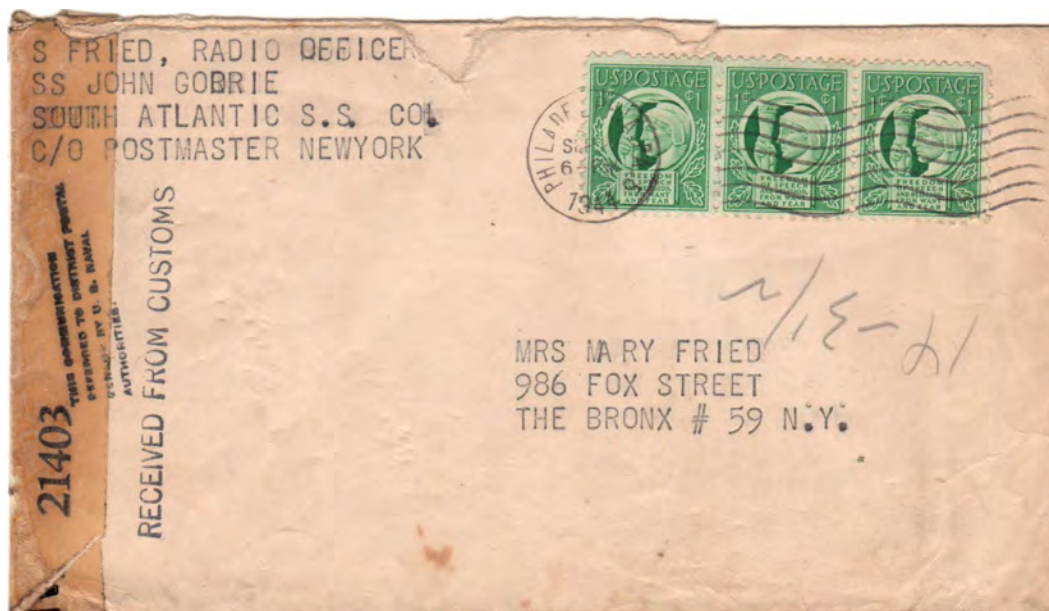


Figure 23: Cover bearing both styles of referred/received markings (naming two different sources!), which I have seen on more than one cover censored in Philadelphia, but not elsewhere. Examiner number 21403 attributes to a TC examiner in Philadelphia, which is consistent with the postmark.

cover in Figure 21, and the standard hand stamp for outgoing covers is shown on the Honolulu cover, illustrated in Figure 22.

Since authority to censor extended only to communications crossing the borders of the United States and its territories, in order to head off complaints of over-reaching it was important for Censorship to highlight those items mailed in the U.S. to domestic addresses that actually originated or were being sent abroad. Beginning in 1943, small multi-line hand stamps appeared in New York (and ports along the Eastern seaboard in which TC examiners subordinate to the NY field station were located), and San Francisco indicating the censored item was referred by military, naval or customs authorities. These hand stamps are typically found on outbound mail from or incoming mail to ships, but not previously censored by U.S. military authorities.

Beginning in 1944, larger hand stamps began to appear at many locations, most notably along the U.S. - Mexican border. See Figure 23.

A cover had to be carried across a border of the U.S. or its territories by a traveler of some sort in order to be subject to Travelers' Censorship. Travel could involve boat, ship, train, airplane or just walking, but required an international border crossing.

When not engaged in TC work for lack of travelers, TC examiners were put to work

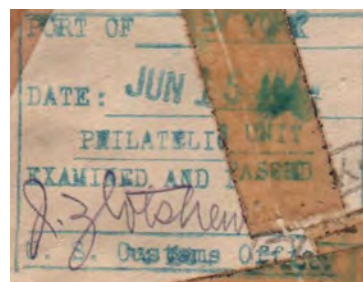


Figure 24:

censoring regular mail. Thus, TC examiner numbers may sometimes be found on regular mail. This number alone is not sufficient to make it TC censorship.

To confuse things further, it appears the New



Figure 25:  
International mail containing philatelic material required a permit from the Philatelic Control Unit of the Office of Censorship. Here, Permit #D380.



Figure 26: Licensed by the Office of Export Control and Commissioner of Patents. It is highly unusual to have multiple licenses documented on the same cover.

York Customs office had its own Philatelic Unit, the hand stamp for which is often found on mail with examiner numbers of the Office of Censorship Philatelic Control Unit. This hand stamp is invariably found on mail carried into the U.S. through postal channels so, while similar to other Customs hand stamps found on incoming TC mail, because no carriage-by-traveler was involved it cannot be TC censorship. See Figure 24.

### Permits and Licenses

Permit and license markings on covers are not censorship markings. But since the need for them arose from censorship regulations they are an integral part of the story.

Before philatelic material could be sent abroad, it had to be reviewed by the Philatelic Control Unit (PCU), located in the New York City field station. Postal patrons, many of them



stamp dealers, wishing to speed up this process applied for a permit from the PCU, to be renewed annually. Possession of such a permit did not guarantee approval of the transmission of the material submitted. The contents had to conform to regulations about what could and could not be exported (or paid for if imported). Figure 25 shows philatelic material being exported to St. Pierre and Miquelon with permit number prominently displaced.

Beyond philatelic items, the export of certain material, financial or even intellectual property required a license from an appropriate agency, as may be seen in Figure 26.

### Station-to-Station Transfers

Evidence of a cover being processed in more than one censor station is extremely scarce. The most common occurrence, of which I have seen fewer than 10 examples, involves the transfer under separate cover of a cover from a field station outside New York to the Philatelic Control Unit (PCU). The usual key to identification in these cases is the presence of a tape with a hand stamped number of

the originating station under a tape with an examiner number of the PCU. The more fully spelled out documentation on the cover below is exceptional.

### Sub-Covers and Fakes

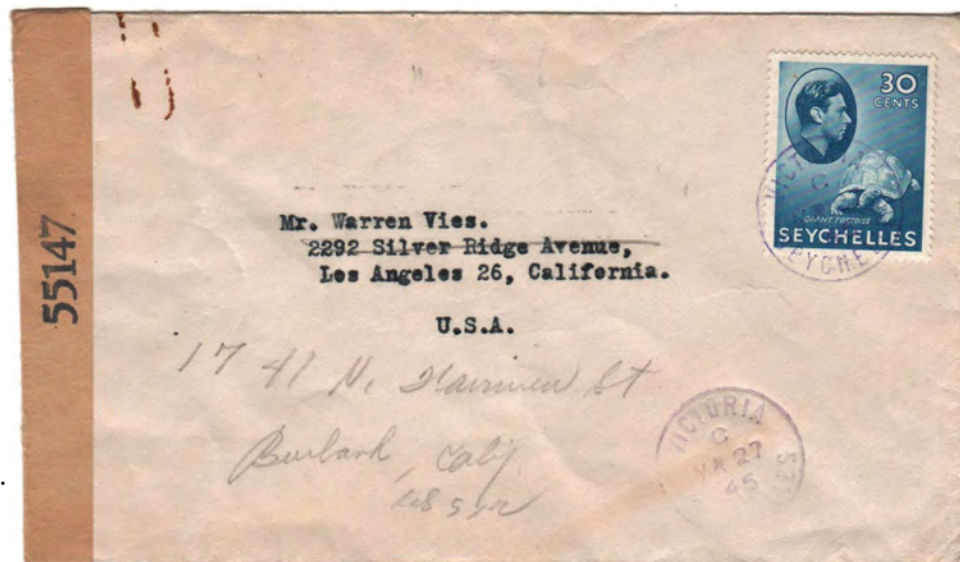
I treat sub-covers and fakes together because they involve a common thread: discernment. Censored covers have been faked for almost as long as censored covers have been collected, and not just to satisfy the desires of collectors. The Office of Censorship was greatly concerned about people producing fake censor devices to put on their mail as a means of bypassing the real censor, which led to a nice collection of World War II censor devices now preserved at the National Archives in Washington D.C. Thus a question always exists whether what you are seeing is legitimate.

Let me start with something that looks fake, but I believe is not. The cover in Figure 28 is arguably postmarked in the Seychelles in March 1946. Any possibility the wrong year slug was put in is effectively countered by the presence of a May 1946, Los Angeles back



Figure 27: Registered philatelic mail from Los Angeles to Uruguay, postmarked January 15, 1945. Censored at Miami (30509), then twice at the New York PCU (20006, 20020). Postmarked New York January 23 and Miami January 24. New York re-sealing tape placed on top of Miami tape.

Figure 28: Sub-cover originating in Los Angeles prior to V-J Day. Condemned until after August 15, 1945 and placed in the mail stream. See text for additional details.



stamp. The examiner's hand stamp appears genuine, but its legitimate use after August 15, 1945 is impossible. Surviving censor devices continue to float around to this day. (I have been offered a couple and turned them down; at least one has shown up on eBay.)

So, fake, right? For my money, wrong. Rather, this is a good example of a sub-cover, as described in the excerpt of the censorship instruction shown below. My best guess places this cover inside another cover mailed some

time before August 15, 1945, and sent to a Seychelles addressee to obtain a postally used cover. The whole packet was likely condemned by the U.S. censor and held until after V-J Day. The sender eventually received the cover postmarked, as requested, and returned in March 1946. By the time it reached Los Angeles, Mr. Vies had moved to Burbank, which fortuitously led to a Los Angeles back stamp confirming the 1946 usage. Bottom line, lead into gold; sub covers are rare.

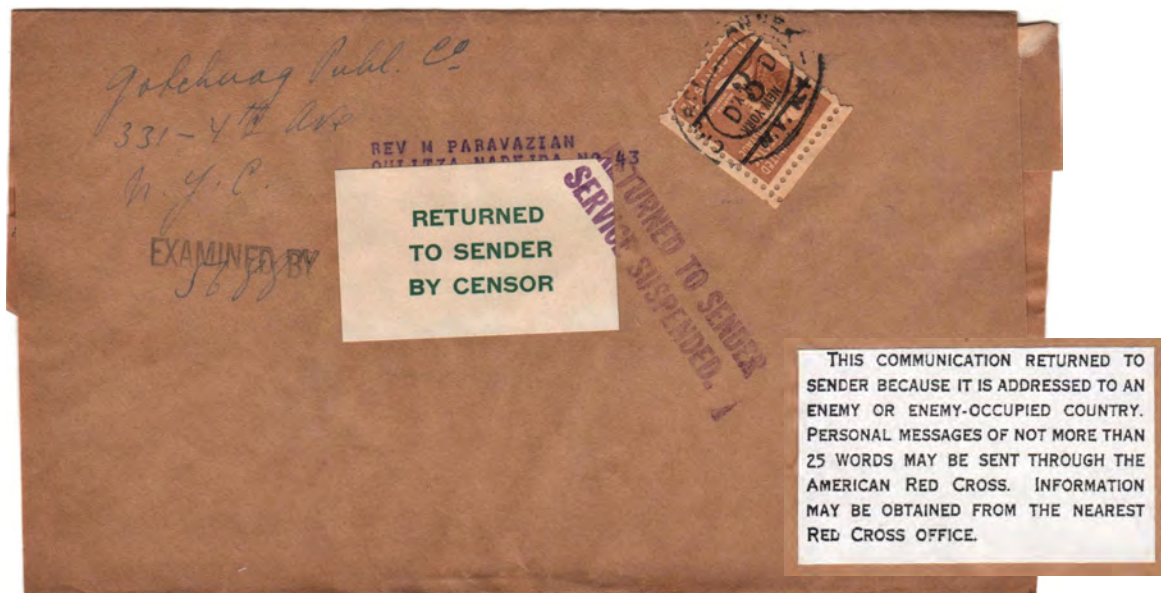


Figure 29: All elements of censorship on the front are genuine. The statement affixed to the back is a photocopy fake.





Figure 30: The examiner numbers on the Spanish/English enclosure slip (appropriate for mail to Latin America, but not to Poland) are from Miami, while the number on the resealing tape was assigned to the PCU in New York.

And now, gold into lead. The **EXAMINED BY** hand stamp, **RETURNED TO SENDER BY CENSOR** label, and **SERVICE SUSPENDED** marking on the wrapper shown in Figure 29 are all real. What is not real is the “enclosure form” on the back. This is in fact a photocopy of a real enclosure form. But the paper is wrong for World War II, was affixed by what appears to be unevenly distributed paste of some sort, and the “ink” is a fused toner that can be scraped off without damaging the paper underneath. This, of course, would be impossible with an original printed form. In a failed attempt to clear the market of these fakes, about five years ago I bought several dozen at a bit over a dollar each (way too cheap had they been real), but others continue to be offered on eBay.

A dangerous form of fakery consists of combining completely legitimate elements that did not start out together. I have seen numerous covers addressed to collectors made “better” by adding common U.S. censor labels from other covers (turning say, a cover from Basutoland into a “censored” cover at the cost of sacrificing a common cover from Mexico).

Enclosure slips have always been scarce and

are now highly sought after. Some people failed to save them in the covers in which they were returned, while others saved the slips but not the covers. Thus, uniting loose enclosure slips with covers lacking the slip is a tempting, and potentially lucrative proposition. Figure 30 shows an enclosure slip with Miami censor numbers “enclosed” in a First Day Cover with a New York Philatelic Control Unit censor number.

Absent a compelling reason otherwise, an examiner number on the slip must match an examiner number found on the cover. Where items of value were found enclosed in a cover or were supposed to have been enclosed but were absent, two examiner numbers will usually appear on the cover. At least one should appear on the enclosure slip.

### The End of U.S. Civil Censorship

On August 15, 1945, President Truman issued a “Directive for the Director of Censorship” in which he ordered “that the Office of Censorship cease at once the censorship of all international communications.” Further, “Except for a small group needed for liquidating the Agency,” all personnel were to be given 30 days’ notice.





Figure 31: The handstamp on this cover was used in the New York field station in both June and September, 1945. A September 12, 1945 New York machine postmark on the back of the cover dates it to the final days of the censorship.

Executive Order 9631 followed on September 28 giving the Office of Censorship until the close of business on November 15, 1945 to complete its liquidation tasks.

Consequently, the only civil censorship markings occurring after V-J Day are hand stamps on previously condemned mail indicating that it had been held. Some are accompanied by date stamps. Those without make it difficult to determine whether the cover was released following V-E Day or V-J Day.

### Endnotes

1 Other stations and sub-stations would be added bringing the total to 19. An examination section opened in the Office of the Chief Postal Censor in Washington, D.C. When it began censoring mail on a regular basis remains unclear. It had only 3 examiners in mid-1942 and 21 at the end of 1943, as compared to 3001 examiners in New York, 385 in New Orleans and 439 in Seattle in late 1942. See Broderick and Mayo.

2 Atlanta and Manila never had stations for civilian postal censorship. Civil censorship in American Samoa stayed under military control,

and control of the Honolulu station passed from the Office of Censorship to the Territory of Hawaii Military Administration on April 15, 1945.

3 <http://texts.cdlib.org/view?docId=hb4q2nb2nd&doc.view=frames&chunk.id=div00006&toc.depth=1&toc.id=> (last accessed August 10, 2015).

4 The lack of censor markings caused the New York and San Francisco to return enough mail to the censorship offices in those cities that the latter resorted to machine markings (relatively common from NY; scarce from SF). The New York censorship office was instructed by the CPC to stop this practice and use an embossing device to mark the lead seals on mail bags sent back to the post office. I have never seen such a lead seal.

5 Broderick, Wilfrid N. and Mayo, Dann: *Civil Censorship in the United States During World War II*. (Civil Censorship Study Group and War Cover Club, 1980). This monograph ascribes some of these dot-and-bar markings to Washington, DC, but they were in fact spread among the stations.

6 Broderick, and Mayo. While this work is in need of updating, it remains the only

comprehensive study of the subject.

7 General Order 4 assigned numbers 1000 through 3000 on December 19, 1941. Additional numbers were assigned by General Orders 24 (February 2, 1941; 1000 through 14200) and 56 (May 1, 1942; 101 through 15100. Examiner numbers (not all of which were used; the number of examiners peaked at around 10,000) were eventually extended to 72004. The Hawaii ICB and Los Angeles BIC handstamps shown here, and the San Francisco Returned to Sender handstamp shown below, are the only ones to reflect their creation during the Information Control Branch period.

8 Local procurement records indicate the New York tape was obtained on December 12, 1941, but the only recorded example dates from February 1942. The San Juan tape is a copy of

the contemporaneous Canadian civil censor tape, except the stop after C is a diamond rather than a circle. Examiner numbers on both e tapes do not conform to those assigned in General Order 4.

9 Spanish Language versions of both types of cellophane tapes were produced for use in the Canal Zone. In 1945, excess supplies of the no-number tapes were given to Costa Rican censorship. These were used with hand stamps in the 75000 series.

10 Carter, Russ W. *WWII US Censor Enclosure Slips and Return-to-Sender Labels*. (Military Postal History Society, 2010).

11 Mayo, Dann: *Travelers' Censorship in the US During WWII*. (CCSG Special Study No. 1, 2013).



# *The Prexie Era*

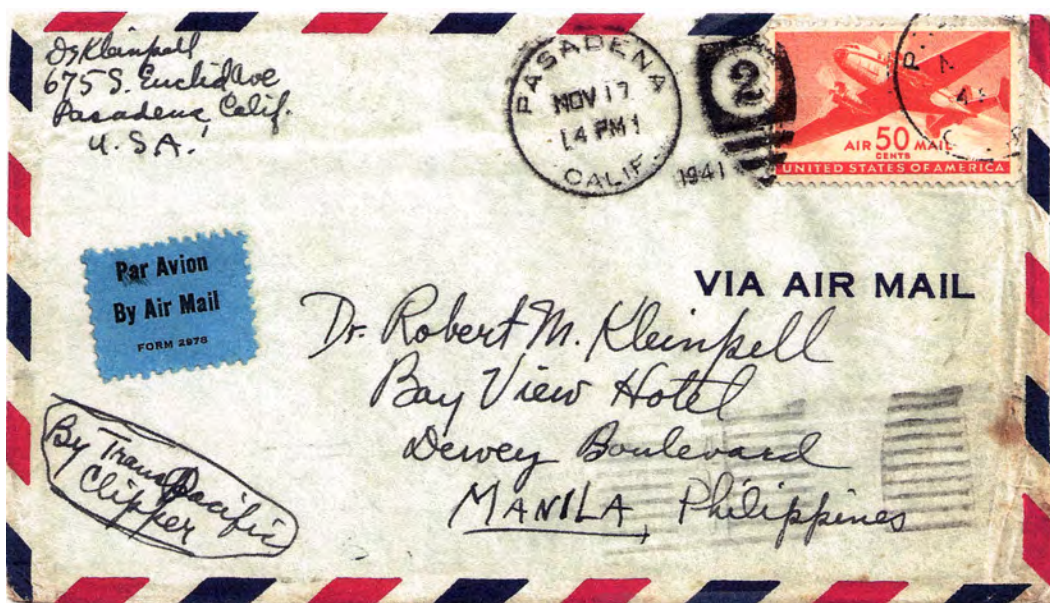
Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

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## Early Solo Use of the 50-Cent Transport Stamp

by Joseph Bock



The 50-cent Transport was the highest value of the 1941 Transport Airmail Series and the last of the eight stamps to be issued. It first appeared on October 29, 1941 at the World Wide Philatelic Convention, in St. Louis, Missouri.

The stamp's primary purpose was to pay the 50 cents per half-ounce airmail rate to the Philippine Islands. However, it also found usage for partial payment of higher international airmail rates then in effect, some as high as \$1.10 per half-ounce. Being the highest value, this stamp had the smallest printing total of all stamps in the issue.

### *Inside*

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Solo uses were possible by paying for combinations of lower airmail rates combined with registry or special delivery service.

The cover shown here illustrates one of only two reported (to date) 50-cent Transport commercial uses to the Philippines, received and not returned, prior to the Japanese attack on December 7, 1941. Paying the 50 cents per half-ounce airmail rate from the continental U.S., it was flown on a Martin M - 130 on the last *China Clipper* flight, which departed San Francisco (Treasure Island) November 19, 1941. A backstamp shows it was received in Manila (Cavite) on November 28th. The cover has a circular receiving backstamp showing

“4:30PM NOV 28 MANILA P.I.” After December 7th the trans-Pacific commercial routes were closed beyond Hawaii for almost four years, not to be resumed until late in 1945.

The addressee, Dr. Robert Minssen Kleinpell (1905-1986), was senior geologist at the National Development Company of the Philippines. He was trapped in Manila by the Japanese attack and interned, first at the Catholic University of Santo Tomas in Manila and later at the agricultural college at Los Banos. Kleinpell was repatriated in 1945.

Some of Kleinpell’s wartime correspondence as an internee survives.

## Cover Surfaces with 71 Copies of the \$5 Prexie

by Edward Field



Figure. 1: May 17, 1946 inter-bank correspondence likely bearing treasury bonds indemnified for almost \$3,000,000. The cover bears postage and fees totalling \$358.70.

A cover with multiple copies of the five-dollar Prexie stamp has recently surfaced and is shown here. This may be the first time it has seen the light of day in four decades. Like most covers with large numbers of the Coolidge definitive, this, too, is inter-bank correspondence registered with high indemnity.

Franking includes 71 five-dollar Prexie stamps, including two blocks of 25 on the reverse. Also, a single one-dollar and a two-dollar Prexie stamp are on the front, along with 70 cents worth of lower value Prexie stamps. Total franking: \$358.70.



Figure. 2: Reverse side revealing two blocks of 25 five-dollar stamps and May 17, 1946, and May 18, 1946, San Francisco postmarks.

The purpose of the correspondence was the transfer of bearer bonds from Wells Fargo Bank and Union Trust Company, San Francisco, to the Bank of America in Sacramento. Both locales were within Postal Zone 2. The supplemental fee was 12 cents per \$1,000 dollars of indemnity. Subtracting six cents postage and 20 cents basic registration fee leaves a supplemental fee of \$358.44 paying for \$2,987,000 indemnity. Contents were probably treasury bonds. (assuming a weight of six ounces, rather than two, reduces the indemnity by \$1,000.) Note that a Wells Fargo employee took pains to get the postage correct to the penny. Banks did not always do that.

All stamps, with the exception of the two-dollar Harding, bear Well Fargo & Union Trust Co. perfins.

A close cousin to my cover is illustrated on the front of *US Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1999* by Beecher and Wawrukiewicz. Same sender, same recipient, same mailing date. The main difference is that the Beecher & Wawrukiewicz cover has “only” 40 five-dollar

Prexies on the reverse, and the indemnity was “only” \$2,008,000. These two examples may well represent the largest known number of five-dollar Prexies on cover.

Another well known example of a commercial cover with a large multiple of five-dollar Prexies may be seen in Bill Helbock’s book, *Prexie Postal History*. His example, on inter-bank mail going from Wilmington, Delaware, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, shows \$141.36 in postage and fees, represented by 28 of the high value Prexies. The negotiable securities contained within were valued at more than \$1,250,000.

I bought my cover from Richard Searing several years ago. He had owned it for at least thirty years, so it has been out of sight for around forty years. Note that the two-dollar stamp is a replacement; the original was cut out decades ago by a prior owner who apparently valued the off-cover stamp more highly than the intact cover. That attitude may explain why so few high--indemnity covers have survived.



# Twilight of the Prexies - End of the Era

by Stephen L. Suffet

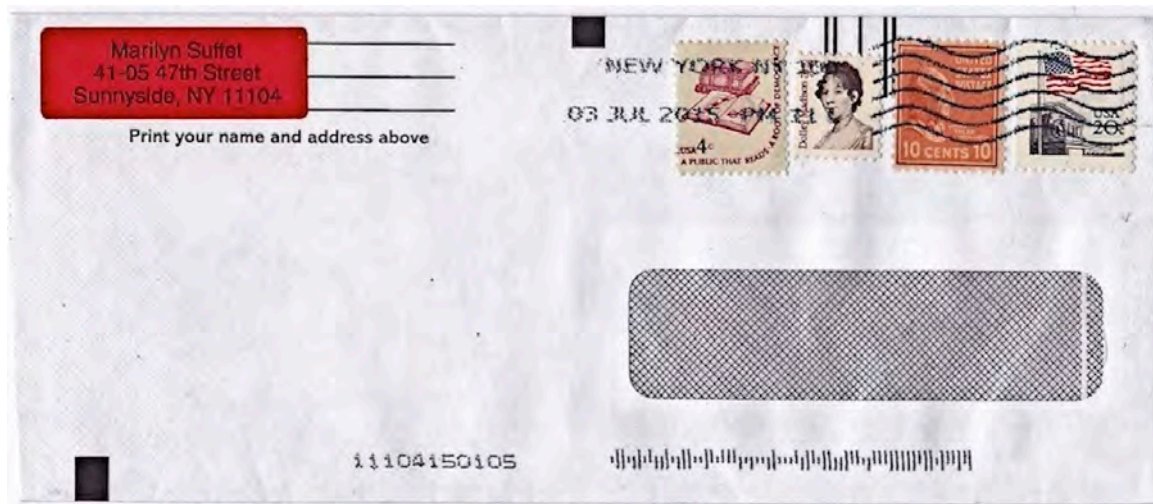


Figure 1: 10-cent Prexie paid part of the 49-cent first ounce letter rate in 2015.

This is the fifth and final article in a series that looks at usages of the United States Presidential Series stamps after the Post Office Department (P.O.D.) began to introduce the Liberty Series with the release of the 8-cent value on April 9, 1954.

The Prexie era began April 25, 1938, with the official release of the 1-cent sheet stamp in Washington, D.C., but when did it end? There is no simple answer. Like all regular U.S. postage stamps issued since August 1861, the Prexies remain valid to the present time, and they still occasionally turn up on mail. Figure 1, for example, shows a 10-cent Prexie paying part of the 49-cent first ounce domestic first class letter rate on a cover postmarked July 3, 2015.

That cover, of course, is of philatelic origin. The return address label is from my wife, and while she is not a stamp collector, I certainly am. The 10-cent stamp was one of several Prexies that came in a lot of discount postage I had purchased earlier in the year. Nevertheless, the 49-cent rate was correctly paid and the cover did pass through the mail.

While I have not done a scientific study, it is my personal experience from collecting Prexie postal history in earnest since the early 1980s that after 1954 the proportion of Prexie covers (cards, wrappers, etc.) with philatelic connections continuously increased, while the proportion of those apparently without philatelic connections shrank. As the next few years passed, this trend rapidly accelerated, and some time around 1959 or 1960 the majority of covers bearing one or more Presidential Series stamps were addressed to or from stamp dealers, philatelic organizations, philatelic publications, or well known stamp collectors.

Furthermore, after the end of 1962, nearly all Prexie covers that I have seen have some sort of philatelic connection. The cover from the West Springfield Stamp Club of Massachusetts illustrated in Figure 2 is typical. Postmarked January 21, 1963, the cover bears a 5-cent Prexie coil stamp paying the 5 cents per ounce domestic first class letter rate that went into effect two weeks earlier, on January 7. By that time the P.O.D. had already issued the 5-cent George Washington coil stamp in the





Figure 2: 5-cent Prexie coil paid one-ounce letter rate on 1963 cover from the West Springfield Stamp Club of Massachusetts.

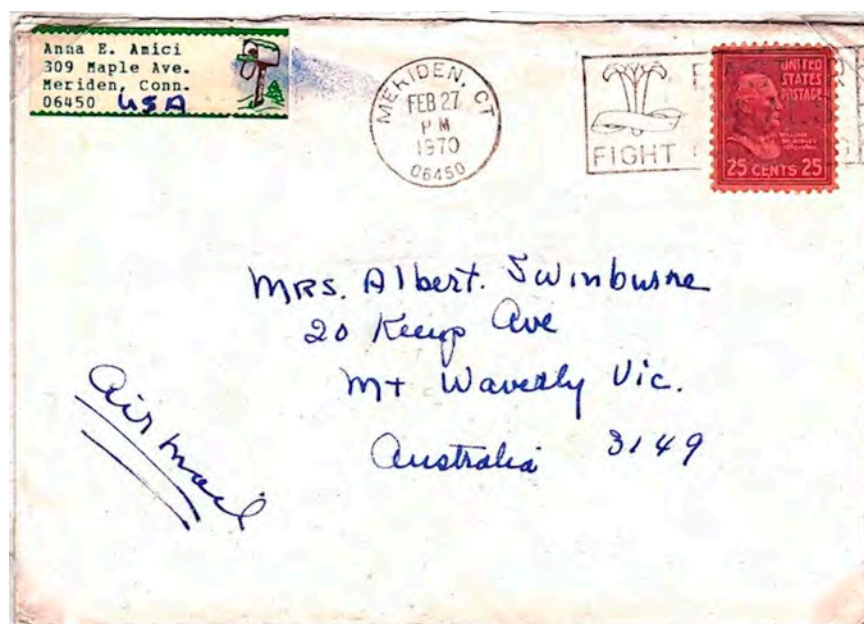


Figure 3: 25-cent Prexie paid the half-ounce air mail letter rate to Australia in 1970.

unnamed three-denomination regular series of 1961-1966. Nevertheless, the West Springfield Stamp Club still had a supply of 5-cent Prexie coils, last distributed to post offices in Fiscal Year 1956 (July 1-June 30), on hand.

A reasonable rule of thumb, therefore, is to consider December 31, 1962, as the end of the Prexie Era. At least that is the cutoff date I generally use for my own collecting.

Exceptions exist, of course, and it is possible to find some post-1962 Prexie covers that are apparently non-philatelic in origin. Figure 3,

for example, shows a 25-cent Prexie paying the half-ounce air mail letter rate to Australia on a cover postmarked February 27, 1970. That was nearly twelve years after the 25-cent sheet stamp in the Liberty Series had been issued, and more than ten and a half years since the end of Fiscal Year 1959, when the last 25-cent Prexies were shipped to post offices.

Let's return for a moment to 1961 and 1962. The last 11-cent Prexies had been sent to post offices during Fiscal Year 1957. In his posthumously published book *The Prexies*, Roland E. Rustad stated, "One would be hard pressed to

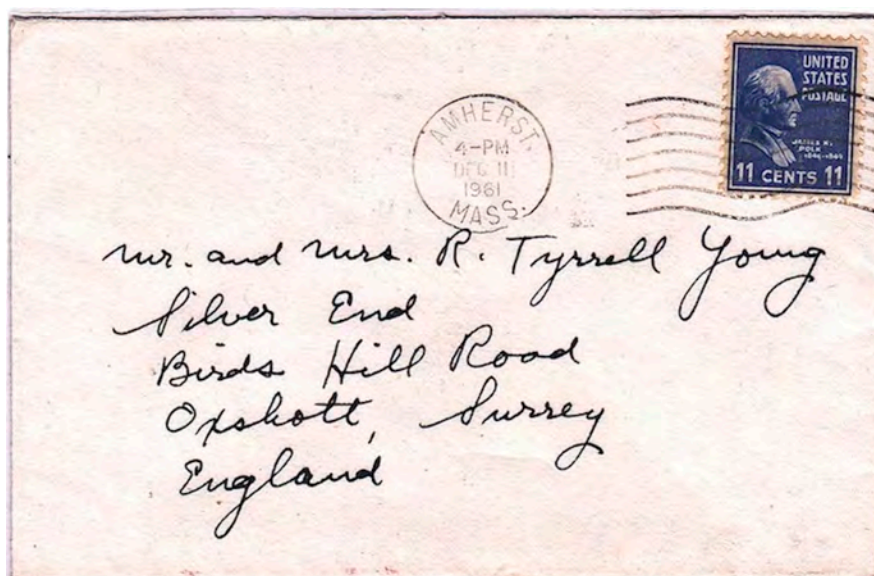


Figure 4: 11-cent  
Prexie paid the first  
ounce surface letter  
rate to the U.K. in  
1961, after the rate  
increased from 8 to  
11 cents.

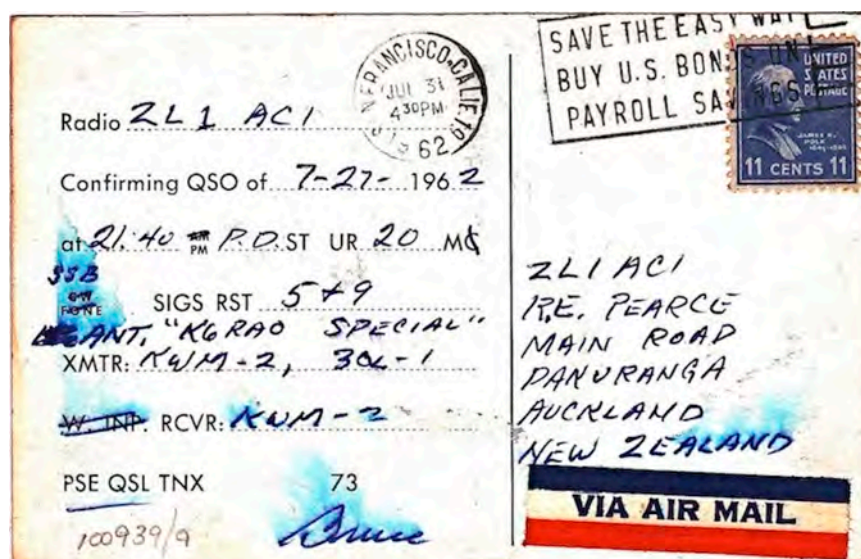


Figure 5: 11-cent  
Prexie paid the air  
mail postal card rate  
to New Zealand in  
1962.

say that this stamp was issued for any specific rate or rate/fee combination, and solo usages are not often found.”<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it is possible to find some such 11-cent solo usages in the last year and a half of the Prexie era. Effective July 1, 1961, the P.O.D. increased many of its postal rates to foreign counties. For example, the first ounce surface letter rate to countries other than Canada and Mexico climbed from 8 cents to 11 cents,\* while the air mail postal and postal card rate to countries other than Canada and Mexico increased from 10 cents to 11 cents.

Figures 4 and 5 show usages at these two

new 11-cent rates, respectively. The first is a cover to the United Kingdom postmarked December 11, 1961, and sent at the surface letter rate. The other is a QSL post card postmarked July 31, 1962, and sent at the air mail rate to New Zealand. Amateur radio operators commonly used QSL post cards to confirm reception of each other’s broadcast signals.

The P.O.D. added an 11-cent stamp to the Liberty Series on June 15, 1961, primarily to pay these two rates.\*\* However, as these two items prove, remaining 11-cent Prexies did the job just as well.



\* At the same time, the surface letter rate for each additional ounce increased from 5 to 7 cents.

\*\* The 11-cent stamp would be the last new value in the Liberty Series that had an equivalent in the Presidential Series. The last Liberty Series stamp, not counting tagging and gum varieties, was the 25-cent coil stamp, issued

February 25, 1965. There was, however, no 25-cent coil stamp in the Presidential Series.

### Reference

1. Rustad, Roland E., *The Prexies* (Belleville, Illinois: Bureau Issues Association, 1994) p. 212.

## Certificate of Mailing - Air Mail from Hawaii

by Bob Hohertz

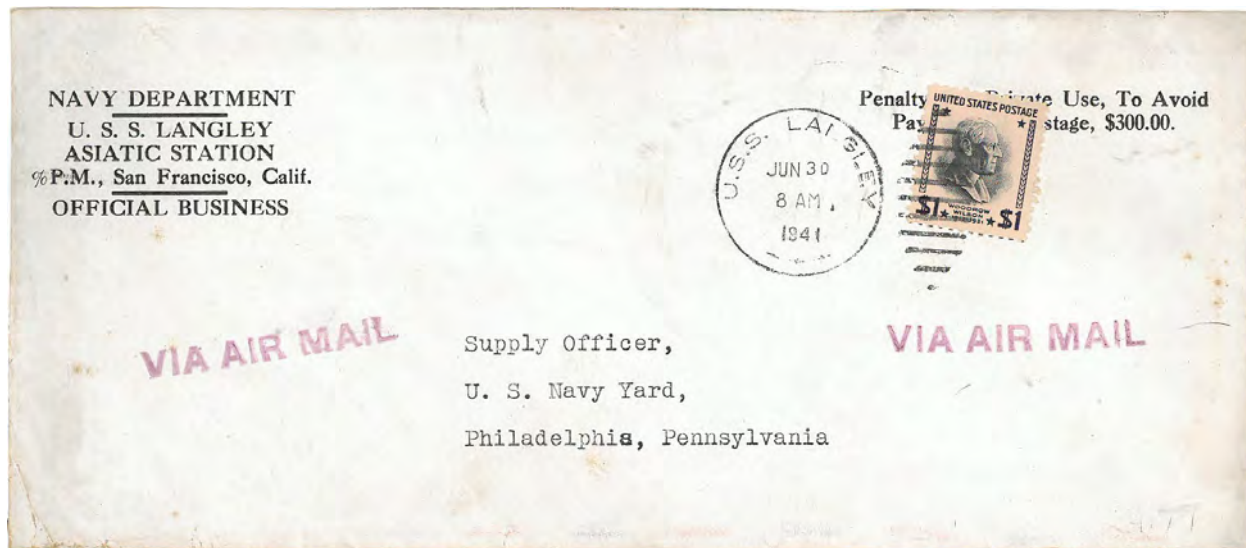
This return receipt was mailed from Hawaii December 18, 1941, with air mail postage affixed. It was received in California December 26. Whether it went by air probably depends on how much time it spent in censorship (ICB = Information Control Bureau), and when air mail flights took place. I can't imagine it

got through censorship in time for the China Clipper's flight of December 18. It likely went on one of the shuttle flights between the Islands and the West Coast soon after. In any case, it appears to be a rather rare item, as Beecher and Wawrukiewicz fail to discuss the existence of such an item.



## USS *Langley* Scuttled

by Jeffrey Shapiro



While some Prexie collectors covet solo usages, like this example of a \$1 Prexie paying the rate on a 1941 penalty cover, an additional fascinating story is associated with this cover.

The \$1 Prexie paid two times the 50 cents per half ounce Clipper air mail rate to/from the Philippines and the U.S. Mainland, (in effect April, 1937 until October 30, 1946). It was canceled on the USS *Langley* on June 30, 1941, while on patrol duty in the waters off the Philippines Islands.

The *Langley* (named after the astronomer and aviation pioneer Samuel Pierpont Langley) was the Navy's first aircraft carrier, having been converted in 1920 from the collier, USS *Jupiter* (originally built in 1913).

Officially launched in 1922, the *Langley* saw several historic firsts in Naval Aviation. Operating off the East Coast and in the Caribbean until 1927, she was next reassigned to the Pacific Fleet. After 12 years operating between Hawaii and the California Coast, the *Langley* was sent to Mare Island for overhaul

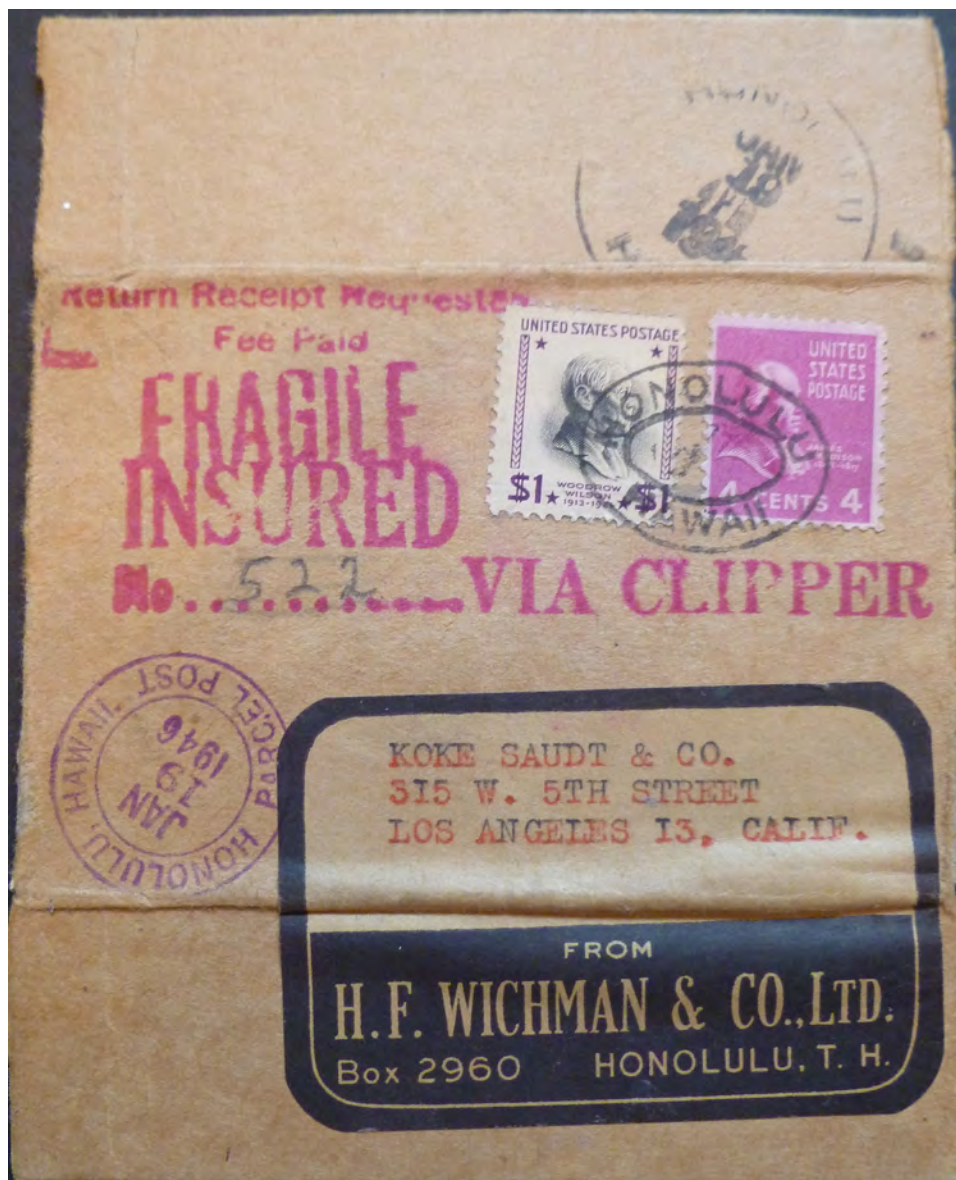
and conversion to a seaplane tender. In 1939, she was ordered on patrol in the Atlantic, then on to the waters off Alaska and subsequently to patrol duties with the Philippine Fleet.

After the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941 the *Langley* hurriedly departed the Philippines during the Japanese invasion, to patrol the waters off the Dutch East Indies. She then assisted with delivery of 40 crated P-40s to Australia and Java to counter the Japanese advance in the area.

After the final delivery, on February 27, 1942, the *Langley* rendezvoused with the destroyers USS *Whipple* and USS *Edsall* south of Java, where the convoy came under attack by 15 Japanese G4M bombers. As a result, the *Langley* burst into flames, with its engine rooms flooding and killing 16 crewmen. Now dead in the water, the decision was made to scuttle the ship so she would not fall into enemy hands. Surviving crew members were transferred to the USS *Pecos*. Most were killed a few days later, however, when the *Pecos* came under enemy fire and was sunk.

## Merchandise From Hawaii Post-World War II and Before Air Parcel Post

by Daniel S. Pagter



The flattened mailing box top shown here demonstrates that products other than orchids were mailed from Hawaii after the end of World War II. The 80-cent Hawaii airmail stamp was issued for the newly created Air Parcel Post (APP) service, which began September 1, 1948. A one-pound zone 8 parcel cost 80 cents to mail, based upon the normal parcel post zones. Most surviving mail with this stamp involved orchid flower boxes.

With the war now history and with increased reliability of aircraft, more merchandise was being moved by airmail. This January 19, 1946 item was one such example. Likely containing jewelry, it was a commercial, company-to-company mailing from Honolulu to Los Angeles.

The \$1.04 in postage and fees paid by a 4-cent sheet Madison stamp and dollar Wilson stamp

with center line at top, rates out as follows:

- 4 cents Return Receipt Fee (valid March 26, 1944 to December 31, 1948); plus
- 2.5 ounces at 15 cents per half-ounce airmail postage (valid January 15, 1945 to September 30, 1946) plus 25 cents insurance fee (\$100.01-\$200.00 valid November 1, 1944 to December 31, 1948); or
- 3.0 ounces at 15 cents per half-ounce airmail postage plus 10 cents insurance fee (\$5.01-\$25.00 valid period as above).

The other surface (ship) reduced rate options for this item, both of which could have been similarly insured with return receipt, were third class merchandise of 1.5 cents per two ounces up to eight ounce maximum or parcel post zone 8 for 18 cents for the first pound or fraction.

In 1946 third class and parcel post merchandise matter was still subject to postal inspection to verify the contents qualified for lower than first class special rates of postage. Merchandise sent airmail paid at airmail was not subject to inspection, nor was merchandise sent at first class rates. The endorsement "May be opened for postal inspection" was not needed for either air or first class mail. However, beginning July 29, 1924, insurance services, which began with the start of Parcel Post in 1913, were extended to third class and airmail matter. The same order allowed third and fourth class mail to be sealed as long as it could be opened for inspection as

noted by such an endorsement. Prior to that order, if third class or parcel post matter was sealed it was to be considered first class matter and re-rated as such. Closure of contents of first class and airmail was always allowed.

From the start of Parcel Post Service in January 1, 1913, the goal was to reduce costs associated with mailing of merchandise for companies and citizens. This was done twofold; 1) by lowering the postage for such matter, and 2) increasing the weight limits allowable, first from four to eleven pounds then, rapidly in steps to the present day 70 pound limit (starting August 1, 1931) for all mail classes and zones (except second class). This took control away from the private, expensive express companies.

Air Parcel Post service followed that plan. This item mailed for possibly 90 cents in 1946 could have been mailed beginning September 1, 1948 for a dime less, for up to 16 ounces for APP zone 8 Hawaii to California travel. Or as non-APP at the lower standard unified air mail 5 cents per ounce rate for 15 cents postage.

Lastly, this hybrid item had the stamps tied by mute oval cancels consistent with parcel post or registered first class, as well as a fully dated parcel post cancel and finally, a normal four bar CDS as required for first class and airmail. The "VIA CLIPPER" inscription appears to date from the earlier clipper airmail service days.

### **Complete Run of *The Prexie Era* Available**

A complete run of *The Prexie Era* newsletter, from No. 1-72, is currently available on CD. Send Jeff Shapiro \$10 and your street address. Your editor will burn a copy and put it in the mail. Jeff can be reached at the following address:

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





# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

No. 73 Spring (Supplement) 2016

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
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## Postal Censorship during the Prexie Era

### Part 3: Post-World War II Censorship

By Dann Mayo



Figure 1: Finland censorship, March 1946, using the same devices employed earlier, during World War II.

While U.S. civil censorship ended immediately upon Japan's surrender announcement on August 15, 1945, civil censorship in some countries had later end-dates. For example: in the U.K., September 30, 1945 marked the terminal date;<sup>1</sup> in the Netherlands, domestic (vs. Allied, which appears to have lasted into 1947) censorship of neutral countries' mail ended on October 1, 1945.<sup>2</sup> In India and Burma civil censorship operations ended on December 31, 1945;<sup>3</sup> and in Finland, December 31, 1946.<sup>4</sup> Figure 1 shows Finnish censorship in March

1946, occurring long after the conclusion of hostilities.

In addition to ongoing civil censorship, many countries (including the U.S.) continued censoring mail of former POWs and civil internees until their ultimate release. Typical censorship devices used here were hand stamps of the individual camps. While surface mail to the home country of the sender was free under the Geneva Conventions, mail to other locations and airmail was not free. It is therefore possible



Figure 2: Incoming domestic mail to Ellis Island, 1947. Late intern-  
ee mail to a U.S.-  
resident German  
national awaiting  
repatriation.



Figure 3: July  
1946 air mail from  
a German intern-ee  
in Australia, with  
camp censor  
handstamp at left.  
Censorship con-  
tinued until January  
1947.

for Prexie covers to exist during this post-war period. Figures 2 and 3 provide examples of post-war censorship of intern-ee mail, both incoming and outgoing.

### Post-War Occupation Censorship

Censorship of civilian mails was carried out in various countries occupied (in the case of the Netherlands, liberated) by the Allies. These censorships included Italy (and subsequently the Free Territory of Trieste), the Netherlands,

Germany, Austria, the Philippines, Japan and Korea. Excellent literature is available for Germany<sup>5</sup> and Austria,<sup>6</sup> while the other areas are more or less hit-and-miss. The challenge for the Prexie era collector grows out of the fact that covers sent to these foreign destinations do not circulate in the U.S. marketplace in quantity. The good news is that, if/when they are found overseas, they are likely to be cheaper than in the U.S. due to the reversed supply/demand imbalance.





Figure 4: Airmail to Japan, post-marked October 17, 1947, revealing allied censorship at Tokyo. Airmail service resumed on September 5, 1947.

Figure 5: September 1946 air mail to an addressee in the post-war American Zone of Germany and censored there.



Figure 6: Military censorship of incoming civil mail to Austria in 1946. Censorship continued until 1953.



Shown in Figures 4, 5, and 6 are typical censor markings to be found on mail to Japan, Germany, and Austria. In Germany, Post-V-E day censorship was carried out by American, British, French and Soviet examiners in their respective occupation zones.

### Currency Control

In the postwar period through roughly the mid-1950s, customs/currency control examination was carried out by a number of European countries, notably those behind the Iron Curtain. Whether examination really was for economic rather than political reasons remains a matter to be decided on a cover-by-cover basis.

Figure 7 illustrates a currency control label on correspondence to Czechoslovakia in 1951. Note that text on the resealing label is in both Czech and French.

### Small Events

The biggest “small event” of the later Prexie era is the series of Israeli-Arab wars that began in 1948. In addition to Israel, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Jordan also carried out civil censorship at various times during this period. The Israeli side is well covered,<sup>7</sup> while information on

censorship by the other countries remains spotty.<sup>8</sup> Figure 8 shows a Jordan air mail cover with a handstamp left over from World War II.

Lesser events also occurred during the Prexie era for which, unfortunately, I have not yet seen examples of Prexie covers. Collectors with “small events” examples to Madagascar, Costa Rica, Colombia, Korea, Mali, Indonesia, and elsewhere, will have reason to brag in the event such treasurers come their way. Figures 9 through 14 show examples of the kind of censorship to be expected on Prexie era covers.

### Madagascar revolt

A nationalist revolt occurred on Madagascar from March 29, 1947 to November 1948.

### Costa Rica civil wars

Following a disputed election, in March and April 1948 Costa Rica experienced a brief civil war. For about two weeks in January 1955, the loser in that civil war occupied a small section of Costa Rica before being driven out.

### Colombia civil war

The assassination of the charismatic Liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán Ayala on April 9,

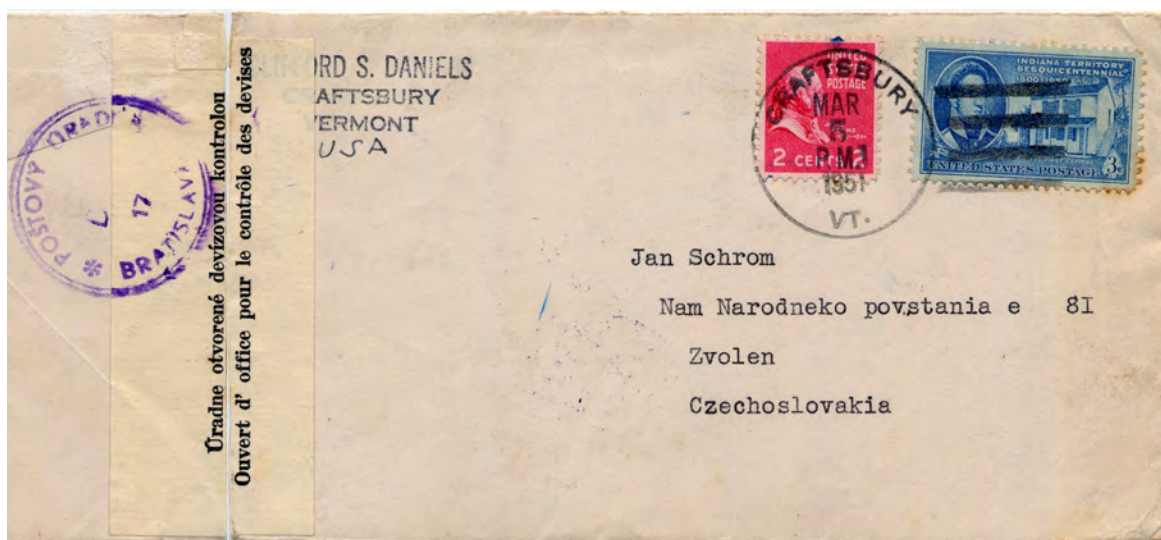


Figure 7: Currency control (censor?) resealing label on 1951 cover to Czechoslovakia. Examined at Bratislava. [Collyer Church collection]



Figure 8: 1948 Jordan airmail correspondence censored using a resurrected World War II handstamp.

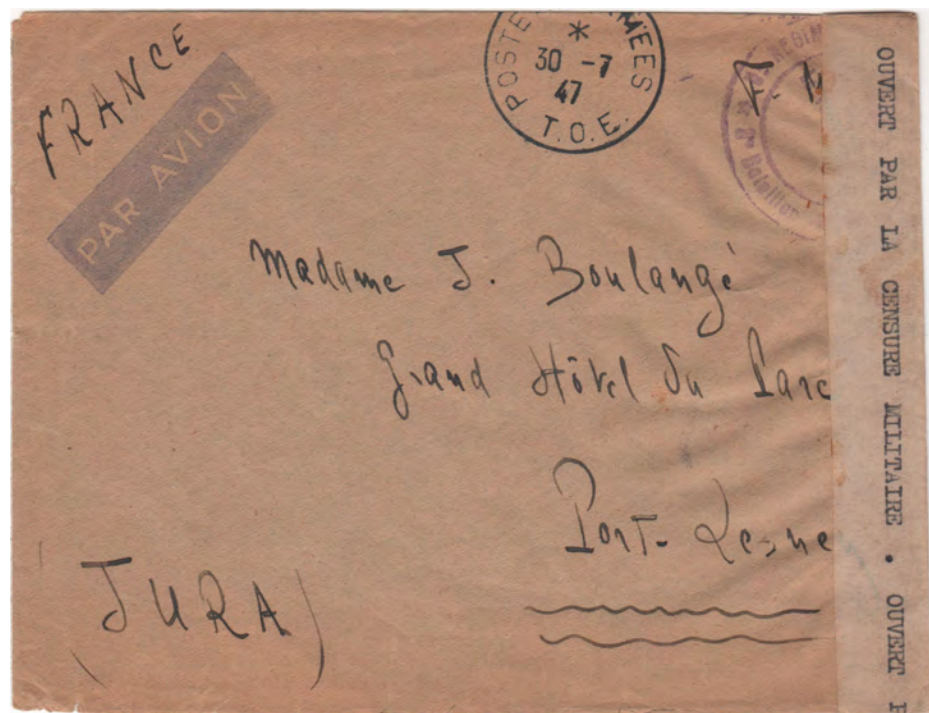


Figure 9: Mail from Madagascar to France during the 1947-1948 revolt.

1948 resulted in immediate riots in Bogota that led to 3,000-5000 deaths and set off a decade-long civil war known as La Violencia.

### Mali Republic war

When the Republic of Mali was declared on September 12, 1960, President Kieta immediately set out to establish a centralized state based on Socialist principles (meaning that Americans and West Europeans were suspect). A very few censored covers are known sent during October-November 1960.

### Korea guerilla war

A war in Korea occurred before the beginning of the Korean War. In 1949-50 an ongoing guerilla occurred in South Korea, with occasional pitched battles involving units up to regimental strength along the line of demarcation.

### Indonesia guerilla wars

At different times between 1959-1962 various censorship hand stamps were used on mail from locations in Sumatra, Borneo, West Timor, Sulawesi and the Moluccas, suggesting





Figure 10: Mail showing variations of military censorship on civil mail during Costa Rica's civil wars.



Figure 11: Outgoing censored mail from Colombia during the decade-long civil war, known as La Violencia.



that censorship was local rather than national. The above cover was sent while the Republik Maluku Selatan guerillas were still fighting. The fact that the senders were Christians may also have played a part in the selection of this cover for censorship. While this one falls just outside my definition of the Prexie era it and the previous cover suggest that mail to US missionaries may be a potentially rich source of Prexie covers in small event situations.

## References

- 1 *The History of the Postal and Telegraph Censorship Department 1938-1946*, 2 vol.; printed for the Home Office (UK Government) 1952.
- 2 LaBlonde, Charles: "Late WWII Netherlands Censorship;" *Civil Censorship Study Group Bulletin*, No. 187, pp. 93-97 (July, 2015)
- 3 *History*, op. cit., para. 269.
- 4 Private correspondence with Ali Muhonen, September 15, 2015. "Finland continued censorship measures until Dec 31, 1946, but only 15 percent of mail to abroad was inspected. The percentage was a lot smaller for the incoming mail." This end date points to the arbitrary nature of termination of censorship, since Finland did not sign its peace treaty with the U.K. and the U.S.S.R. (et al.) until February 10, 1947.
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- 8 A starting point for this and many other censorships is the only general catalog on civil censorship ever published. Wolter, Karl Kurt: *Die Postzensur*; 2 vols.; Georg Amm, 1965-66.



Figure 12: Air mail from the new Mali Republic early during its independence. Censorship of mail during the first few months remains scarce.



Figure 13: Incoming airmail from Korea during the guerilla war of 1948-1949 prior to the Korean War.



Figure 14: Outbound missionary mail from Indonesia posted in April 1962 during a period of guerilla warfare in the country.





# *The Prexie Era*

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## **\$5 Prexie Covers Meet Again**

by Leonard Piskiewicz



*Figure 1:* Heavily franked Prexie covers with 71 \$5 Prexies (above – should be 72) and 48 \$5 Prexies (below) mailed together in 1946.





The last issue of *The Prexie Era* (No. 73) brought to light a \$5 Prexie cover that I last saw about 30 years ago. When I saw Ed Field's article titled "Cover Surfaces with 71 Copies of the \$5 Prexie," it prompted me to exclaim, "Holy Cow! There's that \$5 Prexie cover again!"

Ed describes another cover, which I owned and exhibited until 2005, as follows:

A close cousin to my cover is illustrated on the front of *US Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1999* by Beecher and Wawrukiewicz. Same sender, same recipient, same mailing date. The main difference is that the Beecher &

Wawrukiewicz cover has "only" 40 five-dollar Prexies on the reverse, and the indemnity was "only" \$2,008,000. These two examples may well represent the largest known number of five-dollar Prexies on cover.

The two covers aren't cousins, they're brothers – "fraternal twins." Both covers are illustrated, front and back, in Figure 1.

As Ed notes, both covers were postmarked the same day. Also, the covers bear consecutive registry numbers 734706 and 734707. The covers were obviously mailed together.

On Ed's cover, as he states, "Note that the

two-dollar stamp is a replacement; the original was cut out decades ago by a prior owner who apparently valued the off-cover stamp more highly than the intact cover.” He does not indicate who replaced the missing stamp, which was replaced, as he notes, with a \$2 Harding Prexie that did not have a Wells Fargo & Union Trust Co. perfin (WF/U) as all of the other stamps on the cover have. The \$2 stamp looks like it belongs, with the cancel nicely matching the cover. But the \$2 stamp is wrong, apparently placed there by someone who had a \$2 with a cancel that “fit” the hole. What’s missing is a \$5 stamp.

Ed’s analysis of the rating of the cover concluded that the contents had a declared value of \$2,987,000. However, he also noted that my former cover as described in the Beecher-Wawrukiewicz book contained a declared value of \$2,008,000. If the space occupied by the \$2 stamp had been filled with a \$5 stamp, then

the declared value would have calculated out to \$3,012,000. The missing stamp must have been a \$5 Coolidge Prexie. And whatever was contained in the covers, my cover with \$240 in \$5 Prexies (I call it the “\$240 cover”) contained two of them and Ed’s cover contained three of them. This is corroborated by the regular postage and registry fees on the covers. The registry fee was the 20-cent minimum in both cases. The “\$240 cover” shows 3 cents first class postage, indicating that it weighed no more than one ounce, but the “\$360 cover” has two 3-cent stamps, indicating it weighed more than one ounce.

As stated in the Beecher-Wawrukiewicz book, I speculated that the cover “probably contained negotiable, interest bearing securities valued at \$2,000,000 with \$8,000 accrued interest to the date of mailing.” Ed has provided further analysis for the extra \$8,000 and \$12,000 value of the two covers:



Figure 2: Part of a photocopy offering the “\$240” cover in 1984.





Figure 3: Wells Fargo parcel tag offered recently on ebay.

Len's 1994 conclusion that each bond was insured for \$4000 extra to cover accrued interest is consistent with interest rates that prevailed in 1946; namely about 2.5 per cent and 1.6 per cent (\$12,500 and \$8000 for each semi-annual coupon) for investment quality corporate or muni bonds, respectively. Nonetheless, I am skeptical that the extra \$4000 indemnity was solely for accrued interest.

By 1946 interest rates had been in steady decline for years. During such periods, quality bonds sell at a premium over par value and approach par only at maturity. Why would the bank

insure the bonds at par value rather than the higher market value? The answer might lie in the fact that issuers usually reserved the right to "call" bonds before maturity in order to get out from under previous high rates and refinance at lower rates. Such forced redemptions were generally made at a small premium over par – a tiny bone for reluctant callees. I have no idea when the subject bonds were issued or were to mature, but my best guess is that the extra \$4000 per bond was a call premium .... in 1947 interest rates started a decades long rise. Whatever entity called the bonds timed it right.



Now that we have thoroughly explored the ratings of these covers, what of their origin? As I suggested above, I bought the “\$240 cover” in 1984, when almost nobody cared about Prexie postal history. I had begun accumulating interesting and unusual Prexie covers with the idea of eventually putting together an exhibit of Prexie usages. Being aware of my interest, postal history dealer Chuck McFarlane (Ausdenmoore-McFarlane Stamps) sent me copies of both sides of the \$5 cover, offering the cover for \$140 (see Figure 2). I bought the cover. Chuck related the history of the cover as he knew it, which I recall as follows.

The Prexie cover had been “homeless” for a while. The Sacramento Philatelic Society, which is now over 100 years old and which still holds weekly meetings, used to have auctions at their meetings once a quarter. In the early 1980s, the cover went through their auction three times before finding a buyer, when Chuck happened to attend a meeting (he wasn’t a member) and bought the cover for his sales stock. As I said, back then nobody cared about Prexie covers and nobody wanted it. But I was happy to have it – to be an “anchor” for a future exhibit. (The cover now resides in the collection of a Prexie Era Committee member and is exhibited periodically.)

Then, several months after I bought my cover, itinerant vest-pocket dealer John Gonzales offered me the Field cover for \$200, which I didn’t buy (my cover cost me less than that). I may have been aware of the cover before that time, but I don’t remember that specifically. I later learned he sold it to Dick Searing. While I wasn’t acquainted with Dick Searing, I was aware that he was the Section Editor of The Bank Note Period of the USPCS *Chronicle* and had a particular interest in on-cover uses of high value Bank Note stamps. I figured that interest extended into the 20th century and the

Prexies.

When my old cover went through the Sacramento Philatelic Society auction, Chuck didn’t know about the other cover, which Ed Field now owns. It wasn’t offered at the same time, but it was apparently lurking in the shadows, since it showed up in our area and was offered to me some months later (less than a year, as I recall). When the single \$5 stamp was cut out of the envelope is not known. The seller of the cover at the auction has since passed on, so the previous source of the cover appears to be unrecorded history.

What about the future of the cover with the incorrect \$2 Prexie? The missing \$5 stamp should be fairly easy to replace. Wells Fargo most likely made perfins of many more \$5 stamps that were used on these two covers. Many or most of those were probably saved. It shouldn’t be terribly difficult to find – even the stamp that was removed from this cover should be out there somewhere. In fact, as this account is being written, a parcel tag from Wells Fargo in San Francisco with their perfined Prexies is being offered on ebay – see Figure 3. There must be a good supply of Wells Fargo perfined Prexies available in collections and dealers’ stocks.

One final note: The two \$5 covers and the parcel tag all have a penciled “X” next to the registry number. The “X” was unwritten Post Office code for valuable contents, perhaps to encourage postal employees to be “eXtra” careful to protect the letter or parcel from being “lost.”

This account may not be all of “the rest of the story,” but is presented here to record the rise to greater appreciation of these highly franked covers.

## Prexie Movie Prop

by Thomas Matthiesen



*Figure:* This brief close up of covers occurs at about 65 minutes into the movie, “Portrait of Jennie.” The film is currently posted on YouTube.

I suppose part of the fun achieved through philatelic knowledge is the satisfaction of once in awhile discovering that somebody else has made an obvious mistake. This often happens when we encounter stamp collecting in novels, short stories and film. There seem to be varying degrees of awareness of philately among authors and editors, directors, art directors and property masters. We have all cringed when we have seen a movie where a valuable rare stamp (often described as “unique”) is carelessly held between greasy fingers by a so called expert philatelist. These are simple gaffs clearly done through ignorance.

But some novels and films show at least some respect and awareness of the historical importance of getting these little paper objects right. Sometimes a property master (the person in charge of obtaining the props in a movie) does a pretty good job, tries hard to make a letter shown in a close-up look very real. Some

of the studios had convincing prop stamps just for that purpose. But more often than not something slips by them, usually something any average collector would be able to catch.

In the 1948 film, “Portrait of Jennie”, directed by William Dieterle and starring Jennifer Jones and Joseph Cotton, the head nun of a convent (played by Lillian Gish) shows the Cotton character some letters written “many years ago.” They look quite good in their brief close-up, a nice bundle of letters franked with what appear to be Prexies (or prop stamps designed to look just like Prexies). Unfortunately the story takes place in the “winter of ‘34” and it is further implied that the old letters predate that year, supposedly from the 1920’s, long before the Prexies were issued.

The film is interesting though, a strange and somewhat surreal story of time and afterlife adapted from the best selling novel by Robert

Nathan. It is something of a trivia gold mine with lots of Hollywood history there for those who search. Two major things do stand out from a cinema standpoint. Curiously, there are no conventional titles at the beginning of

the film and then the final scenes of this black and white movie are suddenly tinted in over all color as it builds up to the final concluding shot of the painting of Jennie, the title character, in full Technicolor.

## Early Use of the 10-Cent Prexie Coil

by Robert Schlesinger



The 10-cent Prexie coil stamp, perforated 10 vertically, was issued on January 20, 1939, in Washington, D.C., along with the rest of the vertically perforated coils. Unlike the others, it was issued not in rolls of 100, but in rolls of 500. This may help explain why this stamp saw limited use.

I recently purchased the cover illustrated here, which shows an interesting early use of a short lived rate.

*Postal Bulletin* 17706, dated June 5, 1939, announced changes in F.A.M. 18. There would be stops in Shediac, New Brunswick; Botwood, Newfoundland; and Foynes, Ireland. The air mail postage rate for the Newfoundland portion of the flight would be 10 cents per half ounce. The announcement further stated, "Although

the exact date of inauguration of service cannot be announced at this time, it is expected that service will be inaugurated over the North Atlantic portion of F.A.M. 18 on June 24."

The cover was indeed postmarked on June 24, 1939. It arrived in Botwood, Newfoundland on June 27, as shown on the backstamp.



Per *Postal Bulletin* 17784, dated September 25, 1939, air service was to be discontinued for the winter season with the last flight from New York scheduled for September 30. This rate would not be renewed.



## Seaman's Special Handling Christmas Parcel Returned to Sender

by Dan Pagter



Illustrated is a three pound zone 4 parcel post item mailed from Los Angeles to San Francisco on September 15, 1944. The rating from March 26, 1944 through December 31, 1948, is 10 cents for the first pound, 3.5 cents per pound for the next two pounds (7 cents) for a total of 17 cents postage. An additional postage surcharge of 3 percent was required, adding 1 cent (0.51 cents rounded up) for a total parcel post postage of 18 cents. It was paid by an 18-cent Prexie, properly tied by an undated parcel post roller cancel.

A 15-cent Prexie paid the special handling

fee on this parcel (greater than 2 pounds up to 10 pounds), a rate in effect from July 1, 1928 through December 31, 1948.

Special handling was introduced to expedite the parcel as if it was first class matter, from office of acceptance to office of delivery and requiring a dated cancellation. In this case a manuscript time was written over the cancel reading 11:00 AM. So this item was received at 11:00 AM Sept. 15, 1944 to be included with the next first class dispatch to San Francisco, the office of delivery. In San Francisco the parcel was "delivered" to a naval FPO. While the parcel

post postage was adequate for the package to be carried to any naval location served by that FPO or for forwarding as necessary, the special handling service stopped there as the military did not provide, that service.

The Christmas theme mailing label and Frosty's sticker add eye appeal and inform us this was a Christmas parcel for J. P Goggin C.B.M.. serving aboard a naval warship. The package was posted for timely Christmas delivery. But the boxed auxiliary marking on the upper right tells us the package went from San Francisco to Washington D.C. where it was returned to the sender in Los Angeles as unclaimed. Without additional markings there is no way to determine how far west this package may have traveled into the Pacific -- Hawaii, Guam, or all the way to Purvis Bay, Florida Islands group of the Solomon Islands, the local command base for J.P. Goggin C.B.M.

The return from Washington, D.C. went by regular postal service. Parcel post regulations normally required additional postage when forwarding or returning parcel post matter. However, an exemption existed for military personnel and civil servants whose change of address was caused by official orders. The parcel should have been returned to Los Angeles with special handling service.

The foregoing is not a story but a recitation of facts and deduction found on or derived from the items and markings on the parcel wrapper as presented. A little digging explains that John Goggin was a chief boatswain's mate (C.B.M.). Generally, boatswain's mates oversee work parties in maintenance of a ship's external structure, direct damage control parties, and supervise maintenance of abandon-ship equipment and abandon-ship training. In short boatswain's mates were charged with keeping the ship and its equipment floating and functioning at all times, period. John Goggin was so charged on the destroyer, USS *Hoel*

(DD-533). The *Hoel* was commissioned July 29, 1943 and, following shakedown and final alterations, left San Francisco on October 26, 1943, later to gather five battle stars, a Presidential Unit Citation -- and to never return.

At 6:45 am the Battle off Samar began, the centermost action of the four-day Battle of Layte Gulf (October 23-26, 1944), largest naval battle of World War II and perhaps in history. Operating as Taffy 3, *Hoel*, two other destroyers, including the USS *Johnston*, six escort carriers, including USS *Gambier Bay* and USS *St. Lo*, and four destroyer escorts including the USS *Samuel B. Roberts*, were operating off Samar. Admiral Halsey, having left his position to chase a decoy fleet, Taffy 3 remained unprotected to the north, backlit by breaking dawn and completely surprised by the arrival of the Japanese Central Force consisting of the *Yamato* and three other battleships, six heavy cruisers, two light cruisers and eleven destroyers. Naval historians consider the Battle off Samar one of the largest naval mismatches in history. *Yamato's*, displacement alone exceeded the combined total of all Taffy 3's ships.

After ordering the launch of all aircraft and hiding the carriers in a squall, the Admiral of Taffy 3 ordered the three destroyers to attack the Japanese battle group. At 7:14 Commander E. E. Evans of the *Johnston* had already given his crew the order to attack. That and subsequent command action while seriously wounded earned Evans a posthumous Medal of Honor.

While screening the carriers *Hoel* began firing at the enemy with the *Yamato* returning fire, hitting the bridge and taking out all voice radio communication, killing four, wounding Commander Kintberger (Navy Cross awardee for the day's actions) and the flag officer. At 7:16 *Hoel* initiated a torpedo attack, steering straight towards and engaging the much larger enemy ships. At 7:27 *Hoel* launched five torpedoes against the heavy cruiser *Haguro*

causing it to turn away and lose its attack position against the carriers. Moments later *Hoel* was struck by multiple shells, losing mechanical steering and reducing its speed to 17 knots. *Hoel* immediately targeted another ship in order to fire its five remaining torpedoes before being incapacitated. The *Yamato* was in the line of fire, but in a defensive maneuver turned and successfully outran the torpedoes.

Now surrounded, *Hoel* continued firing, but at 8:30 was overwhelmed. The enemy continued fire as the crew abandoned ship, stopping at 8:55 when it finally rolled over and sank. *Hoel* lost 253 of her 339 man crew, including John P. Goggin C.B.M. The *Johnston* went dead in the water at 9:40 am and sank at 10:10 with a loss of 186 hands, including its Commander Evans. The carrier *Gambier Bay* was sunk by naval fire and *St. Lo* by a single kamikaze plane from the first kamikaze unit attack of the war

coming at the end of the sea battle. The *Samuel B. Roberts*, “destroyer escort that fought like a battleship,” fired with deadly accuracy more than 92 percent of its available shells before going to the bottom.

Admiral Kurita, commander of the Central Force, withdrew his ships after the attacks had broken up his formations and lost tactical control. This was the only engagement of *Yamato* in a ship to ship sea battle. She recorded hitting three ships contributing to their sinking, *Gambier Bay*, *Johnston* and *Hoel*.

USS *Hoel*'s Commander Kintberger said of his men, including J.P. Goggin C.B.M., “Fully cognizant of the inevitable result of engaging such vastly superior forces, these men performed their assigned duties coolly and efficiently until their ship was shot from under them.”

### Third-Class Materials for Planting

by Louis Fiset



Shown are both sides of a tag attached to a package containing four different plants, itemized at the left. The package falls under “third-class materials for planting” rated at 1 cent per two ounces (in effect April 15, 1925 - December 31, 1948.) The tag bears 4 cents postage, paying the maximum 8 ounces allowed for third-class mail. The text on the address side certifies the plants from the nursery stock of A. B. Kathamler to be free of disease, and “. . . This certificate is valid until Oct. 1, 1940.” To further narrow the postmark date on this MAILED ON RURAL ROUTE tag, the Sousa stamp first went on sale May 3, 1940.





# *The Prexie Era*

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## **Paying Postage Three Different Ways On One Parcel Post Item**

by Daniel S. Pagter



*Figure:* Partial wrapper containing a catalogue forwarded twice with three postage assessments.

The registered trademark of The Allbright-Nell Co., of Chicago, marks this corrugated container top as a Prexie era postal history rough gem. The container originally contained a company catalogue. The company name, present in both long form and as ANCO, has a century-long history of mechanized innovation

throughout the USA and world. William B. Allbright, an MIT graduate, spent his early career developing and processing the means to convert oil, fat, grease and other animal by products into useful products, such as soap. His employer gave him complete control to develop new processes and invent new machinery.

In 1902 he left his employer to partner with Mr. B. F. Nell and start the ANCO business. Initially, his company produced many industry standard machines for the meat processing industry. During World War II Albright and Nell doubled the company's output for the meat industry. In addition, its ability to adapt its machinery for a war footing allowed it to profit greatly in defense work, including machining and assembling parts for the Army's Sherman Tank.

The Albright-Nell Company is relatively unknown to philately. Addressee Lawrence T. Berliner, his brother, and father, however, are known to collectors for the extensive postal history they left behind, especially fourth class and parcel post material, mostly raw fur mailing tags.

To fully appreciate the illustrated parcel post wrapper, we must know something about the addressee and his family. In the late 1880s Meyer Berliner started a tallow rendering business in Corry, PA, which failed after five years. Meyer died in 1895. In 1900 son Jacob and his sons, Lawrence and Manfred, founded the Corry Hide Company. In 1914 they also founded the Berliner Leather Company, shortly renamed the Berliner Company. Both family-run companies flourished beyond Jacob's 1917 death and until Manfred's death in 1924.

Lawrence soon moved to New York City, but continued to head the companies in Corry. Company operations slowed considerably. Lawrence remained in the industry as a member of the New York Hide Exchange. In the late 1930s he began to spend time in Florida in addition to New York and Corry, relocating to Florida permanently by the 1940s.

The wrapper shown here, as implied by the Sec. 571½ P.L.&R. imprint, contained “. . . a bound catalog of greater than 24 pages and no more than 10 pounds subject to a special parcel

post rate of postage by zone for the first pound and lower rate for the each of additional second to tenth pound, if any.” This special, newly created rate went into effect July 1, 1939 when added as an amendment (Section 571½) to the 1932 Postal Laws and Regulations (P.L.&R.) The 1940 P.L.&R. incorporated that section into Section 571 as paragraph 5. The rates will also be found in the annual POD postal guides. Unlike the guides, the P.L.&R.s are issued as needed, usually not less than five years apart.

The reason Sec. 571½ P.L.&R. is needed is to differentiate these special parcel post rate items from the similar looking normal parcel post matter items, which required higher postage rates. The imprint was placed to prevent the mail matter from being reassessed as a short paid normal rate parcel post item and erroneously “Held for Postage,” as such short matter was normally handled. The 1940 and 1941 endorsement required was “Sec. 571 P.L.&R.” While the short lived Sec. 571½ P.L.&R. became obsolete in less than a year, it adequately conveyed the necessary message on this wrapper, enabling the company to use its remaining stock of preprinted mailers.

**Postage for the first leg:** This item entered the mail stream in Chicago destined for New York City, in Zone 5. The first pound or fraction was 7 cents with each additional pound or fraction at 4 cents up to the tenth pound, a rate in effect from the July 1, 1939 inception until March 24, 1944. Based upon the presence of the 7-cent Jackson stamp, cancelled and tied by mute Chicago roller, this item weighed one pound or less and, as shown later, was seven ounces.

Arriving in New York City, the addressee, Mr. Berliner, had left a forwarding address of Corry, PA but failing to provide instruction regarding forwarding third class or parcel post mail matter. The New York City post office contacted Berliner, advising him of seven cents postage due at the normal third class catalog



Figure 2: Enlarged detail of the address label showing POD-applied markings prior to first forwarding.

rate of one cent per ounce, to be prepaid prior to forwarding to Corry, PA.

Corry, PA to New York City was a Zone 3 distance. However, the item was now no longer eligible for the special Section 571 P.L.&R. parcel post zone and weight rate as a single item. Rather, postage was only weight driven, at third class catalog rates. While the special Sec. 571 P.L.&R. rate would be 5 cents for the one pound Zone 3 distance, the single piece third class catalog rate from April 15, 1925 to January 1, 1949 was one cent per ounce or seven cents for a seven ounce mailing.

**Postage for the second leg:** Berliner sent seven cents as forwarding postage, including a 2-cent Adams, 3-cent Jefferson and 2-cent Sousa Famous American, all of which were affixed and cancelled by a mute New York Station H oval paying for this now seven ounce third class item on its second leg of the journey. The 7-cent adhesive originally canceled in Chicago was re-cancelled as well. Two strikes of “THIS IS THE ITEM FOR WHICH YOU SENT POSTAGE” and a straight line “JAN 27 1941” were added (Figure 2) and the mail matter forwarded to Corry, PA. This date was a gift to the postal historian because dates were neither required nor expected for held-for-postage matter, and

third class and parcel post matter was specifically not to be dated. The date likely appeared so the postal clerk could monitor how long the item sat awaiting forwarding postage. If none arrived, the item was to be returned, postage due, to the sender who would have to pay the return postage upon its return. The “Return Postage Guaranteed” endorsement (Figure 1) in the printed corner card was formal notice to handle the return in that manner without first securing return postage from the sender while holding the item for postage.

**Postage for the third leg:** From Corry, PA, the item was again forwarded, this time to Miami, FL, now Zone 6 mail. Had the item still qualified for the Sec. 571 P.L.&R. rate it would have required 8 cents to forward. The forwarding order on Lawrence’s mail to Miami must have included a pledge to pay for forwarded third class or parcel post matter when presented for delivery in Miami. This promise was cheaper, as it would avoid the 7 cents additional forwarding postage at the regular rate of 1 cent per ounce, plus a notice card fee and the 3-cent cost to send the forwarding postage back to the post office holding the item. The final postage payment for this third leg was collected as a postage due payment (undocumented), likely bulk for a stack of items forwarded to Lawrence in Miami.

During any parcel post era, including the Prexie era, by most measures a forwarded non-military parcel post item is scarce. A twice-forwarded item is even more so. Like a diamond, this unexpected item was dug from a large group lot of Berliner fur tags and envelopes. This find shows the value of sifting through the muck accompanied by basic philatelic knowledge. It allows us to recognize a diamond in the rough when it appears in that muck. Happy hunting!



## Air Despatch Letter Service/Bomber Pouch Mail

by Louis Fiset



*Figure 1: ADLS cover, from the European continent to New York City, via London, Prestwick, Scotland and Washington, D.C. Postage was required for domestic transport of the mail.*

Figure 1 shows what appears to be a rather ordinary cover bearing an 8-cent Prexie paying the domestic airmail rate on May 21, 1945, from Washington, D.C. to New York. What drew my attention is the underlined, “via ADLS” notation. Closer inspection also reveals three dates in May 1945 – 13, 14, and 15, set within rectangular and oval press censorship markings applied by U.S. [Supreme Headquarters Allied Forces (SHAFF)] and British censors. A fourth date “15 May 1945 P.M.” forms part of a “PRO Air Dispatch” clock dial stamp, in red, (PRO = Public Relations Office). Finally, the cover is addressed to the editor (Rédaction) of a Hungarian American newspaper, published in New York.

Here is what I’ve learned about this cover, with help from Ken Lawrence and Richard Martorelli. The ADLS notation stands for Air Despatch Letter Service, a quasi courier service established by the Royal Air Force to ferry important dispatches between Europe’s battlefields and London. The RAF re-outfitted

Hawker Hurricane fighter planes, earlier heroes of the Battle of Britain, to shuttle the mail in modified fuselages and torpedo pods. The service started at the beginning of the war when a squadron was formed to transport personnel and dispatch important communications. Following the invasion of Normandy the service increased in importance as ADLS pilots flew dispatches for home from all over wartorn Europe.

This cover was addressed to *Amerikai Magyar Nepszava*, a U.S.-based, anti-Axis newspaper targeting Hungarian Americans seeking news on the course of the war in the homeland. German and Hungarian troops, on the defensive against invading Soviet troops, were finally expelled from Hungary on April 4, 1945. Formal surrender took place on May 8th, VE Day, one week before the posting of this cover.

Figure 2 shows a contemporaneous print advertisement providing information about the publication.



Figure 2: Print advertisement promoting the Hungarian-American newspaper.

The question arises how this non-APO letter reached the U.S. within a week, given the postage paid. Figure 3 may help provide an explanation.

This cover, bearing several markings similar to the first one, also has a typed directive, BOMBER PACKET. The U.S. Air Transport Command operated a free transatlantic shuttle service using stripped down, long range B-24 bombers to transport important military, diplomatic, and business communications between Washington and London, via Prestwick, Scotland. Eligible mail was to have some directive indicating it should be included as “bomber mail.”

While the Office of War Information underwrote this service, correspondents were required to affix postage for onward postal service in the U.S. Hence, the postage paid on the two covers.

The cover in Figure 3 appears to provide a link between ADLS and bomber pouch mail. This cover was sent from APO 755 (Namur, Belgium) with airmail concession rate postage affixed. Both covers bear SHAEF press censor markings applied a day apart, as well as dated PRO Air Dispatch clock dials. The two covers share pencilled “A4230” and A4309” docketing markings, perhaps applied to all mail being dispatched. Finally, both covers were postmarked at Washington, D.C. on the same day, May 21, 1945.

These similar markings suggest the first cover, flown to England via ADLS, continued its journey to Washington from Prestwick as bomber pouch mail. Now, can anyone show a single cover bearing both ADLS and bomber pouch markings?

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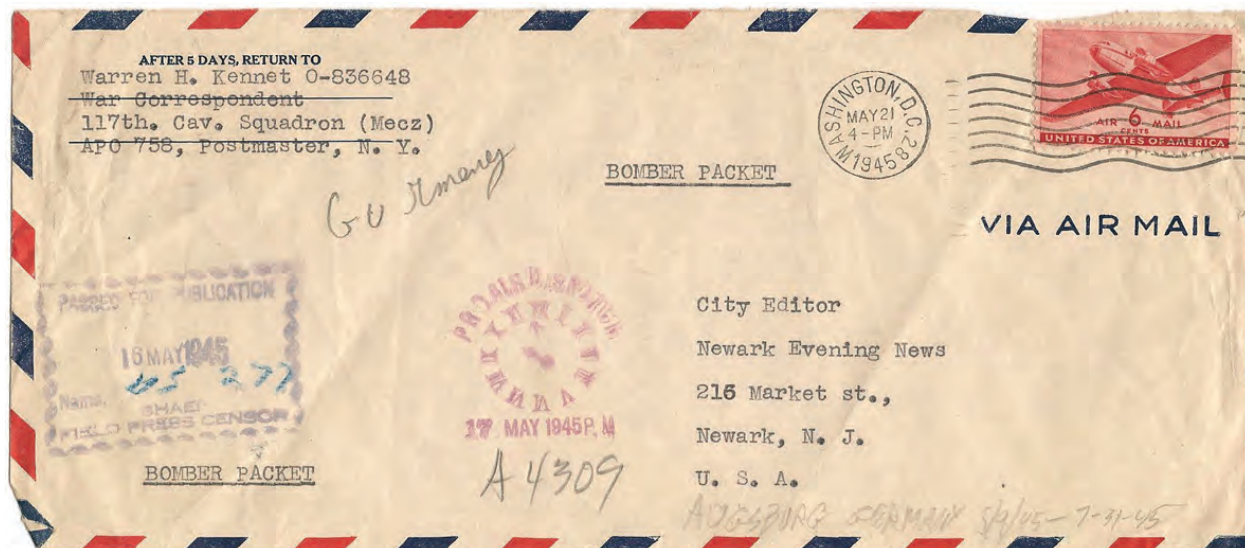


Figure 3: “Bomber Packet” mail correspondence bearing similar markings to the ADLS cover in Figure 1. [Richard Martorelli collection, courtesy of the Postal History Journal.]



## Fourth Class Mail: American Locker Co. Tags

by Richard Pederson

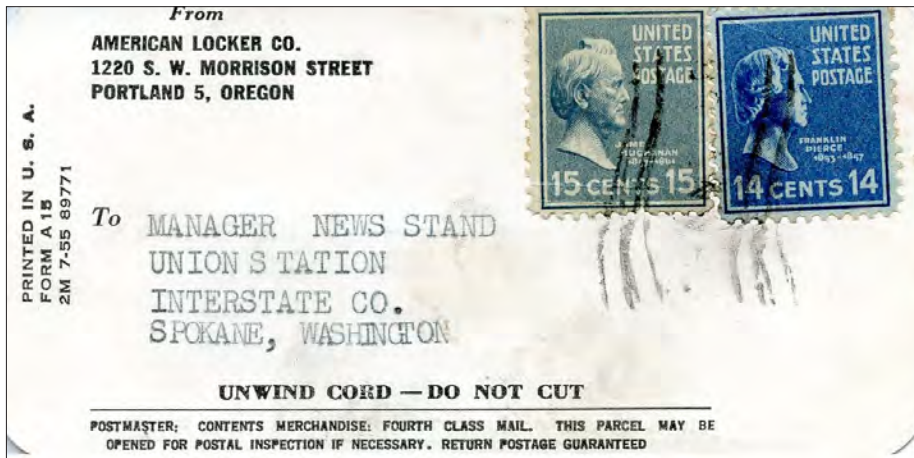


Figure 1: Front and back sides of a fourth class parcel tag, possibly paying for advertising brochures for the American Locker Co.

Over the years I have accumulated a number of American Locker Company fourth class mailing tags franked with Prexie stamps. Although acquired from several different sellers, they may all have originated from the same source. Each tag has postage affixed on both sides, one side paying outbound postage from the American Locker Company and the other with return postage from the original addressee. All tags are cancelled but, as expected with fourth class mail, only two have date stamps, both of them faint or nearly illegible.

Figure 1 shows the front and back of a tag used to affix postage for a parcel sent between the American Locker Company's Portland, Oregon

office and the Interstate Company news stand at Union Station, in Spokane, Washington. Both sides contain 29 cents postage paying for up to 2 pounds for a Zone 3 destination.

This group of tags poses two challenges -- first, to speculate on the contents of the attached parcels and; two, to determine the time frame in which the tags were used in order to confirm the rates were correctly calculated. I will tackle these questions one at a time.

Determining what was being mailed might provide a clue as to why return postage was needed. An internet search on the American Locker Company resulted in the advertisement



for public lockers shown in Figure 2. A follow-up search on the Portland street address revealed the company was located in what is now known as the Terminal Sales Building in the downtown area. The building, constructed in 1926, is a well-known landmark and represents the only high-rise art deco building in the city. It is currently on the National Register of Historic Places.

Next, I looked at the addressees on the tags for clues to what was being shipped. I also read the descriptions of those items I purchased on eBay and those Bob Hohertz has for two American Locker Company tags included on his Prexie web site.

Each of my tags was sent from the American Locker Company to one of the following destinations:

- Young Women's Christian Association, Portland, Oregon
- Northwest Greyhound Bus Depot, Pasco, Washington
- Spokane Union Bus Depot, Spokane, Washington
- Continental Trailways Bus Depot, Seattle, Washington
- Great Northern Railway, Havre, Montana
- Pacific Trailways Bus Depot, Redmond, Oregon
- Northern Pacific Railway, Yakima, Washington
- Coeur d'Alene Hotel, Spokane, Washington
- Greyhound Bus Depot, Tacoma, Washington
- News Stand at Union Station (Interstate Co.), Spokane, Washington
- Trailways Bus Depot, Portland, Oregon.

Also, each tag contains the statement/warning, "UNWIND CORD – DO NOT CUT." This implies the packages were bound with cord



Figure 2: Print copy advertising public lockers for travelers located in train stations, bus depots, etc.

tightly wrapped around whatever was being shipped.

Based upon the destinations and warning, my first thought was that the contents included newspapers and/or periodicals being shipped to newsstands located throughout the Pacific Northwest region. However, analysis of the tags' postage suggests the heaviest weight shipped was between 3 and 4 pounds, with the majority paying up to 1 pound. Most bundles of newspapers or periodicals would exceed four

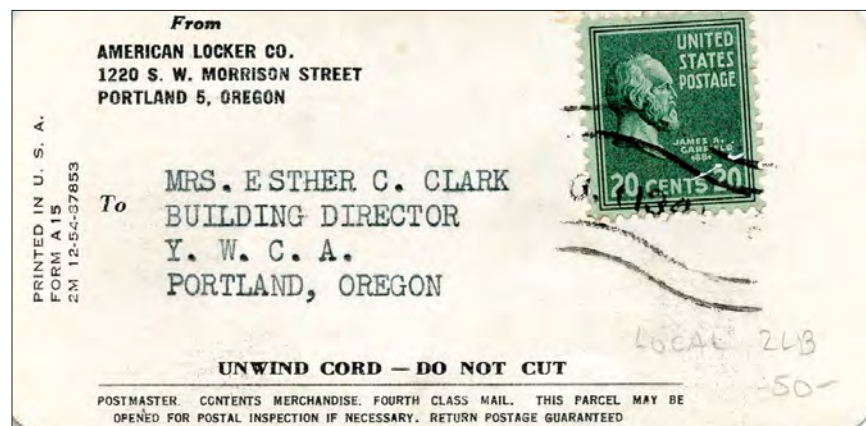


Figure 3: Two American Locker Co. tags with local zone (Portland, Oregon) postage paid.

pounds – and certainly more than just a single pound.

The advertisement in Figure 2 may shed light on the contents of the packages. It suggests the company provided lockers for temporary storage of parcels and luggage located in public places, such as bus terminals and train stations. Perhaps the packages contained advertising brochures for the lockers, with surpluses being returned to the company.

Determining the approximate period of use for the tags proved relatively easy. Bob Hohertz pointed out that the tags were date-coded to indicate when created. According to the coding, the tags were all printed on one of the following dates: December 1954; July 1955; December 1955; and June 1956. Furthermore, two of them were date stamped when the cancel

was applied, one of which clearly shows the year, 1955. Based upon this information, the fourth class rates applying to all 12 of the tags in my possession were in effect from October 1, 1953 through January 31, 1960.

Both tags with local zone (Portland) bear solo Prexie frankings. See Figure 3. The first, with an 18-cent Grant stamp, pays the up-to-one-pound rate between the American Locker Company and the Trailways Bus Depot; the second, with a 20-cent Garfield stamp, pays the up-to-two-pound rate between the American Locker Company and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).

I welcome additional information from other readers on the American Locker Company and the contents of what may have been shipped via fourth class mail. Please contact the editor.



## Supplementary Registration Fee on Foreign Mail

by Ed Field



The figures above show the front and reverse of a cover sent from the Bank of Manhattan to Medan, Sumatra in the Dutch East Indies (DEI). It was posted in New York City on October 29 1941 and arrived in Medan on December 12 1941. Its transit thus spanned the Pearl Harbor attack. Its many markings are of interest to World War II postal historians, but my goal here is simply to determine what the cover's contents might have been.

The franking totals \$7.70 plus 15 cents registry fee. Because the airmail rate to DEI was 70 cents per half ounce, one might conclude the cover plus contents weighed 5.5 ounces and the \$7.70 went entirely for postage. The contents would therefore have been five ounces of paper stuffed into a roughly half-

ounce cover. My purpose here is to offer an alternative interpretation; namely, that part of the franking was to pay the supplementary fee the USPOD charged for delivering valuable contents under the registry system, assuming this would also apply to UPU mail matter.

For one thing, the sender was a large Wall Street bank that routinely transferred negotiable securities such as bearer bonds via the registry system. They were required to declare the value of the contents and had to pay a surcharge proportional to that value. Moreover, try as I might, I could not stuff more than 3 ounces of paper into the cover without risk of bursting it. Unless there is some kind of heavy paper I don't know about, the cover with contents did not weigh more than 3.5 ounces, and it surely



weighed more than a half ounce. So, the airmail postage would have been at least \$1.40, but no more than \$4.90. Any franking above those values would have been for the surcharge.

The surcharge for Zone 8 was 13 cents per thousand dollars declared value. Several possible combinations of weight and value

exist, but simple math shows that declared values between \$21K and \$48K are consistent with the franking. One appealing possibility: If the declared value were \$43K, the postage plus surcharge would have totaled \$7.69. The bank could well afford the penny over payment.

Does anyone have an alternative explanation?

## Diplomatic Mail Air Parcel Post Service

by Robert Schlesinger



I recently purchased an interesting tag with a corner card that reads FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA and was sent air parcel post to Washington, D.C. It bears \$30.77 in postage, all of it Prexie usage.

The handstamp reads EMBASSY - APO 928, c/o Postmaster San Francisco, California. From June 1, 1950, through December 31, 1964, APO 928 was located in Manila, Philippines. Thus we know the American embassy in Manila sent the package back to the Department of State in Washington, DC.

In terms of rating the parcel, the handstamp on the bottom of the front is useful. It gives the date of mailing (August 17, 1954) and weight of the parcel (38 pounds). Zone 8, the applicable zone for this parcel, required 80 cents per pound airmail postage. Thirty-eight pounds times 80 cents per pound comes up to \$30.40. Added was a 30-cent no indemnity registry fee, and 7-cent supplemental fee covering \$400-\$600 in value for Zone 8. These additional fees, added to the postage paid comes to \$30.77, the total amount paid by the Prexies on the tag.



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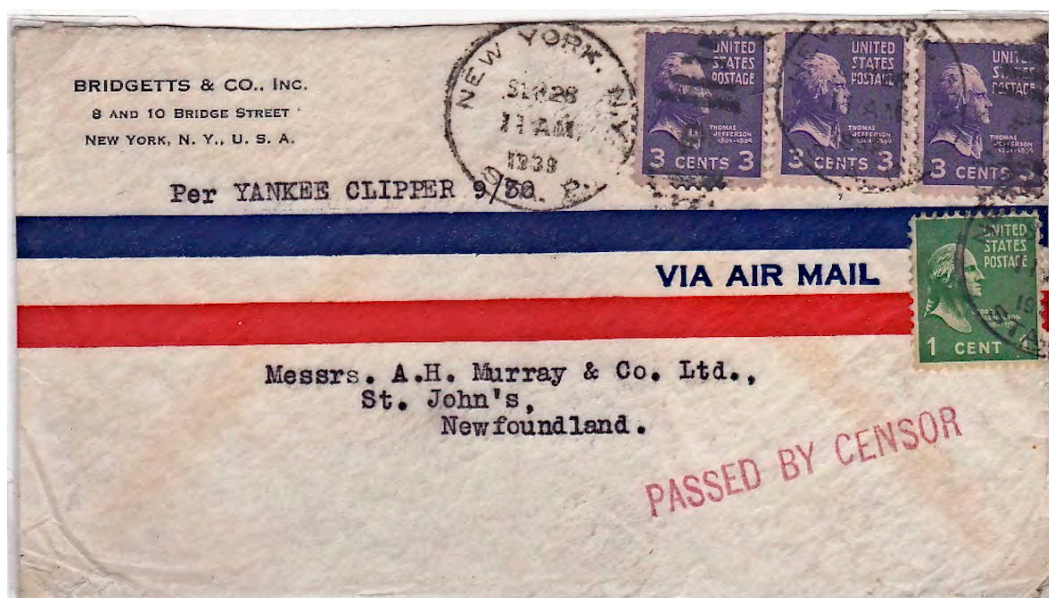
# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

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## **Last Flight Cover to Newfoundland**

by Stephen L. Suffet



Most Prexie era postal history specialists know that the first flight on the Northern Branch of Foreign Air Mail Route 18 (Northern FAM 18) took off from Port Washington, New York, on Saturday, June 24, 1939. After a three-day weather-related delay in Shediac, New Brunswick, the flight continued to Botwood, Newfoundland, and then onward across the Atlantic to Foynes, Ireland, and finally to Southampton, England. Pan American Airways provided this service every other Saturday through September 30. The service was then suspended for the winter season and did not resume until the following spring. That means

there were only eight eastbound Northern FAM 18 flights in 1939. Please note that because of the outbreak of World War II, the last two Northern FAM flights for 1939, the September 16 and September 30 flights, terminated in Foynes instead of in Southampton.

The air mail rate from the USA to Newfoundland on Northern FAM 18 was 10 cents per half ounce, but only for articles actually addressed to Newfoundland. For mail sent onward to Canada or back to the USA the rate was 15 cents per half ounce. These same 10-cent and 15-cent rates applied to mail sent from the USA

to Newfoundland via British Imperial Airways (IA), which provided trans-Atlantic service to Southampton through Montreal, Botwood and Foynes, rather than through Shediac, Botwood, and Foynes. Unlike the Northern FAM 18 flights, the IA flights continued to fly to Southampton after the war began.

The first eastbound IA trans-Atlantic flight took off from Port Washington on August 9, 1939, and the last one for the season departed on September 27. These were Wednesday flights, usually every two weeks, but in one instance as World War II began, there was a three-week gap. That means there were only four IA flights on that route in 1939. In total, there were just twelve flights for which the 10-cent and 15-cent rates to Newfoundland applied.

The figure above shows an air mail cover to Saint John's, Newfoundland, postmarked in New York, NY, on September 28, 1939. It is endorsed "Per YANKEE CLIPPER 9/30" and four Prexies correctly paid the 10-cent rate. The Yankee Clipper was, of course, a Pan American Airways Boeing 314 flying boat. The "PASSED BY CENSOR" marking was applied by British authorities upon the cover's arrival in Newfoundland. It is truly a last flight cover, at least for the 1939 season, but possibly also

for the 10-cent rate at the time.

We do not know for certain what the FAM or IA rate to Newfoundland was when service resumed the following spring. What we do know is that *The Postal Bulletin* of May 1, 1942, announced: "Effective May 1, 1942, through air mail service of a frequency of daily except Sunday will be available to Newfoundland. The postage required on civilian mail posted in continental United States and Alaska to be carried by this service to Newfoundland, and civilian mail posted in Army post offices in Newfoundland for the United States and Alaska, shall be 15 cents per half ounce or fraction."

We also know that from November 1, 1946, through March 31, 1949, the air mail rate to Newfoundland from the USA, or from any of its possessions or military post offices abroad, was 10 cents per half ounce, as it was to most Western Hemisphere countries other than Canada and Mexico. A few minutes before midnight March 31, 1949, Newfoundland became a province of Canada, so effective April 1, 1949, the air mail rate to Newfoundland dropped to 6 cents per ounce, which was the USA's rate to Canada or Mexico, as well as its domestic air mail rate.

### **2017 Subscriptions Payable Now**

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# International Return Receipt Requested After Mailing

by Lucien Klein

Figure: International Return Receipt Requested After Mailing Form 2865, postmarked December 3, 1941 regarding a registered letter mailed August 25, 1941.

An article was sent by registered mail from Pinellas Park, Florida, on August 25, 1941, to Cayenne, French Guyana. On December 3, 1941, the sender, O.J. Richardson, requested a return receipt for the article mailed. Form 2865 was used, franked with a 10-cent Prexie sheet stamp.

The international return receipt requested after mailing rate of 10 cents was in effect from December 1, 1925 to November 1, 1953. "Requested after mailing" is written in the top left corner on the front of the form.

The addressee and an agent of the Cayenne post office signed on the reverse side of the form stating the article was delivered on December 6, 1941. The form was mailed back to the sender in Pinellas Park, Florida (without a street address) on February 7, 1942.

Why am I writing about this? Because, at least at the APS StampShow in Portland, last August, this is the first example of this use, franked with a Prexie, that those (dealers and collectors) who looked at it had ever seen.

# America First Committee

by Lucien Klein



Figure: A cover promoting the America First movement 13 months before the U.S. entered World War II.

In issue number 70 of *The Prexie Era*, in an article about the Famous Americans Issue in Wartime, 1940 – 1941, Louis Fiset mentions that labels on mail promoting America First are difficult to come by. The cover shown here, although not franked with a Famous Americans Issue stamp, but with a 3-cent Prexie, promotes the America First movement.

The phrase, America First, has had different meanings at different times. On September 4, 1940, the America First Committee was founded at Yale University in Connecticut. This October 22, 1940 cover, from McAlester, Oklahoma and addressed to Wheeling, West Virginia, bears a faint America First handstamp with an American flag between the words,

America, and, First. The McAlester postmark is struck over the America First handstamp.

The America First Committee wanted the United States to stay out of the war in Europe. Its basic assumption was that America was protected by two oceans and its vast land mass and that intervention in Europe would turn out no better than it had in World War I. At its peak, it claimed 800,000 dues paying members in 450 autonomous chapters. Noteworthy members included Charles Lindbergh, Walt Disney, John F. Kennedy and Gerald Ford.

The organization dissolved on December 10, 1941, as a result of the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.

## Vermont Statehood Censored FDCs

by Glen Estus



I have been building an exhibit of the Vermont Statehood issue of 1941 (Scott #903) for almost 30 years. Since it's a fairly modern issue, first day covers are rather common, with even the more expensive ones available given a little patience.

Perhaps the most interesting FDCs are those mailed to foreign countries. In 1941, the world may have been at war, but collectors abroad still attempted to add U.S. new issues to their collections. I have three censored Vermont Statehood FDCs in my collection, each of

which bears a pair overpaying the international surface rate by 1 cent.

The first Vermont Statehood censored FDC, shown above, went from the Montpelier, the state capital, to Denmark. By now German forces had occupied Denmark for almost a year. The cover was intercepted by German censorship at Frankfurt and opened for inspection there. It's interesting that the reverse also has a label from the National America Denmark Association with wording: "Freedom and Independence for Denmark." Apparently,



this bit of propaganda failed to attract enough attention by the German censor to condemn the cover.

The second cover went to Australia where it was received in Epping, N.S.W. (New South Wales) on April 3, 1941. It was then forwarded to Burnwood, N.S.W. It was marked in red, "unknown/29.4.41" on April 29, 1941. Finally, a manuscript marking may be seen on the back "Received / Lautoka / 31/5/41". Today, Lautoka is the second largest city in Fiji.

Also found on the front of this busy cover is an "OPENED BY CENSOR" resealing label tied by a rubber stamped "PASSED BY CENSOR/S.71" marking. This censorship took place at Sydney, Australia.

Finally, a most unusual destination: Java in the Netherlands East Indies (NEI). On May 5, 1941, one month after the first day of issue of the Vermont Statehood stamp, the cover was received and censored in the NEI.



## 1940 New York World's Fair Employee, Interned

by Louis Fiset



Sixty-one Italian nationals employed at the Italy Pavilion during the New York World's Fair were stranded in the U.S. at the close of the Fair in October 1940. Italy had entered World War II the previous June, and safe transatlantic passage back to the homeland could not be guaranteed. Soon overstaying their work visas, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) arrested, then detained the group at Ellis Island. Subsequently the workers were mixed in with approximately 1,000 merchant seamen at the Fort Missoula, Montana internment camp, all fellow Italian nationals.

The cover shown above highlights a story of a single restaurant worker at the Fair's Italian Line Restaurant, one that continues to resonate more than 75 years after it was written. First, however, here are details of what we can read from the cover, itself.

Hidden from view by a censor resealing label and thick paper directive, and visible only with strong back lighting, we see the letter was postmarked Missoula, Montana, November 21, 1941. The return address reads: **Luigi**

**Venetta/NY World's Fair/Box 1539/Missoula, Montana.** The letter is addressed to Venetta's wife, Louisa, in Fidenza (Parma), Italy. The letter was dispatched by air via New York to Bermuda, off loaded, and examined by a British censor. With the U.S. now in the war and postal relations with Italy suspended, it was sent back to New York, docketed on July 23, 1942, and eventually returned to the writer. Upon arrival at Fort Missoula, the letter was passed by an INS censor, as seen by the prominent black square rubber stamp marking.

By now Venetta had departed the internment camp. On October 23, 1942 the letter was forwarded to **Ship Lantern Jun Milton, NEW YORK, N.Y.** Despite multiple attempts in October and November 1942 to locate the address, Venetta could not be found. It thus ended up at the Dead Letter Office. There the letter and envelope were separated, and the cover eventually would have been recycled as scrap had it (and many others) not been rescued.

This so-far unique cover begs to be included in an exhibit, but until recently I couldn't fill



in necessary details of the story to justify it. Here's what I know now.

Luigi Vanetta was an employee of the Italian Line as a waiter and worked on the S.S. *Conte Biancamano* for more than a decade. He arrived in New York two weeks before the opening of the Fair, then returned to Italy the following October. He arrived again the next April and worked at the Italy Pavilion through closure of the Fair on October 27, 1940. Soon after, the INS swept him up with his coworkers and eventually transported him to Fort Missoula.

Almost a year had passed by the time Luigi's letter to Louisa was returned to Fort Missoula. But unlike most of his fellow inmates, Vanetta had been paroled by the Justice Department because he posed no threat to the nation's security. But where did Vanetta go after leaving the internment camp?

The answer lies written on the forwarding tape glued to the front of the cover. After a frustrating internet search for a non-existent ship, a last ditch Google search revealed a **Ship Lantern Inn, Milton, N.Y.** A quick read of the inn's website immediately solved the mystery!

Milton is a village on the western shore of the Hudson River, just down stream from

Poughkeepsie and a reasonable train ride north of New York City.

It appears the hand written forwarding address instruction Vanetta left behind was partially illegible. If so, perhaps other forwarded mail never reached him, as well.

Fortunately, the Ship Lantern Inn is still in business, and the third generation Italian owner provided additional details. Mike Foglia's grandfather, an immigrant from Parma province, opened the inn in 1925 as well as an adjacent restaurant, called The Terrace Dining Room. Over the years the grandfather sponsored a number of Italian nationals, providing employment for them at the inn and restaurant while they awaited naturalization.

The grandfather had an association with the operators of the Italian Line Restaurant at the World's Fair, which may have resulted in an initial connection with Vanetta. Although the current owner was not born until after World War II, he nevertheless confirmed the likelihood that Luigi Vanetta received his parole from the INS in part because of the grandfather's compassion, himself an immigrant from the same province and who may have been provided similar assistance by earlier immigrants when he first arrived after the turn of the century.



Picture postcard of a ca. 1940 view of the Terrace Dining Room at the Ship Lantern Inn, Milton, New York.



# A Long Trip to the Philippines

by Mike Ley



The October 31, 1939 Pan American Airways timetable for its Trans-Pacific service called for a weekly departure from San Francisco on Tuesdays, with arrival in Manila the following Monday with scheduled stops at Honolulu, Midway, Wake, and Guam, and then continuing on to Hong Kong.

The cover shown here is addressed to Iloilo City, Philippines, bearing a 50-cent Taft paying the 50 cents per half-ounce rate for Trans-Pacific service to the Philippines. It is postmarked December 23, 1939 at Johnson City, NY and has a 1939 Christmas seal tied by a Manila back stamp dated January 28, 1940, 36 days later. Things did not go according to plan.

The second edition of Edward B. Proud's *Intercontinental Airmails Volume One Transatlantic and Pacific* tells part of the story and gives clues to the rest. According to Proud, the first Trans-Pacific flight available to this cover would have been on the *Philippine Clipper*, departing from San Francisco January 3, 1940. Unfortunately the plane had to return due to mechanical trouble. It left again on January 5 but once more had to return to San Francisco for the same reason. Finally, it left on January 11, but this time had to return because of inclement weather. After all these delays the mail was placed on the S.S. *Matsonia*, which sailed on January 12. The *Philippine Clipper* took off again on January 13 and this time

made it to Honolulu. It was delayed there for a few days and finally returned to San Francisco January 16 because of more mechanical troubles, never completing the intended trip beyond Honolulu.

So, did the *Matsonia* take this cover to the Philippines? This is not likely as it was a luxury liner that traveled back and forth between San Francisco and Honolulu. The mail could have been transferred to another ship. But there may have been a better option. The *China Clipper* left San Francisco on January 17, arriving in Honolulu January 18. Could the cover have been transferred to the *China Clipper*? I have been unable to find any logs for the S.S. *Matsonia*, but its normal speed was 24 mph so should have made the 2,396 mile trip in 100

hours, arriving in four days, on January 16.

Likely, this cover was transferred to the *China Clipper*, but the troubles were not over yet. The plane left Honolulu January 18, but returned the same day due to bad weather. It was subject to continuous delays until Wake Island where it departed on January 23. It was forced back but took off again January 24. It arrived in Guam January 24 and left for Manila January 26 where it arrived January 27. This is consistent with the Manila post office back stamp, on January 28.

As a postscript I should note that the *China Clipper* was repaired and left San Francisco January 30 on a near normal trip, arriving in Manila on February 6.

## 1947 to Syria, Returned



Recently on ebay appeared this August 21, 1947, 5-cent surface cover from Chicago to Beirut, Syria, that was returned to sender having never left the country. The return label, applied at New York's Morgan Station, refers to the May 20, 1947 issue of *The Postal Bulletin*.

The text calls attention to the fact that the office of Beirut (Beyrouth) is located in Lebanon, not

Syria. Postmasters should return all articles addressed to "Beirut, Syria", or "Beyrouth, Syria", for the correct address. This would avoid both criticism and missending of mail.

Lebanon achieved independence from France in 1943, and Syria's official independence occurred in 1946. This may explain the sensitivity expressed in the *Bulletin* notice.



No. 77 Spring 2017

# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
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## **New Book on U.S. 20th Century Postal History - 'Prexie Era'**



The American Philatelic Society has just published *Prexie Era: Postal History and Stamp Production, 1938-1962*, a book highlighting 20th century U.S. postal history. Its focus is on stamp production, domestic rates and postal uses, as well as the changes of international mail routes, delays, and rates shaped by historical events of World War II.

Louis Fiset has compiled 15 essays written by nine experts in the field, all of whom have contributed to *The Prexie Era*. Their extensive

knowledge and passion for their subject are well known to both collectors and exhibitors.

This book is the first major work on the subject since Bill Helbock's 1988 tome, *Prexie Postal History*, and Roland Rustad's *The Prexies*, in 1994. Rather than repeat what is already known, information in this volume focuses on a time period when the Prexies were in current use rather than on the Prexie series, exclusively. The Prexie era offers rich opportunities for collecting mail generated during times of



explosive change, such as wartime crises and expanded airmail service. Stamps throughout the era contribute.

Essay topics are diverse and range from Albert “Chip” Briggs’s two essays on production and uses of the 3-cent Jefferson stamp to Ralph Nafziger’s World War II censorship of first day covers. Stephen L. Suffet concludes this volume with a provocative essay arguing why the Prexie era should end in 1962.

Titles of the essays included in the volume appear in the table below.

*Prexie Era: Postal History and Stamp Production, 1938-1962* is in soft cover, 8.5 inches by 11 inches, 286 pages, with 407 full-color philatelic illustrations, 7 tables, bibliography with 102 references, and index. It is available on the APS website, <https://www.stamps.org>, \$39 to APS members and \$43 to non-members.

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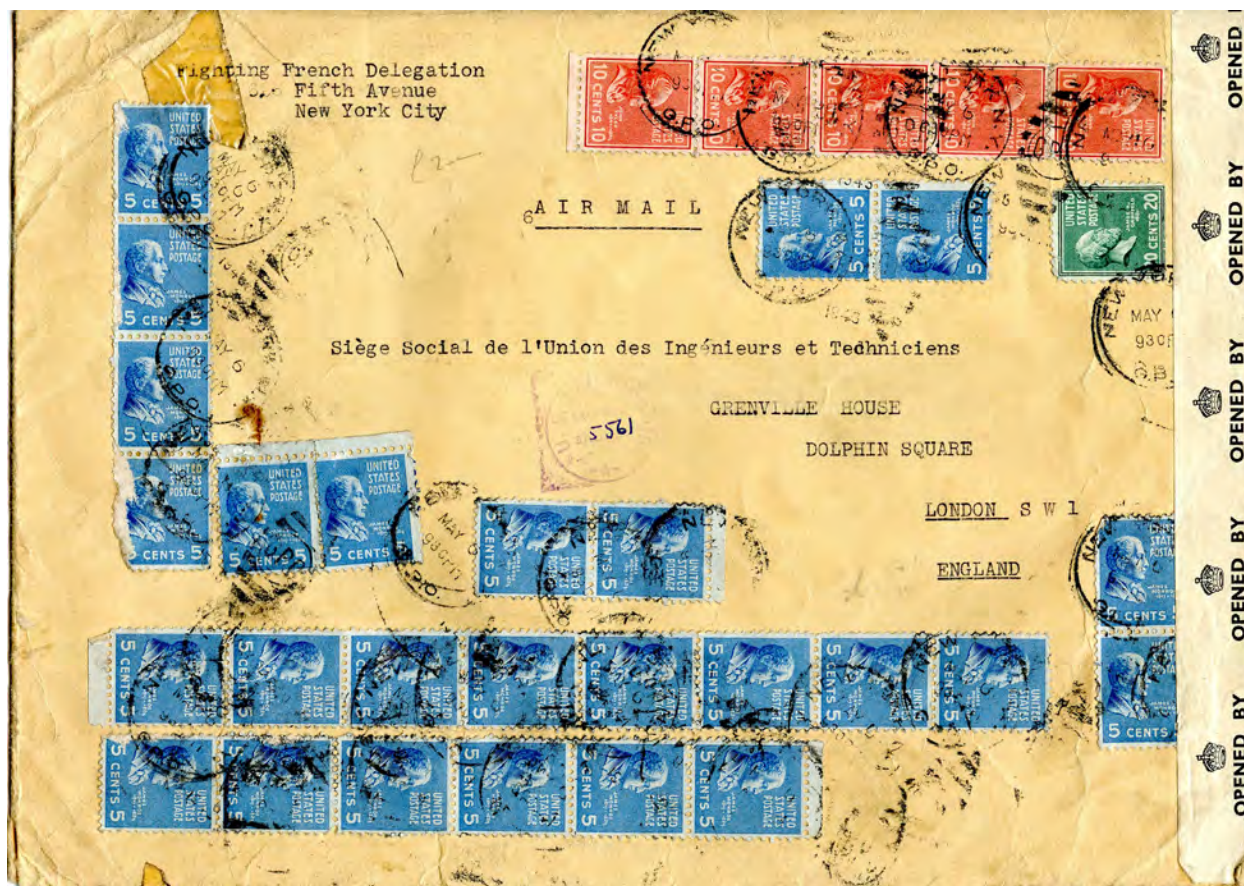
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## Prexie Census Data

by Richard Pederson



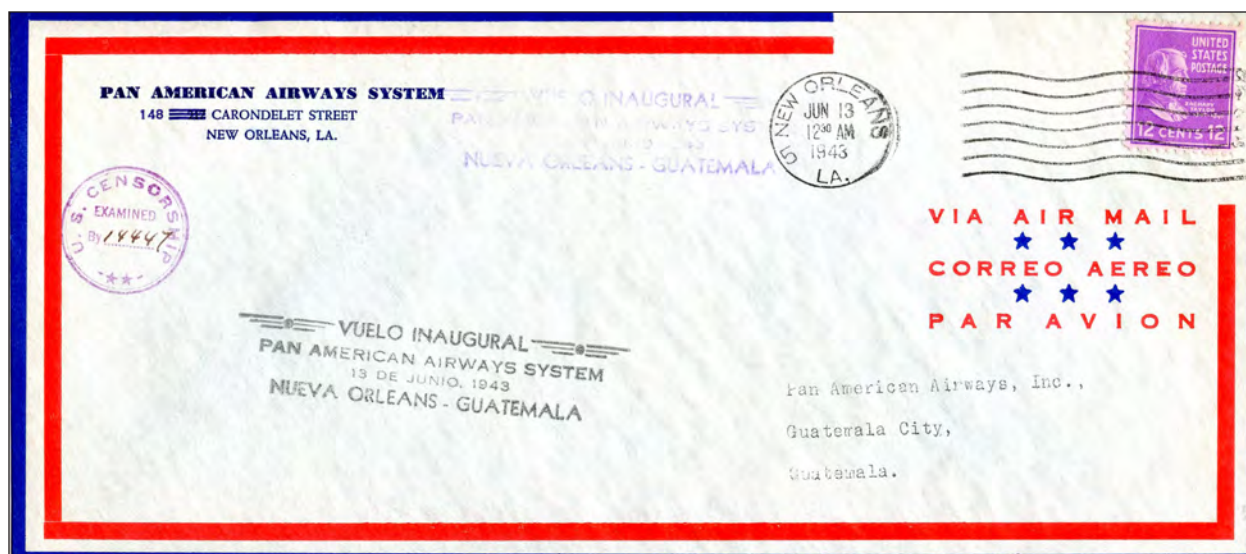
In building a Prexie postal history exhibit, I have encountered the problem that no good census data for Prexies currently exists. Scarcity is a big factor in judging exhibits, but before claiming that an item is “only one of three” known or “unique,” you should have some substance on which to base your claim.

After spending close to 20 years collecting Prexie postal history, I have a pretty good feel for what is scarce and what is not. Am I able to quantify that feeling? Certainly not! Such information is available for much nineteenth century postal history, but not for more recent issues, such as the Prexies.

I am working on a general Prexie postal history exhibit and one showcasing multiple copies of

a single Prexie on cover, parcel piece, or tag. An example of the later is shown above, illustrating a censored cover mailed from New York City to London, containing 26 copies of the 5-cent Prexie stamp picturing James Monroe.

Answering questions such as those posed above are critical to developing an exhibit and accurately characterizing the scarcity of your item. With that in mind, I have added an area on my website, [www.pedersonstamps.com/](http://www.pedersonstamps.com/), to collect census data on Prexie solo uses and on covers containing multiple copies of a given Prexie value. For solo uses, I list the number known for selected Prexie stamps and, where applicable, track the number known for each specific usage. For instance, for the 12-cent Prexie, there are a number of possible domestic



and international solo usages. Some, such as the one paying four times the non-local first class rate, are not difficult to find. Others, such as the cover pictured in Figure 2 paying the airmail rate to Guatemala that was in effect until April 1, 1945, are difficult to find. I intend to focus my data collection on those usages that I have found to be scarce.

For each item that I maintain data on, I will attempt, when possible, to describe the item, show its picture, indicate where I got the information (i.e., person, on-line source,

literature source), and provide data to quantify the scarcity (e.g., contains the most of a given stamp, is one of ten solo uses known). I encourage readers of *The Prexie Era* to return to my website and view the census data, then look at their collections and provide me updates and/or additions to the census data.

You can either send scans via e-mail to [rich@pedersonstamps.com](mailto:rich@pedersonstamps.com) or pictures and descriptions via snail mail to P.O. Box 662, Clemson, SC 29633. If you do not want certain information to be displayed (e.g., your name) please let me know and I will honor your request.

To view the information I have entered so far, click on the "Prexie Census Data" menu item at the left of my home page which will bring up the screen shown to the left. Then select the desired type of census and follow the instructions on each succeeding screen.

**Prexie Census Data**

This portion of the Pederson Stamps website tracks census information for U.S. stamps included in the Fifth Bureau Issue, otherwise known as the Presidential Series of 1938 and referred to by specialists in that series as the Prexies. The site tracks information related to two Prexie areas: solo uses of selected Prexie stamps; and the use of multiple copies of a specified Prexie on cover or parcel piece. Please select the link below for the census of interest.

[Census Tracking Selected Solo Use Prexies](#)  
[Census Tracking Largest Number of a Given Prexie on Cover or Parcel Piece](#)

## Davis Prexie Website Revised

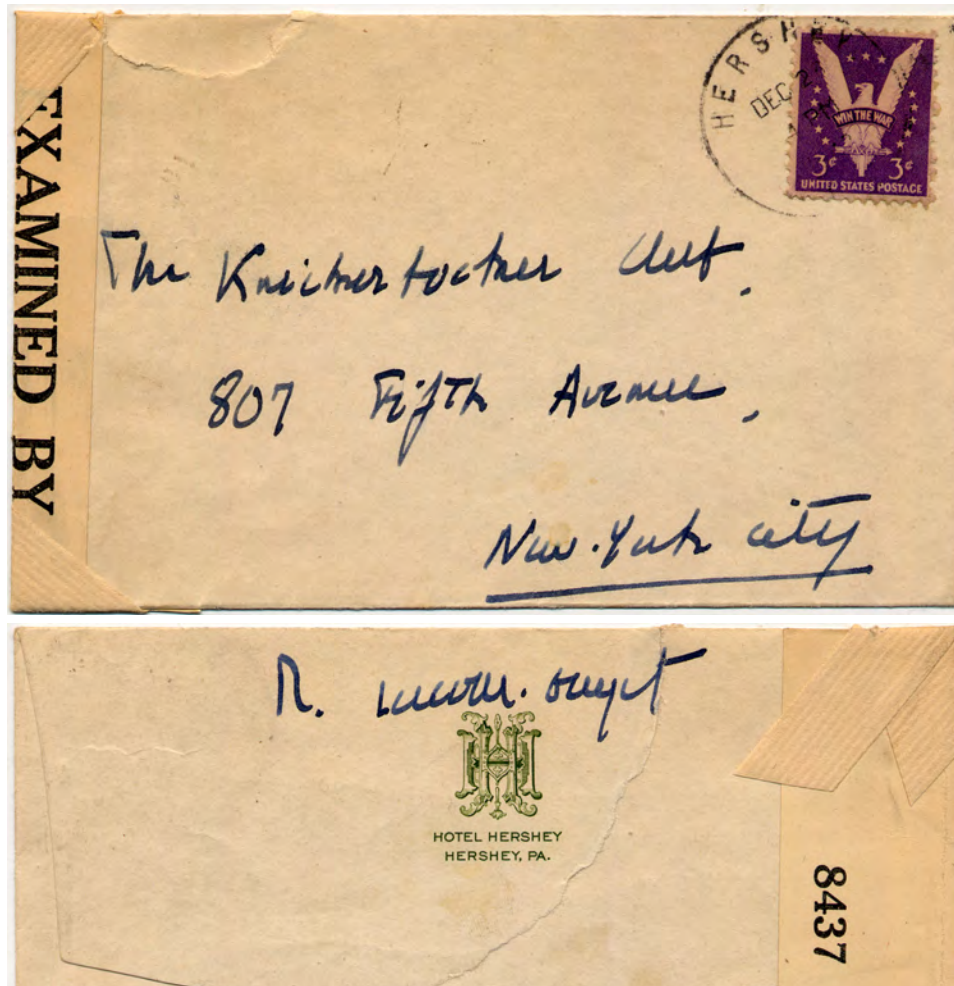
Steve Davis reports that he has made changes to his Prexie website. Updates now make the site easier to navigate.

Davis requests that news items and other additions should be emailed to him at: [stamperdad@yahoo.ca](mailto:stamperdad@yahoo.ca)



## Domestic Censorship - Interned Diplomat

by Louis Fiset

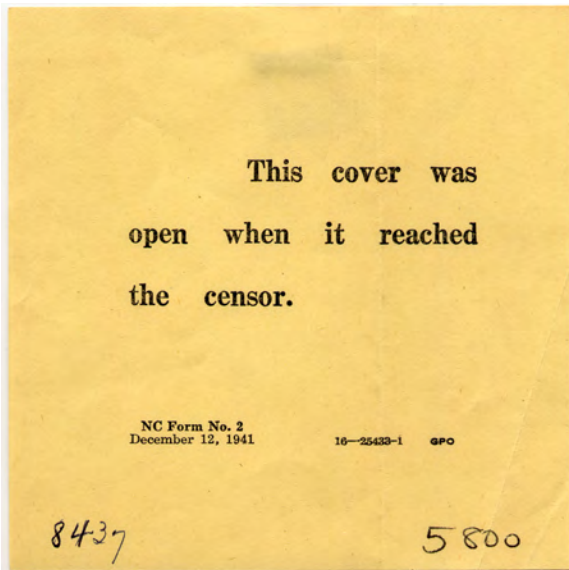


Collectors of World War II covers originating in the U.S. often encounter domestic mail bearing evidence of censorship. Mail to and from Alaska or Hawaii, Manhattan Project mail in and out of Los Alamos, New Mexico, and internee mail to and from Japanese aliens offer a few of the more common examples.

However, some censored domestic mail is more difficult to diagnose, such as the cover shown here. Except for the censor's resealing label, this December 7, 1942 item appears to be ordinary correspondence going from the Hotel Hershey, at Hershey, Pennsylvania, to the Knickerbocker Club, a gentleman's club in New York City, dating to 1871.

So, why the censorship by examiners at the New York field censor station? The answer lies with the nature of the "guests" staying at the Hotel Hershey. They were French diplomats, their staffs, and families -- all 94 of them.

In November 1942 German and Italian armies moved into Vichy France, formerly a "neutral" client state of Germany, in attempt to prevent the Allied invasion of Italy from advancing. With severance of relations, the U.S. diplomatic corps at Vichy was interned. The French ambassador, along with the French consuls and consular agents scattered throughout the U.S., were rounded up and sent to the upscale Hotel Hershey to await arrangements for repatriation



at the earliest possible time.

Although the name of the writer on the back of the envelope is difficult to make out, it may be that of Raymond Imbault-Huart, Vichy French consul general in Chicago, who had been at his post for about a year. His wife and three young sons joined him in captivity upon leaving Chicago on November 11, 1942.

Despite their diplomatic status, the mail of all detained diplomats, including the German, Italian, Japanese, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Romanian, and French contingents and their families, was subject to censorship if it passed through the regular mail stream. This included both domestic and international mail.

The French entourage was transferred to the Cascades Inn, at Hot Springs, Virginia, on October 1, 1943. On February 14, 1944 the entire group of 94 travelled under guard to New York and boarded the diplomatic exchange ship, M.S. *Gripsholm*, which departed the next day for Lisbon on its first transatlantic exchange voyage.

An added feature of the example shown here is the enclosure slip found inside explaining that the cover was open when it reached the censor. It was endorsed by examiner 8437 who resealed the letter, and a supervisor (5800).

Thanks to Collyer Church for providing this interesting item.

## Prexie Era Subscription Expiration

Jeff Shapiro has pointed out that less than half the subscribers who receive hard copies of the quarterly newsletter are routinely paying the \$10 subscription renewal fee. This modest fee barely pays the cost of reproducing and mailing out a year's subscription.

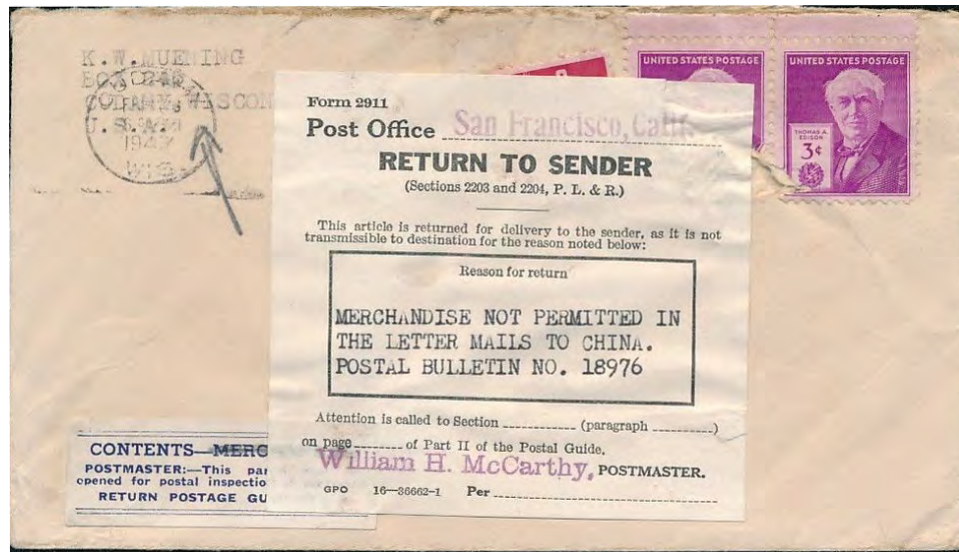
If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, please let Jeff or me know. If you appreciate the newsletter and wish to see it continue, please pay your annual \$10 subscription.

If you believe it's okay for Jeff and me to pay for your subscription, this will be the last issue you receive.

Please contact Jeff at: [coverlover@gmail.com](mailto:coverlover@gmail.com)

# 1947 Merchandise Letter to China Returned

by Art Farnsworth



The cover illustrated above recently appeared on ebay and is reproduced here. It bears eight cents postage paying the two-ounce UPU letter rate, and was postmarked Cudahy, Wisconsin, February 16, 1947. At the bottom left is a label indicating an enclosure of merchandise.

The letter reached San Francisco, on the first leg of its intended transpacific transport. However, it was removed from the mail stream, then returned for reasons stated in *Postal Bulletin* 18976, published on October 31, 1946.

Specifically, letter packages containing dutiable merchandise to China were prohibited because of China's refusal to accept them. The complete text of the directive may be seen below.

Postmasters' **RETURN TO SENDER** labels may be found fairly frequently on mail generated during World War II and its aftermath. However, the example shown here is unusual because of the circumstances imposed on mail to China from 1941 onward.

INSTRUCTION OF SECOND ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL	
INTERNATIONAL MAILS	
ERRONEOUS ACCEPTANCE OF LETTER PACKAGES CONTAINING MERCHANDISE TO CHINA	
It has been brought to the attention of this office that many packages containing merchandise and prepaid at the letter rate of postage are being accepted at United States post offices for delivery in China, notwithstanding the fact that, as indicated in paragraph 7 of section 3 on page 5 of Part II of the 1941 Official Postal Guide, China does not accept dutiable articles in letter packages.	
This Department has not been advised what articles are liable to customs duty in China or in foreign countries generally.	
The mailing of letter packages containing articles of merchandise results in their return, if observed before dispatch, or if erroneously dispatched to China, the subsequent return from that country.	
Postmasters are therefore directed to take such action as may be necessary to prevent the acceptance of letter packages containing merchandise addressed for delivery in China, or the other countries named in paragraph 7 above mentioned.	



## American Locker Company Tags Follow-Up

by Richard Pederson



After my article on the American Locker Co. tags was published (Issue No. 75), I received several comments from readers providing additional information. Dan Pagter indicated that the tags were likely used for “mailing locks and keys, be it for replacement or repair” and that printed matter, such as advertisements, could have been included with the locks and keys in fourth class mail. Dan further speculated that the tags were attached to “sturdy reusable containers” that “were closed and held shut by a permanently attached wrapping cord.”

Dan’s explanation was confirmed by fellow Prexie collector Chuck Gherman who was able to contact a representative of the American Locker Co., which is still in business. The representative indicated they still place lockers in public places and mail replacement locks to those locations. American Locker is now located in Las Vegas, Nevada and is a subsidiary of Cole Kepro International, LLC, a sheet metal

manufacturing business. Their website says that their lockers are internationally recognized because of their “iconic key with the plastic orange cap.” I suspect this iconic key is what was being referred to in the American Locker Co. advertisement that says “The Key is your Check,” which was shown in my article

All but one of the tags in my possession had the same postage on both sides. The outlier was addressed to Seattle, Washington, a zone three destination, with 40 cents additional postage on the return side. Apparently more lock and key sets were returned than sent.

Chuck, who also has a collection of the American Locker Co. tags, provided scans of an additional solo local use within Portland. Single, 20-cent Garfield stamps were used on both sides of the tag to pay the up-to-two-pound rate between the American Locker Co. and the Trailways Bus Depot, and the return.

## Dead Letter Office - Returned Mail

by Louis Fiset



*Figure 1: Cover returned from occupied France and opened in error by the Dead Letter Office. Resealed by the DLO and returned to sender.*

A first class letter that cannot be delivered as addressed is either forwarded or returned. However, in the absence of a return address on the outside of the cover, the letter goes to the Dead Letter Office (DLO) where employees can look for clues in the envelope's content to aide in ultimate delivery or return to the writer. In 1825 the Post Office Department established its dead letter office in Washington, D.C. to open and examine undeliverable mail, and it continues operation down to the present day as the Mail Recovery Center.

During World War II volumes of mail sent to the DLO increased as postal relations were

severed with countries at war with the U.S. or that fell under Axis control. Two unusual items in this article show mail addressed to Paris in 1940 after German troops occupied the north of France and suspended postal relations with the U.S. Figure 1 shows a cover opened by the DLO in error and how it was handled. The cover in Figure 2 bears a hand struck marking indicating a 5-cent fee for the return of a letter absent the sender's address.

The cover shown in Figure 1 was returned from Marseille more than a year after it's original posting. Upon its return to the U.S. it was immediately forwarded to the DLO at New





Figure 2: A cover with no return address returned from occupied France and turned over to the DLO for disposition. The COLLECT FIVE CENTS marking indicates a fee for the service provided to locate the sender.

York because no return address appeared on the back and the vertically typed return address on the front went unnoticed. Upon realization that a return address indeed was present, the DLO resealed the cover with clear tape, applied an official seal, tying it with a double ring canceler dated October 9, 1941. A clerk then applied an OPENED IN ERROR AT/DEAD LETTER BRANCH/NEW YORK, N.Y. hand stamp above the canceler to indicate what had happened.

The letter then entered the mail stream the next day. But by now the writer, a publisher of fine art books, had changed location, requiring the POD to, in its final effort, forward it across the city. In all, the letter appears to have been in transit for at least 13 months.

The cover in Figure 2 also reached France only to be returned from Marseille after examination by German censors at Frankfurt. Originally postmarked July 21, 1940, a month after German forces entered Paris, it bears a New York transit mark dated November 18, 1941. A Gloucester, Massachusetts receiver also appears, struck three days later.

The COLLECT FIVE CENTS hand stamp marking

on the face makes this cover unusual. Tony Wawrukiewicz, an expert on Dead Letter Office mail, cannot recall ever seeing another example. The information contained in the marking usually appears on the face of the ambulance cover containing the returned letter and addressed to the writer.

No evidence exists that this cover ever became reunited with the writer. This raises the question of how such letters survived and found their way into postal history collections.

Prior to April 1942 covers and their accompanying letters were to be burned. However, in a P.L.&R. directive dated February 23, 1942, postmasters were advised to “carefully preserve all waste paper, which shall include dead and unclaimed domestic printed mater . . .”, which should then be sold subject to competitive bids. *The Postal Bulletin* of April 13, 1942 (PB 18423) adds that contents should be “mutilated by tearing across two ways and shall be sold as waste paper.”

This directive helps explain why some World War II era undeliverable covers with no return address have survived.





No. 78 Summer 2017

# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
fiset@uw.edu

## More \$2.00 Harding Stamps on Cover

by Robert Schlesinger



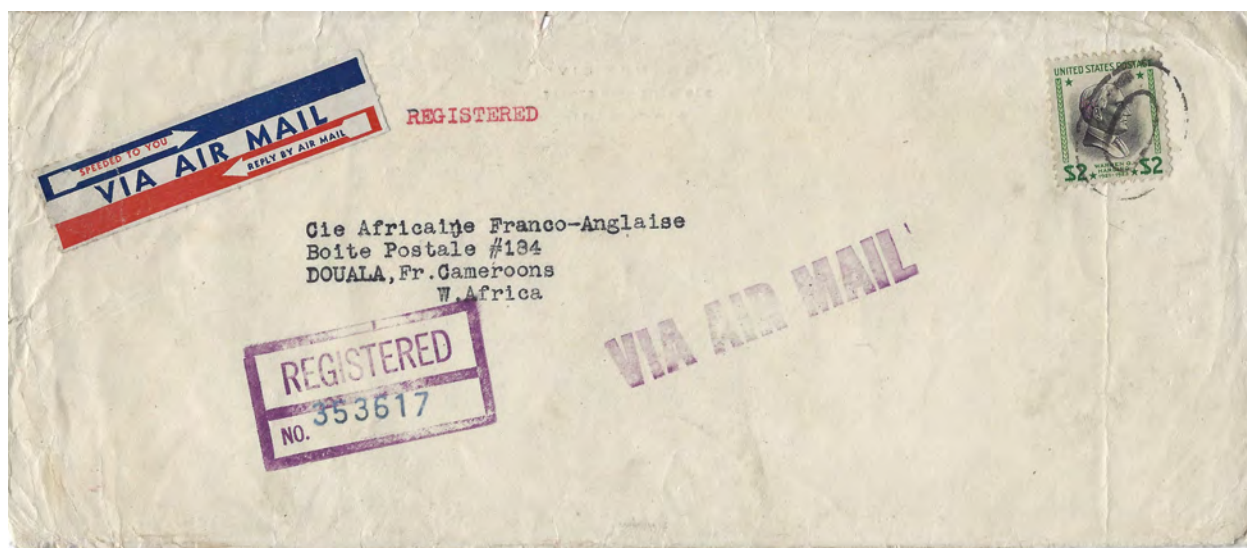
Figure 1: A \$2.00 Harding Prexie paying seven times the 30 cents per half ounce transatlantic airmail rate, posted June 21, 1940.

I recently purchased two \$2.00 Harding covers to be added to the census.

The first cover (Figure 1) bears a total of \$2.10 postage. It prepaid seven times the 30 cents per half-ounce transatlantic airmail rate to Europe. It was postmarked Chicago, June 21, 1940 and flown via Bermuda where it was opened by British censors. The Bermuda censor station had only been in operation for three months and was not fully operational. Hence, most mail passed without examination. Perhaps the registration service drew attention.

The 3.5-ounce weight of the contents made for a bulky envelope for which the creases on the envelope provide evidence. Because there are no backstamps, we do not know how long the cover was in transit. However, British censorship no doubt caused a delay.

The post-World War II cover shown below (Figure 2) bears a solo \$2.00 Harding adhesive. Mailed in New York on December 8, 1945, it was transferred to the Registry Division the same day. The cover was flown to Miami and received there the next day. It then received air



*Figure 1: A solo \$2.00 Prexie paying triple (60 cents x 3) the airmail rate to West Africa plus the registry fee.*

transport to Accra, Gold Coast, and struck with a December 19th receiver. It then travelled to Doala, French Cameroon, where it was received a week later, on December 26, 1945.

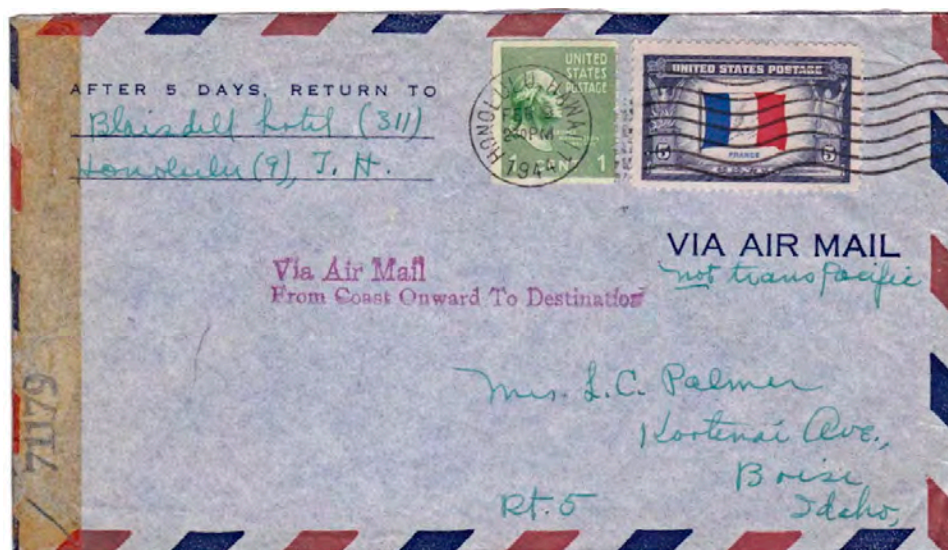
The \$2.00 franking paid for triple the 60 cents per half-ounce rate plus the 20-cent registry

fee. The 60-cent airmail rate was in effect from December 2, 1942, until November 1, 1946 when the 25 cents per half ounce unified rate took effect. The 20-cent registry fee was in effect from February 1, 1945 through December 31, 1951, after which the rate was raised to 25 cents.



## Reverse Printed Overrun Nations Stamp on Prexie Cover

by Stephen L. Suffet



Sometimes you look for one thing and serendipitously find something else instead. Such is the case with the cover shown above. I found it while rummaging through a dealer's stock at a show several years ago, although I cannot recall the dealer, show, or year.

Anyway, I bought the cover because I collect the 1-cent Presidential stamp in all its formats: sheet stamp, booklet stamp, horizontal coil, and vertical coil. I do not remember how much I paid, but it could not have been more than 10 dollars. Here, a 1-cent horizontal coil teamed up with a 5-cent Flag of France stamp from the Overrun Nations series to pay the 6 cents per ounce domestic airmail rate. The cover was postmarked in Honolulu, Hawaii, on February 9, 1944, and it is addressed to Boise, Idaho. The clipper rate between Hawaii and the mainland was 20 cents per half ounce at the time, but this cover was only flown within the continental USA from the port of entry, Los Angeles or San Francisco, to Boise, so 6 cents postage was sufficient.

I was looking through my plastic tub full of extra covers earlier this year when I noticed

something did not seem right about the 5-cent stamp. The black shading visible in the white center part of the French tricolor was missing from the blue and red parts. On a normal stamp it should have been there. Was this the so-called reverse printed variety, Scott No. 915a, where the black ink was applied first, and the deep blue and dark rose inks were printed over it? On the normal stamp (Scott No. 915) the deep blue and dark rose were printed before the black, so that some black shading is visible on all three parts of the flag.

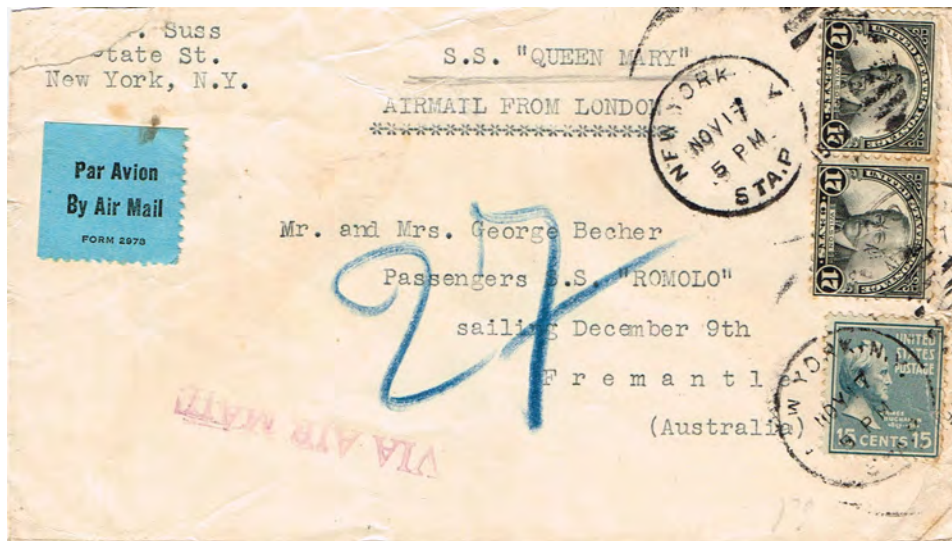
So I sent the cover to the American Philatelic Expertizing Service, and a few weeks later I received the answer I had hoped for. The cover was returned with an APEX certificate stating "United States, Scott No. 915a, deep blue and dark rose over black, used on airmail cover, genuine in all respects." Single, off-cover stamps, mint or used, routinely sell for \$100 or more, while cacheted first days covers have gone for \$200 and up. I could find no reported sale of a 915a used on a commercial cover, so who knows how much it would fetch?

How is that for good fortune?



## Eastbound New York to Australia

by Bill DiPaolo



The cover illustrated above shows an interesting eastbound routing of a letter from New York to Fremantle, Australia. The addressees are passengers on the Italian steamer, S.S. *Romolo*. The envelope specifies the "S.S. QUEEN MARY" and "AIRMAIL FROM LONDON." Total postage paid is 49 cents, and the only markings are a November 17, 1938 New York duplex, "VIA AIR MAIL" straight line and the number "27" written in blue crayon. The latter likely indicates the passenger's stateroom number. Postage is paid by a pair of 17-cent Wilsons from the Fourth Bureau Issue and an early use of the 15-cent Prexie. No markings are to be found on the back. The rate calculates at 5 cents for surface transportation from New York to London and 44 cents paying the air mail surcharge from London to Sydney with onward domestic ground service to Fremantle.

In *U.S. International Postal Rates*, Wawrukiewicz and Beecher identify the rate as being available only from December 17, 1934 until July 8, 1935. In fact, this rate and route

continued until December 31, 1938. There are numerous mentions of this routing in *The Postal Bulletin* from its establishment through the 1939 rate change, the latest being #17494 on August 2, 1938. The next reference is #17597 issued on December 27, 1938 when the air mail surcharge was standardized. Effective January 1, 1939, the surcharge became 40 cents for departure from any European city to Australia.

During this period, there were three routings from the U.S. to Australia:

- Pacific Clipper at 70 cents, onward air service within Australia
- Air mail surcharge from London at 44 cents, onward by surface within Australia
- Air mail surcharge from Amsterdam at 40 cents, onward air service within Australia

As a postscript, the *Romolo* crew scuttled the Lloyd Triestino vessel off the Queensland coast to avoid capture shortly after Italy entered the war in June 1940.

## Air Parcel Post With ‘LETTER INSIDE’ Printed Endorsement: Combined Rates?

by Dan Pagter

The January 1, 1913 start of the Parcel Post Service introduced the “eight zone” concept, plus local service, based on distance. Other service and fee structures employed the zone concept throughout the 20th century. The weight allowed went from four to eleven pounds at the start of the Parcel Post service. Other classes of mail also saw their weight limits rise in concert until the limit of 70 pounds was set in 1931. Parcel Post postage was based upon a combination of weight in pounds and zone distance, which resulted in the lower Parcel Post postage rate.

Parcel post matter sent at parcel post rates could not be registered. It was restricted to indemnity of “Insurance,” which also began with the start of Parcel Post Service. While restrictions applied as to what qualified as parcel post matter, no prohibition existed for paying for parcel post matter at a higher class of service, such as airmail, or even first class with the related indemnity service of registration. And it was not unusual for mailers to mail at first class for registration or especially airmail in order to achieve faster service.

The Air Parcel Post Service (APP), a zone based service, was created so that parcel post matter, domestic or international, could benefit from the lower cost of parcel post postage rates and the speed of movement that carriage by airplane provided. In the 29 months before the September 1, 1948 start of the APP service, domestic airmail rates had unified and dropped significantly, from as high as 70 cents per ounce to five cents per ounce. The rate rose to six cents on January 1, 1949, but remained stable for more than eight and one half years. APP matter was not limited to parcel post. Any first, third or fourth class matter could be sent APP



Figure 1: Air Parcel Post Service, insured, with LETTER INSIDE, posted June 13, 1949.

if over eight ounces. This new concept allowed mixing of mail classes within one service.

APP matter, especially domestic use during the first year of service, is difficult to find. The item in Figure 1 is an example. But from that small base of uncommon postal history items, this envelope stands out due to the “LETTER INSIDE” endorsement. It is postmarked June 13, 1949, although the final number in the year is blurry and can be mistaken for an “8.” However, the year 1949 is clear in the dated portion of the insurance service endorsement. This date places the item in the tenth month of the new APP service.



*Figure 2a:* Back side of envelope showing open flap with undisturbed gum.



*Figure 2b:* Enlarged detail of the affixed Air Parcel Post label.

This envelope, used as a mailing label on a zone eight insured APP parcel weighing up to one pound, has 90 cents postage affixed, which rates at 80 cents for the APP and ten cents for insurance with indemnity of \$5.01 to \$10.00. That this item is insured means the contents included either third or fourth class matter alone. First class matter could not be insured, but had to be registered if indemnity was desired.

The back side of the envelope on the flap has what appears to be a “patented July 6, 1919” date. It is not illustrated. It is unclear, however, if it applies to the envelope, or envelope and text on the envelope. Likely, the envelope used was not produced for the new APP Service. It seems likely the “LETTER ENCLOSED” printed endorsement was an artifact from a different service class of mail (e.g., non-APP) used by the company, which sent out this matter. A personal communication with Tony Wawrukiewicz confirms neither additional first class nor airmail postage was required for such enclosures in APP.

The envelope (Figure 2a), while gummed, was unsealed. An enlarged multicolored APP Service label affixed to the back is shown in Figure 2b. It includes “NATION WIDE WORLD WIDE” as text, which is difficult to read in the illustration. While the envelope itself is a pre-APP artifact, this APP service label was created specifically for the new APP service.

In comparison, Figure 3 shows both sides of an APP registered item, indicating the nature of the contents to be first class matter. It was sent from APO 500 (Tokyo, Japan). A total of \$33.10, paid in full with Prexies, rates at 30 cents registration plus 80 cents per pound for 41 pounds of Zone 8 APP matter.

On ordinary fourth class mail, which includes Parcel Post, and third class mail, if first class



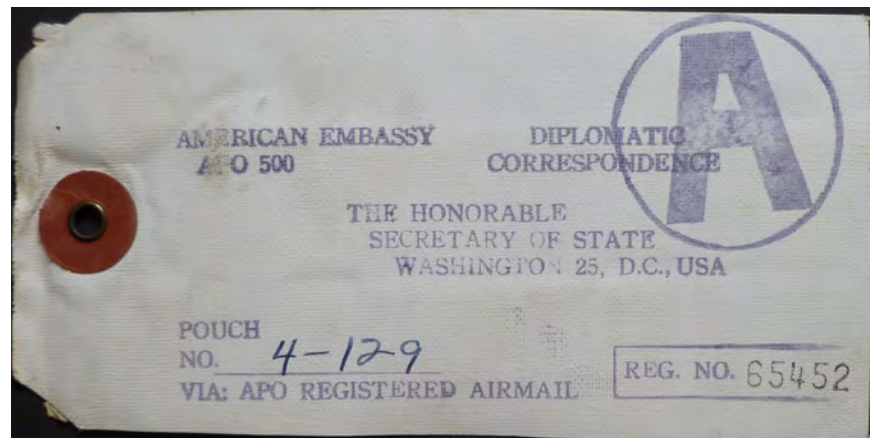


Figure 3: APP registered item sent from APO 500 (Tokyo, Japan), paid with \$33.10 in Prexie stamps.

matter (e.g., letter) was enclosed the postage would be the amount for the third or fourth class matter plus letter rate first class postage applied separately on the envelope or mailing label to indicate the distinction. Figure 4 shows a third class item with 4.5 cents of postage paying a weight of over four and up to six ounces, plus two cents for the first class enclosure, paying the local (in-city) first class letter rate. This local, carrier post office rate remained in effect until March 25, 1944.

In contrast, APP did not require extra payment for a mix of third or fourth class matter with first class or airmail enclosed. APP could include first class matter or a mix of classes with no special distinction, but in so doing did create irregularities. At the time some APP combinations of weights and zones could

result in a postage cost below an average of 3 cents per ounce, the first class letter rate, and below the higher five- or six-cent airmail letter rate. In those cases, the minimum postage for the APP matter was to be calculated at the first class rate of 3 cents per ounce.

With the minimum postage set at the first class rate, the letter enclosed, unlike ordinary third and fourth class matter, would already be paid at the first class rate. And first class, not airmail, was the targeted minimum rate. This belief is confirmed by the correct postage payment on the Figure 1 item. If an additional 6 cents was required for the letter at airmail rate of 6 cents, the total due would either be ninety one cents (80 cents APP + 6 cents Air Letter + 5 cents Insurance [\$5.00 or less indemnity]) or 97 cents (80 cents APP + 6 cents Air Letter



Figure 4: In-city local carrier post office mail sent third class with first class contents.

+ 10 cents Insurance [\$5.01-\$10 indemnity]) in postage and fees. Also, in a close reading of *US Domestic Postal Rates 1872-2011* and a review of USPOD *Official Postal Guides* of the era reveal no requirement to pay extra for an enclosed letter.

A final observation of note is the change in description of APP usages Wawrukiewicz uses in his rate books. In the second edition he writes, “. . . difficult to find . . . air parcel post usages are to be cherished.” But after collectors’ eyes

focused on such material, in the third edition he notes, “Domestic, air parcel post usages are relatively common.” But he does include the early usages such as the subject of this article, as “special” items. Such items remain scarce but I too have seen enough examples of APP, mostly in the form of diplomatic mail tags from the 1950s, to agree with Tony. Additional services such as registered (non-APO), insured,

or special delivery on APP make such items far more difficult to find no matter the era and are uncommon.

### Reference

Beecher and Wawrukiewicz. *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates 1872-2011*, (3rd ed.), p. 5, and chapters 7, 10, 13, 30, 34, 36 and 49.

## C23 - Stepchild of the Prexie Era

by Bob Hohertz



Figure 1: Incoming to a *Columbus* crewman, at Angel Island, California.

Over the last year and a half I’ve been actively collecting anything and everything to do with the U.S. bi-colored eagle airmail stamp (Scott No. C23). First issued on May 14, 1938, it falls into the early part of the Prexie era, which officially began April 25th of that year. However, we rarely think of this 6-cent adhesive as part of the period we all collect. The Transports, yes, but the earlier bi-colored eagle, not really. I’d like to remedy this by featuring some interesting covers featuring this stepchild of the Prexie era.

I’ll offer two covers that provide the flavor of the period. The background mostly comes from our Editor’s wonderful book, *Detained, Interned, Incarcerated – U.S. Enemy Noncombatant Mail in World War II*. In a nutshell, the German luxury liner S.S. *Columbus* was caught in the Caribbean in early September 1939 when war broke out in Europe. After spending some time at Veracruz, Berlin ordered the crew to make a dash for home, but British naval vessels were waiting off the coast of New Jersey. The *Columbus* crew, not wanting the ship to be





Figure 2: To the same *Columbus* crewman, now at Fort Stanton, New Mexico.

used by the enemy, scuttled it, and the crew members were rescued by a U.S. naval vessel and taken to Ellis Island for detention and eventual repatriation.

For technical reasons the crew were classified as aliens under detention, and the majority of them were sent to San Francisco to meet a Japanese ship that would begin their repatriation. However, they arrived too late, and were sent to the quarantine station located on Angel Island, in San Francisco Bay.

Since safe passage could not be guaranteed, repatriation efforts stopped, and the *Columbus* crew was eventually transferred to quarters at Fort Stanton, in a remote part of southern New Mexico. There, most remained for the duration of the war.

The two covers shown here were sent to the *Columbus* crewman, Reinhold Schreiber, who

was a photographer. The first, shown in Figure 1, went to Schreiber while he was at Angel Island. Sent from Brooklyn in December 1940, it has a red 15 on the front, indicating the barracks where the photographer was housed.

The second cover was mailed from San Francisco in 1941 and reached Schreiber at Fort Stanton. The red 5 directed it to his barracks.

Some *Columbus* crewmen were repatriated around the beginning of 1945. Most, however, including Schreiber, remained at Fort Stanton until August of that year. With a diligent search, several of Schreiber's photographs taken in New Mexico can be found on the internet.

This attractive airmail stamp, issued to pay the one-ounce domestic airmail rate, was widely used until replaced by the 6-cent Transport stamp on June 26, 1941. It deserves to be included in the Prexie era.



# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

No. 79 Autumn 2017

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
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## Release of “Prize Court” Mail to The Netherlands

by Louis Fiset



Figure 1: Condemned philatelic mail from 1941 to The Netherlands, released in 1951 to The Netherlands Shipping and Trading Committee for subsequent delivery to addressee.

As a general rule, collectors of commercial postal history tend to avoid philatelically inspired covers. Collectors of censored mail, however, delight with covers when they are censored *because* they are philatelic. The items illustrated here provide two examples.

Upon entering World War II in December 1941, the U.S. Office of Censorship was charged with examination of mail crossing the nation's borders. A special Philatelic Unit at the New York Censor Station was devoted to examination of philatelic mail. The foreign exchange of mint postage stamps was strictly regulated as a means of currency control, requiring annual permits by both businesses and individuals. The Philatelic Unit was charged with returning mail to senders in violation of regulations.

By the time the U.S. got into the war, the conflict was more than two years old, and a U.K. censor station at Bermuda had been examining transit ship and air mail since March 1940. The U.K. practice was to condemn philatelic mail with stamps, separate them from the correspondence, and later liquidate them.

The U.K.'s Prize Court determined whether certain war prizes, such as ships, goods, and other seized valuables, met all legal requirements for seizure. Proceeds from subsequent disposal of such booty would help reimburse the nation for costs of the war.

Stamps originating in neutral or occupied countries and their territories, most often contained in registered mail, were forwarded by Imperial Censorship directly to the Prize Court. Such condemned covers therefore do not bear the usual Bermuda censor labels.

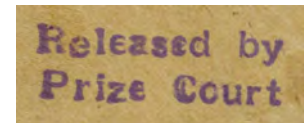
The Prize Court released the correspondence sans stamps in five batches, from 1948 to October 1951. The stamps themselves were sorted, catalogued, then sold at H.R. Harmer's

1949 auction held at Hamilton, Bermuda. The sale netted \$40,000 (\$415,000 in 2017 dollars).

Most of the released condemned mail received a "Released by Prize Court" marking before being placed into the mail stream. Mail addressed to The Netherlands, however, appears to have been an exception.

Recently three registered, philatelic covers have come to light in which explanatory Dutch language labels are attached to the covers, with accompanying circular markings in black reading COMMISSIE VOOR AANGEHONDEN LADIGEN, or Netherlands Shipping and Trading Committee. Two of them may be seen here.

The cover in Figure 1 bears a faint "Released by Prize Court" marking underneath the label, visible with strong back lighting. Figure 2 shows a similar marking peaking out beneath the label, also fully visible with back lighting. A detail from the Manchukuo cover shows the entire marking. The two attached labels have almost identical wording, but differ in design. Both use the acronym, COVAL, to designate the Committee, Amsterdam receivers show the dates October 5, 1951, and November 17, 1951.



COVAL was established by the Dutch government in October 1939 to represent its interests in cargo and ships detained abroad due to the war, and subsequently represented the government in exile in London. Following liberation, COVAL was given the task of handling the remaining Dutch assets worldwide.

When the Prize Court released the covers, those addressed to The Netherlands were turned over to COVAL for subsequent distribution. An earlier agreement between the two countries may have included a pro rata share of proceeds from the Harmer auction.





Figure 2: Prize Court mail with design variation on Dutch COVAL label released in 1951.

## Second PrexieEraPex Planned

Jeff Shapiro has announced the second PrexieEraPex, to be held at Philatelic Show, Boxborough, MA, on May 4-8, 2018. A full range of activities will be offered, including 100+ exhibit frames reserved to display some of the finest Twentieth Century U.S. material available that spans the Prexie era period.

The “Roland Rustad Memorial Award” will be awarded by the jury to the best exhibit of Presidential Era (1938-1962) material. Grand Award winning Prexie exhibitor, Steve Suffet, has agreed to serve on the jury.

This event, occurring on the 80th anniversary of the 1938 Presidential Series, will include seminars and talks on Prexie era topics. Ken Lawrence has agreed to present an APS On-the-Road Course. A fellowship dinner is also planned.

Please consider participating in this periodic event. Membership in the Prexie-Era Group is not required, but encouraged. Full information, including an exhibit prospectus and entry form, can be found on the Northeastern Federation of Stamp Clubs website, at [nefed.org](http://nefed.org)

## A Prexie Era Unicorn Found

by Daniel S. Pagter

Air Parcel Post (APP) became a category of service in 1948 for both domestic and international mail. Like Parcel Post service, other countries first engaged the service before the United States Post Office Department (USPOD). On March 15, 1948, The USPOD initiated international APP service to all 26 countries choosing to participate in the service. Domestic APP followed on September 1, 1948. Both provided similar services, except inclusion of first class/letter matter, and several interesting, but minor differences. The common goal for the two APP services was to provide faster transportation of non-first class mail matter.

*The Prexie Era* (No. 78) included an example of domestic APP posted during the eleventh week of the new service. This article provides an international APP counterpart mailed eight months to the day from the start of international service. The *Official U.S. Postal Guide* has been consulted for much of what follows below.

The cost of posting a domestic APP was weight based, in pounds, and further determined by the distance travelled to the destination. The distance calculation was based on eight zones with 1800 miles determined as the minimum mileage for the open ended zone eight. The rate for zone eight domestic parcels was 80 cents per pound to a maximum of 70 pounds. Most countries of the world exceed 1800 miles from some point in the “domestic mail areas” of the U.S., which include territories and possessions beyond the 48 states and U.S. military post offices around the globe.

International APP rates were set by weight, but with four-ounce units determining the amount, not pounds. Each country had a different rate basis for each weight unit. These differences

may have been based upon the airlines used, air routes, and airline contracts available to each country destination. The units remained four-ounce steps up to the maximum allowed weight for the country of receipt. The weight of APP matter could not exceed the maximum weight of ordinary parcel post matter to the destination country, and it could be set lower.

A major difference between domestic and international APP involved the inclusion of “first class” mail. The USPOD treated domestic APP as part of Airmail/First Class matter, not as parcel post. Domestic APP thus could include all classes of mail including first class, or a mix there of. Under UPU rules international APP could include a mix of all categories except “letters and letter packages,” which the USPOD called “first class” mail. An exception was non-current letters and their envelopes, franked or unfranked. An example is letters from a former lover, which qualified as “commercial papers” and allowed in international APP mail.

The international APP rating scheme produced such a complicated system that Wawrukiewicz and Beecher omit the rates in *U.S. International Postal Rates, 1872-1996*. Only APP rates established long after the end of the Prexie era may be found in the book, beginning January 1, 1981. At that time all participating countries were grouped into five rate groups and three weight ranges. The first weight range was four ounces up to 16 ounces, with each of the four units assessed the same unit rate. The second weight range was up to five pounds (20 units), all at the same, but reduced unit rate. At a weight over five pounds, the unit of weight increased to eight ounces.

Although absent from Wawrukiewicz and Beecher are the participating countries and





Figure 1: International Air Parcel Post (APP) cover with attachments, to South Africa in 1958.

their rates and weight limits, they may be found in the annual *Official Postal Guides, Part II -- International Postal Mail* under the alphabetized individual country listings. No tables exist in the guides for APP specifically, or parcel post in general.

Ordinary parcel post rates will not be found in the Wawrukiewicz book, either, except for some brief exceptions. A change in rate or country service occurring between consecutive annual guides may sometimes be found in the monthly postal guides serving as supplements to the *U.S. Postal Guide, Parts I and II*. Additional services such as registration, insurance, C.O.D. and sealing of parcels may also be found

under individual country listings in the *U.S. Postal Guides*. Required forms, including numbered stickers and labels, are also shown and discussed.

Thus, Prexie era collectors of international parcel post and air parcel post will likely need Part II of the appropriate *U.S. Postal Guide*. In addition to outgoing international mail requirements, the Guides include the rates of postage for all types of incoming mail from all countries. But even then the USPOD cut a corner on parcel post mail in Section 88:

Parcels to be considered as fully prepaid.  
As parcel-post packages received from



a number of foreign countries are unaccompanied by postage stamps, the postage having been prepaid by means of cash, all parcels from abroad will be considered as fully prepaid, unless define information is known to the contrary.

Shown in Figure 1 is an international APP envelope, with attachments, to South Africa and posted at New York on November 15 1948. It contained four ounces of mixed non-first class matter, specifically a price list (printed matter) and a sample of merchandise, specifically a hypodermic syringe. The APP rate for the first four ounces to South Africa was \$1.31. In addition to the required payment of proper APP postage and designation of contents of a parcel post nature, other required items were the blue Par Avion/by Airmail label (Form 2978), and

Customs Declaration label (Form 2966) with the current value of the finished article in the open market at time of dispatch. Normally required, an International Parcel Post sticker (Form 2922) was not required for any “gift” packages with a free sample of merchandise qualifying as a gift, and is therefore absent here. Parcel post mail to South Africa could not be registered, insured or sent C.O.D. Figure 2 is included here to show an outstanding example of Form 2922 in actual use during the waning years of the Prexie era.

Sealing of APP to South Africa was optional, and this sender sealed the package. Sealing requirements appeared in *The Postal Guide* for each country participating in Parcel Post and APP, with three options available; sealing required, unsealed required, and sender’s option. In some cases a specific method of

**INTERNATIONAL PARCEL POST**  
Colis Postal International

**INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY SENDER**  
Dispositions de l'Expéditeur

If undeliverable as addressed:  
Au cas de non-livraison:

(a) Deliver to. (Le colis doit être livré à):

(b) Abandon. (Abandon du colis).

(c) Return to sender. Return charges guaranteed.  
Le colis doit être renvoyé à l'expéditeur, qui s'engage à payer les frais de retour.

Arthur P. Moore  
(Sender's signature—Signature de l'expéditeur)

16-8339-1

out by accepting clerk)

WEIGHT  
2 lbs.

ozs.  
11

POSTAGE  
\$5.23

CLERK'S INITIALS  
M. M.

Form 2922

Figure 2: Form 2922 used on late Prexie era mail.

sealing was also described and required.

Had the South Africa item weighed more than four ounces, the postage required would have dropped to 94 cents for each additional four ounces or fraction to the maximum weight limit of 11 pounds (\$41.73 maximum postage cost). For comparison, Turkey allowed 44 pounds at \$100.90 maximum postage, with 11 pounds being only \$25.66 in postage. Russia did not accept APP and limited the maximum parcel post weight to 22 pounds with two different rates, one to Russia in Europe and a second to Russia in Asia.

For South Africa destinations, the mailer could calculate and prepay wharfage and other duty charges to avoid the recipient from having to pay. The Department of Customs, Union of South Africa did not accept direct prepayment of customs fees by the sender for specific packages. The sender at time of mailing could prepay by affixing South African customs duty stamps obtained in advance from the official representative of the Department of Customs of the Union of South Africa at 44 Whitehall St. New York, NY. The mailer could also forward to the recipient an international postal money order to cover the duty fees. Lastly the sender could trust the recipient would willingly pay the assessed duty fees. Duty was not prepaid by the sender on this Figure 1 item, and there is no way to tell if the sender sent the penny to the recipient or if the recipient paid the fee out of pocket. Duty was likely paid, however, since the item was not returned.

Other sending options shown below illustrate International APP as a compromise between cost and transit time saved:

- If sent via normal airmail as merchandise weighing up to eight ounces, this envelope would have cost \$2.00, based upon 25 cents per half ounce for four ounces. Thus, APP saved the mailer 61 cents without any

compromised air service.

- A sample of merchandise of 18 ounces or less could have been sent via surface for three cents at 1.5 cents per two ounces, with a three-cent minimum and customs Forms 2976 and 2976-A attached.
- The item could have been up rated to the letter rate as merchandise, including samples. The surface rate was 14 cents -- five cents for the first ounce and three cents for each additional ounce.
- If the mailer had added four ounces to the contents to make a package over the eight-ounce minimum for ordinary parcel post, the cost would have been 14 cents for up to a pound.

While saving significant postage expense, each of the three surface rates noted here would have added weeks or more to the delivery time of the parcel.

Wawrukiewicz has noted “examples of international air parcel post in collector’s hands are almost non-existent.” Wawrukiewicz and Beecher show no examples from the 1948-1996 period, and all international APP subject matter is covered on a single page (p. 216). The International Air Parcel Post package shown here is truly a unicorn. Subscribers with other international APP usages should report them to your editor. Perhaps together we can assemble and enjoy an entire herd of unicorns.

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Henry Beecher and Tony Wawrukiewicz. *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-2011*. (Portland: CAMA Publishing Company, 3rd Edition, 2011), Air Parcel Post chapter.

# World War II Italian POW Parolees in the U.S.

by Jeffrey Shapiro



Figure 1: Uncensored domestic correspondence from a former Italian POW now assigned to non-combat duty at Pine Camp, New York.

From June 1940 through September 1943, hundreds of thousands of young Italian soldiers were sent to war, poorly equipped, poorly trained, and poorly led. As a result, approximately 600,000 were taken prisoner by the Allies, with an estimated 51,000 of them winding up in 21 POW camps in 18 U.S. states.

On September 8, 1943, an armistice was signed between the Italian government and the Allies, even though the German armies still occupied northern Italy. To complicate matters, Nazi collaborators were able to free the imprisoned

Benito Mussolini, former Italian leader, and a new, Italian Social Republic, was established.

Italian POWs had to make a decision to remain loyal to Mussolini or to cooperate with their former American “enemy” by accepting non-combat labor assignments in and outside the POW camps. Many of the prisoners had little political affiliation and couldn’t wait to leave camp and get into the countryside to perform farm labor, work in the forests, and fight fires

It has been estimated that paroled Italian POWs



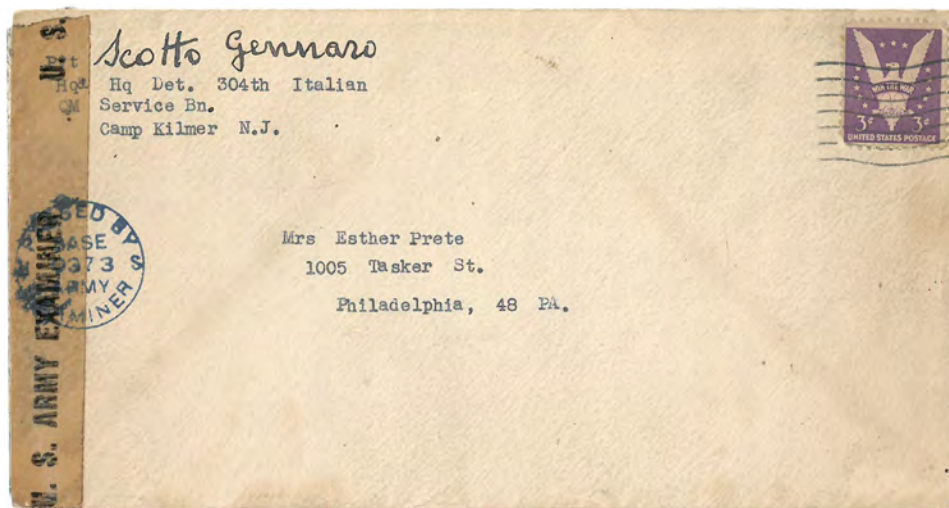


Figure 2: Censored correspondence from a former Italian POW assigned to the Quartermaster Corps at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

in the U.S. contributed more than a million man hours to a labor-starved civilian work force during the war years.

Two covers from paroled Italian POWs are shown here. The first cover was sent by Italian POW, Eues Manfe, at Pine Camp, NY.

Today known as Camp Drum, it is located in the Adirondack Mountains, near the Canadian border. Designated as a training area for the US Army in 1917, Pine Camp saw continuous growth and expansion. German POWs captured in North Africa started arriving at Pine Camp in 1942. In 1943, Italian POWs began to join them. About 1,000 POWs eventually called Pine Camp “home” for the remainder of the war.

Domestic labor shortage caused by World War II was widespread throughout the region and country. The Army responded by quickly organizing “Work Companies,” first sending German POWs to nearby St. Regis Paper Company’s logging camps. In 1943, Italian POWs were sent to various logging operations at former Civilian Conservation Camps (CCC) located near Pine Camp. Eventually, supervised labor camps were set up in locations near Booneville, Conifer and Old Forge. Besides

logging work, POWs were sent to other locations as farm hands and factory workers.

The correspondence in Figure 2 shows an unusual censored domestic letter sent by POW, Scotto Gennaro, housed at Camp Kilmer, NJ.

Camp Kilmer was named after poet, Joyce Kilmer, who was killed at the Second Battle of the Marne in July 1918. The Camp, located a few miles north of New Brunswick, NJ (Kilmer’s birthplace) was selected to serve as a major point of embarkation for Europe-bound troops, starting in July 1942, because of excellent, nearby rail connections.

Beginning in 1944, Italian POWs were sent to Camp Kilmer. Anti-fascist prisoners on good behavior were allowed to join non-combatant Army service battalions, such as the Quartermaster Corps, and served the Allied cause for the duration of the war.

It should be noted that loss of POW status brought surrender of the free frank privilege. However, members of the U.S. armed forces were permitted free postage on their ordinary mail. Thus, the free frank status for paroled Italian POWs serving in the U.S. army in World War II remains unclear.

## C23 - Supplementary Mail during the Prexie Era

by Louis Fiset



Figure 1: Supplementary mail on 1938 New York foreign letter to Europe. [Bob Hohertz collection]

By the time the 6-cent bi-colored Eagle airmail stamp appeared on May 14, 1938, both the 1-cent (April 25, 1938) and 1.5-cent (May 5, 1938) Prexie definitives were in circulation. This stamp enjoyed a three year life until replaced by the Transport Series stamp on June 25, 1941. So, C23 on cover definitely fits into the category of early Prexie era postal history.

The cover here, addressed to Austria, shows two Eagle stamps and a copy of the newly replaced 1-cent Fourth Bureau Issue definitive. It bears the directive "Per S/S COLUMBUS, a North German Lloyd cruise ship that sailed between Bremen and the Western Hemisphere until scuttled by its crew in December 1939. The 13 cents postage pays double the regular rate of 5 cents, plus an additional 3 cents for air service in Europe.

Of special interest here is the magenta SUPPLEMENTARY MAIL auxiliary marking applied on the cover bearing a NEW YORK, N.Y. G.P.O. MAY 21, 1938 1:30 PM postmark.

Supplementary mail was a special post office service of dispatching mail after the regular

mail closed. On foreign mail the fee was double the regular rate, but no fee to be added on postage for air mail service. This enabled a letter to reach a departing ship after the regular mail closing but before the ship set sail.

For the *Columbus's* sailing on May 21, 1938, Figure 2 reads in part: "(mails close \*1 P.M., supplementary 3 P.M.; sails 5 P.M.)" This is consistent with the 1:30 PM postmark shown.

Supplementary mail service ended in 1941.

**COLUMBUS (North German Lloyd), Cobh (Queenstown) May 27, Plymouth May 28, Cherbourg May 28 and Bremen May 29 (mails close \*1 P. M., supplementary 3 P. M.; sails 5 P. M.), from W. 46th St. Letter mail and printed matter for Europe, Africa and West Asia (except Aden, Ceylon, Gibraltar, India, Madeira, Portugal, Scotland and South Africa), printed matter for French Morocco and letter mail for Iraq. Parcel post for Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Hungary and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.**

Figure 2: *New York Times*, May 21, 1938.

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No. 80 Winter 2018

# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

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## **An Army Post Office at the Washington Monument, September 1943**

by Lawrence Sherman



*Figure 1:* National Archives photographs showing the actual APO open to the public during the show, and a separate display field APO tent.

“Back the Attack” was the slogan that the United States government gave to its Third War Loan, the war bond drive of September 9 to October 2, 1943. It was the year that, with hindsight, has been considered the turning point of the war. The German Sixth Army surrendered at Stalingrad (February), American and Australian forces solidified their hold on the Solomon Islands and advanced in New Guinea (January-June), and Italy withdrew from the war (September).

As part of its home front activities for the drive, the army mounted an exhibit on the grounds of the Washington Monument in Washington, DC.

The exhibit, presented from September 9 to 26, featured a complete Army Post Office field unit conducted by army personnel. This working APO gave American families an opportunity to see how the mail they exchanged with their loved ones overseas was handled.

Figure 1 illustrates two photographs from the National Archives showing first, the actual APO that was open to the public from noon to 10 PM for the 18 days of the show. The APO provided all postal services except postal savings and “duck” stamps. It was manned by two officers and 12 enlisted men from the Adjutant General’s Department. The second



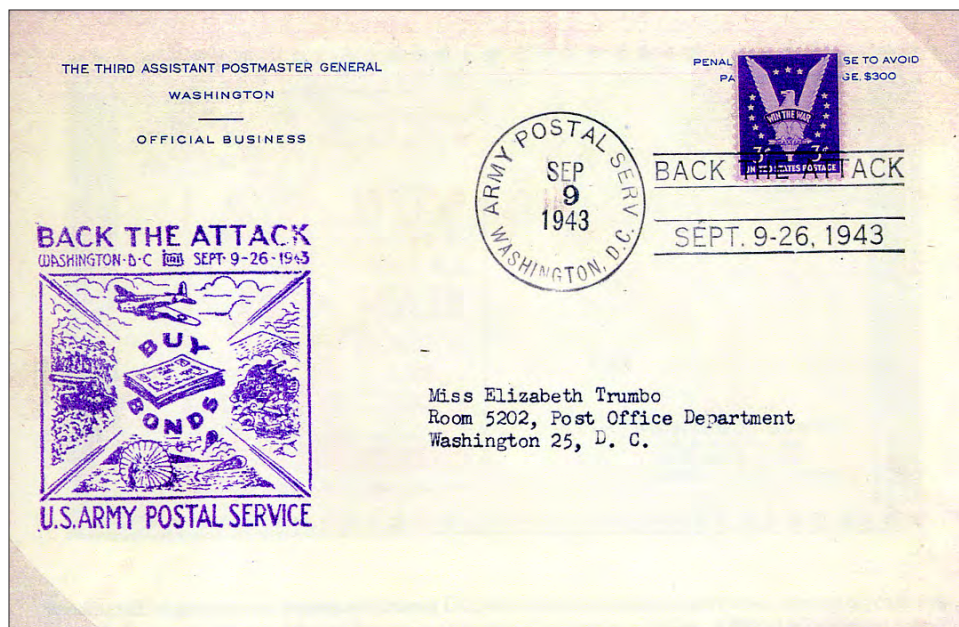


Figure 2: Hand canceled first day postmark with hand struck, “Back the Attack” cachet.

Figure 3: Machine cancel on cacheted cover self-addressed to cachet maker, Walter G. Crosby. Official cachet on back, not shown.



photograph shows a separate field APO tent containing equipment and layout of a “typical Army Post Office in the field.” The tent was erected for display, not active use, near the working APO.

The Post Office Department (POD), intimately involved with both delivering mail to the military and selling war bonds, had a special interest in the success of the APO exhibit. It enabled people to obtain a special postmark with slogan cancel and an army-produced patriotic cachet, on their mail from the APO. The hand-stamped and machine-stamped

varieties of postmark/slogan cancel were easily distinguishable. The cachet, struck in purple, featured sketches of battlefield armaments provided by funds from the sale of War Bonds. The words “Back the Attack,” “Buy Bonds,” and “U.S. Army Postal Service” spelled out the meaning.

Figure 2 shows a hand-canceled September 9 first day postmark with its “Back the Attack” slogan cancel and official cachet on a cover mailed within the POD. The cover, bearing a 3-cent Win the War stamp, was mailed from the office of the Third Assistant Postmaster General

to an employee in the Washington POD office. Note the large size of the hand-struck postmark and the configuration of the slogan cancel.

A machine-canceled cover featuring a Crosby cachet on a cover mailed to San Pedro, CA, on September 18 to cachet maker Walter G. Crosby himself, is shown in Figure 3. Note the smaller size of the machine-struck postmark and the different configuration of the slogan cancel. Also, because of space constraints, the official purple “Back the Attack” cachet is located on the back (not shown). Sometimes the official army cachet could be artfully handstamped on the front of a previously cacheted cover to make a pleasing combination, as shown in Figure

4. Here the original multicolored cachet was printed by Jacques Minkus. Note the 2-cent in-city rate for a piece mailed within Washington, DC.

Nearly all mail sent from the Washington Monument APO was sent to domestic addresses. These are, in the main, easy to find at stamp dealers’ booths or in online auctions. Foreign destination mail from the APO is an entirely different story. Among the few examples I have found, the one shown in Figure 5 is pre-eminent. Paying the 5-cent international surface rate, it was mailed on September 11 to Brazzaville, French Equatorial Africa (now Republic of the Congo). It received the handstamped APO



Figure 4: Jacques Minkus printed cachet with official “Back the Attack” hand cachet.

Figure 5: Foreign destination, to French Equatorial Africa, ultimately returned to sender. Foreign destination examples are scarce.





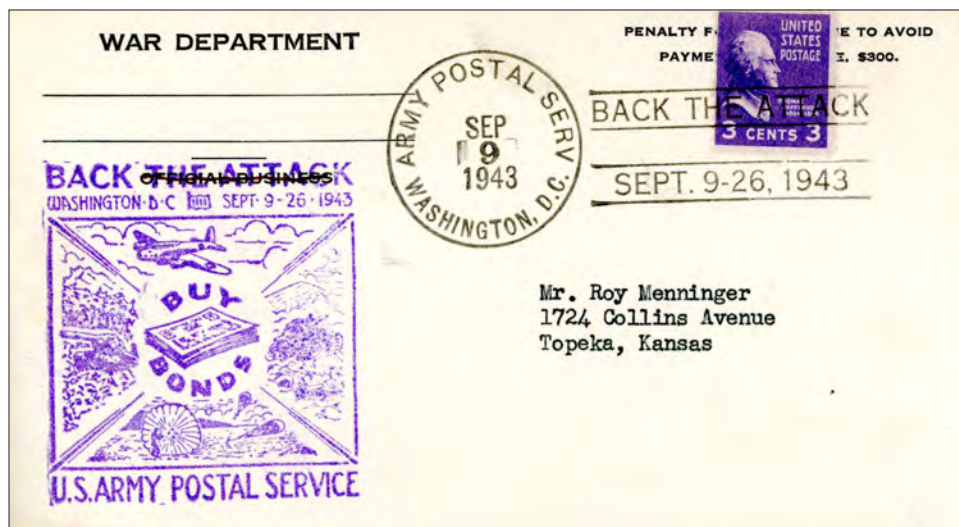


Figure 6: First day use, with official cachet, to Mr. Roy Menninger, future physician as well as President and CEO of the Menninger Foundation.

postmark/slogan cancel with official purple handstamp cachet on the back and was on its way to Africa. Upon arrival in Brazzaville it was censored (*Contrôle Postal*), marked “*inconnu*” front and back, received a lightly struck, 13 Nov Congo received marking, and presumably was returned to sender.

Although not as difficult as finding foreign destination mail from the Washington Monument APO, encountering a Prexie used on such mail is no easy task, either. But examples can be found. Figure 6 shows a September 9 cover sent from the War Department to Topeka, Kansas. It bears the handstamp Army Postal Service postmark and slogan cancel, official cachet, and a 3-cent Jefferson Prexie paying the first class rate. Most APO exhibit covers used the Win the War stamp or a combination of other wartime-themed stamps to pay the first class rate, so the use of the Jefferson Prexie is an uncommon use of a common stamp.

Look again at the name of the addressee and the city where he lived. Roy Menninger was a third generation member of the family that founded the Menninger Foundation in Topeka in 1925. He became a physician specializing in psychiatry and eventually succeeded his

father, Charles, as President and CEO of the Menninger Foundation. Born in 1927, Roy was 16 years old at the time of the APO exhibit at the Washington Monument; hence, he was Mr. (not Dr.) Roy Menninger at the time, as the cover attests.

Another use of a Prexie on mail from the Washington Monument APO is found on the September 26 postcard shown in Figure 7. The postcard is franked, appropriately enough, with the 1-cent Washington. In addition to the machine postmark and cancel, the green card has a vivid boxed “Last Day” in green ink on the front, along with a cachet picturing a portly “Postmaster.” The official purple “Back the Attack” cachet is on the back (not shown).

The Third War Loan was a success. Americans backed the attack by oversubscribing the expected \$15 billion dollars in War Bond purchases. The APO exhibit at the Washington monument was a success, too. Public attendance at the field Army Post Office was high and covers for servicing arrived at the APO from all corners of the United States. By the end of the show more than 52,000 covers had been cancelled, one-third of them on the first day. For present day collectors, finding 36



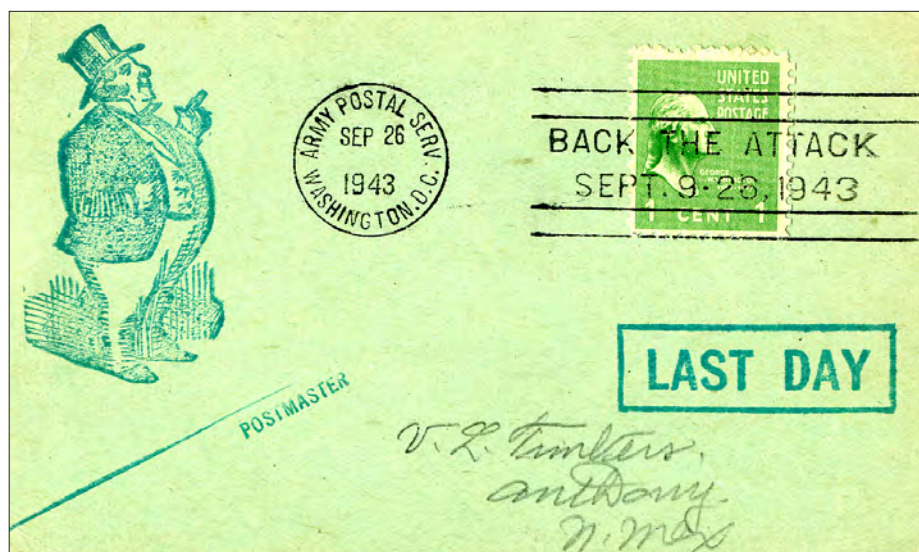


Figure 7: Last day of use postcard with the official purple “Back the Attack” cachet on back.

of those covers –one with hand cancel and one with machine cancel from each of the 18 days of the exhibit– makes for an inexpensive but worthy challenge.

In June 1943 the Postmaster General had written that all other postal problems were subordinated to expeditious handling of official

armed forces mail and “seeing to it that our men and women in the armed forces have rapid and uninterrupted postal communications with their families and friends.” Three months later the working APO on the grounds of the Washington Monument did its best to make that point to the American public.

### Prexie Era Subscription Renewals Now Due

It is time to renew your annual subscription to *The Prexie Era*. The cost is \$10 for the print version and \$5 for the electronic version. These modest fees barely pay the cost of reproducing and mailing out a year’s subscription.

If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, please let Jeff or me know. If you appreciate the newsletter and wish to see it continue, please contact Jeff Shapiro to make payment. You can pay via PayPal (using the address below), but add a 50 cents surcharge if you select that option.

Jeff can be reached at: [dirtyoldcovers@aol.com](mailto:dirtyoldcovers@aol.com)

## When Did FAM 22 End?

by Ken Lawrence



Figure: Registered air mail to India, postmarked May 9, 1946. 90¢ postage pays 70¢ air + 20¢ registry fee. Received Kankanady, India May 26, 1946. No Miami transit marking; therefore, not FAM 22. [Stephen L. Suffet collection]

In a 2006 *London Philatelist* article Robert May posed the following question: “When did FAM 22 end?” Until now my answer to the question has been July 1, 1946.

That answer was never entirely satisfactory because it was based on a deduction. Foreign Air Mail route No. 22 (FAM 22), with service from the United States dispatched through a newly established exchange office gateway at Miami, to West Africa and connecting service

to countries throughout sub-Saharan Africa, the Near East, and Asia as far as India, had been inaugurated on December 6, 1941, one day before the United States became a World War II belligerent.

The attack on Pearl Harbor abruptly suspended trans-Pacific civilian flights west of Pearl Harbor. On December 13, 1941, Pan American Airlines and the War Department concluded a secret contract that extended the FAM 22

route eastward from the Belgian Congo to Singapore, and on December 17 the Second Assistant Postmaster General had ordered “Air mails for Netherlands Indies, North Borneo, Sarawak, Straits Settlements, Malaya, Burma, unoccupied China and countries west thereof (including Turkey), which have heretofore been sent by the trans-Pacific route, shall be routed promptly via Miami, Fla.”

The Civil Aeronautics Board certified the FAM 22 extension on December 23, and approved a December 20 New York to Calcutta Special Mission flight by a memorandum order. For the duration of the war and most of the following year, the POD published no revision to that order. Finally, on July 1, 1946, a new edition of Part II of the *Official Postal Guide* abolished the Miami gateway for air mail to trans-Atlantic destinations, thus effectively ending FAM 22 service.

Recently, while browsing 1946 issues of *The Official Foreign Air Mail Guide (OFAMG)*, I verified the May issue listing of the following countries served by the South Atlantic service departing from Miami: Aden, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Angola, Bahrain, Baluchistan, Belgian Congo, Borneo, Brunei, Burma, Cameroons, Ceylon, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, French Equatorial Africa, French Somaliland, Gambia, Gold Coast Colony, India, Iraq, Italian Somaliland, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Malay States, Malta via Egypt, Mauritius, Nigeria, Nyasaland, Palestine, Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique), Reunion, Rhodesia (Northern and Southern), Saudi Arabia, Siam, Sierra Leone, Southwest Africa, Spanish Guinea, Straits Settlements, Syria, Tanganyika Territory, Transjordan, Turkey, Uganda, Union of South Africa, Yemen, and Zanzibar.

That list did not include some countries previously served by FAM 22, such as Liberia, which had become a FAM 18 call, and several

Francophone countries in Africa and the Middle East that were served by FAM 18 to Lisbon and Dakar, transferring to French carriers.

But the June 1946 *OFAMG* carried this notice: “Planes carrying mail via the Trans-Atlantic routes no longer depart from Miami. Therefore, the marking of mail (M) ‘Via Miami’ is not required, and the ‘(M)’ previously shown in the last column of Part 2 of the *Guide* has been eliminated.”

The *OFAMG* closed during the last week of each month and reached subscribers during the first week of the cover date. Therefore, some time in May 1946 FAM 22 ceased. Steve Suffet’s registered cover to India postmarked May 9, 1946 and lacking a Miami transit marking, provides evidence of a late April or early termination date.

This information applies to outbound civilian air mail. Military air mail was dispatched from and to the postal embarkation center assigned to the specific APO, FPO, or ship. Some trans-Atlantic APOs were served by New York, others by Miami, and some switched from New York to Miami (including the APO for Ascension Island, which was a FAM 22 flag stop). Official mail departed Washington by the never-announced TWA FAM 23 route via the South Atlantic to Egypt and India, or by the parallel Air Transit Command Washington-Cairo-Karachi route. Inbound mail came on FAM 22 ATC flights to Miami or FAM 18 Navy flights to New York or FAM 23 ATC flights to Washington depending on the connection.

To my knowledge no one has studied or exhibited postwar transoceanic air mail with attention to these details, except to record that the PAA Cannonball route carried mail as late as November 1945, and that some trans-Pacific service to and from China occurred via 1946 UNRRA flights. Otherwise it’s virgin territory awaiting a dedicated student.



## Early Cover from the German Occupation of Denmark

by Jeffrey Shapiro



Figure: Combined domestic air/surface mail to Denmark, postmarked March 20, 1940. Received "9 APR 1940" the day German forces entered Denmark. UK (Liverpool) and German (Frankfurt - "402") censorship. Addressee moved (*déménagé*), so on April 22, 1940 the letter was returned. [Louis Fiset collection]

German armed forces invaded Denmark's Jutland Peninsula by land, sea, and the air just after midnight on April 9, 1940. Lasting approximately six hours, the operation against the small independent Kingdom proved to be one of the shortest conquests in recorded military history.

The German High Command was not particularly interested in Denmark, but viewed the country as a stepping stone to Norway with its vital iron ore resources and strategic location.

During the six hour operation, German forces

suffered an estimated 26 killed and 23 wounded. The Danes confirmed their military casualties at 16 dead and 20 wounded. Civilian resistance was listed as 10 dead and 3 wounded.

King Christian X realized the overwhelming superiority of the Nazi aggressors and capitulated at 6:00 the same morning, thus saving lives on both sides. With the Danes having surrendered so quickly, the Germans proceeded with a lenient occupation, content to leave the Aryan Danes to manage themselves.

The cover shown here was posted on March 20, 1940 prior to the occupation, and docketed

in green ink, “9 APR 1940,” the day German forces entered Denmark. The contents were censored at Liverpool (4167) before subsequent transport by surface to the continent. The letter was next intercepted and examined by a German censor, per the “402” pencil notation on the front of the cover. This likely occurred at Frankfurt because German censorship operations in Denmark did not begin until July 15, 1940.

The letter was not condemned by the censors, but returned to the U.S. from Copenhagen on April 22, 1940 because the addressee had moved (*déménagé*).

## PrexieEraPex 2 Update

Jeff Shapiro has provided an update to **PrexieEraPex 2**, to be held in conjunction with Philatelic Show 2018, at Boxborough, MA, May 4-6, 2018.

CANEJ has approved the following jury for the show:

James P. Gough, California, Chief Judge  
Anthony Dewey, Connecticut  
Peter McCann, Florida  
Paul Phillips, California  
Stephen Suffett, New York  
David Ball, Massachusetts, apprentice

The title of Ken Lawrence’s two-day APS on-the-road course will be; “Postal History of World War II in the Pacific Ocean from the American

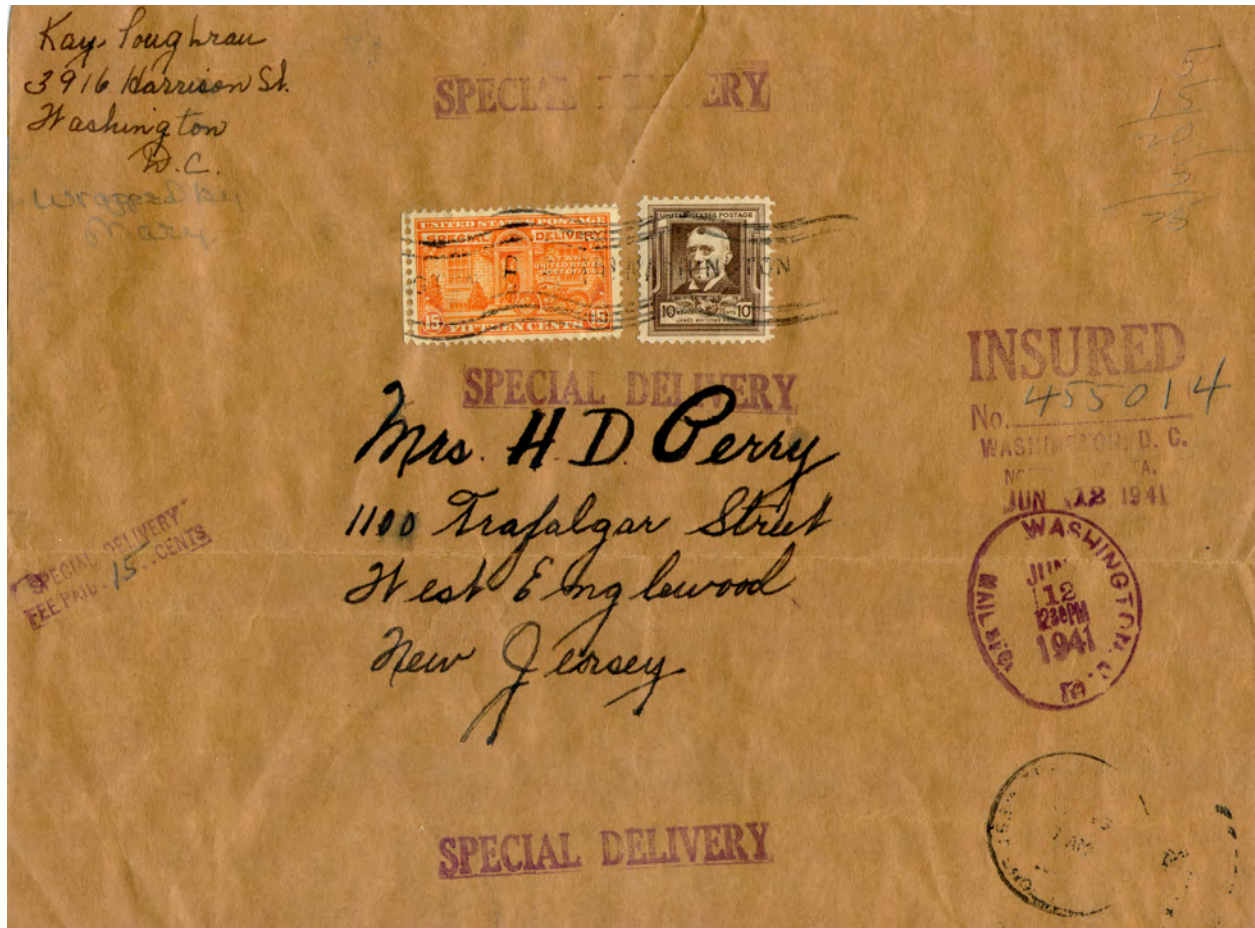
Perspective.” Jeff Shapiro will accompany him with a talk about collecting Pearl Harbor Navy ship covers. This program will take place on Wednesday May 2 and Thursday May 3, prior to the opening of the show.

Doug Clark, Exhibits Chairman, reports that the complement of frames reserved for us are not yet completely filled. Therefore, time still exists to enter the competition.

Full information regarding Philatelic Show 2018, including an exhibit prospectus and entry form, can be found on the Northeastern Federation of Stamp Clubs website, at [nefed.org](http://nefed.org)

## Third Class, Insured Special Delivery Mail

by Louis Fiset



This wrapper, posted July 12, 1941, provides a nice example of insured, special delivery mail for non-first class matter weighing two pounds or less. The faint, pencil notations at the upper right,  $5+15=20+5$ , provide a guide to determining the contents of the package.

The minimum insurance fee available cost 5 cents for indemnity of \$5.00 or less. Next, the 15-cent special delivery stamp paid the special delivery rate for non-first class mail. This leaves the remaining 5 cents postage to help determine what the package actually contained.

The lowest Parcel Post rate at the time began at nine cents for zone 1, except for a Bound Printed Matter rate that would have required an endorsement, or "Sec. 34.77 PL&R"

somewhere on the package. Absent, this package was thus limited to third class mail.

Basic third class mail had a rate of 1.5 cents per two ounces, making an exact, 5-cent combination impossible. Books, catalogs, and material for planting, however, were rated in 1-cent increments, making a 5-cent rate possible. The latter, however, rated out at 1 cent per 2 ounces, making 5 cents pay for 10 ounces, too heavy for third class mail. This leaves only books and catalogues of 24 pages or more as possibilities. Likely, the package contained a book weighing 5 ounces, since catalogues usually went uninsured.

*Thanks to Dan Pagter for help diagnosing this interesting Prexie era wrapper.*





# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

No. 81 Spring 2018

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
lfiset@outlook.com

## 1941 Airmail to China, 50-Cent Rate Explained

by Louis Fiset



Figure 1: FAM 14 mail paying 50 cents airmail to Manila, with onward dispatch to Shanghai by steamer. No Hong Kong censorship. Received November 10. Transit time: 27 days.

Three attributes of the October 17, 1941 cover from New York to Shanghai illustrated here drew attention and led to further study. First is the 50 cents postage paid for airmail service to China when the published rate was 70 cents. Second, missing is evidence of censor markings seen on most, if not all air mail from the U.S. to China after March 1940. And third is the Shanghai receiver on the back showing an arrival date of November 10, 1941, thus documenting a transit time of 27 days.

The first direct air mail service between the U.S. and China began with the inauguration

of FAM 14 from San Francisco on April 21, 1937. The *Hong Kong Clipper* arrived at Hong Kong on April 28th. A China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) plane flew from Shanghai to connect with this flight on April 27th and returned to Shanghai two days later with mail having been transported on that transpacific flight from the West Coast.

This regular service continued uninterrupted until the Japanese attack on Shanghai caused CNAC to suspend its Hong Kong-to-Shanghai service on August 13, 1937. This all-air service from the U.S. mainland to Shanghai thus lasted

a little more than three months. Thereafter, air mail from the U.S. to north China was off loaded at Hong Kong and placed aboard a regularly scheduled Hong Kong-to-Shanghai steamer.

The airmail rate for letter mail to China was 70 cents per half ounce, effective from April 21, 1937 until the suspension of FAM 14 service on December 7, 1941. British censors examined all mail transiting Hong Kong, passing unopened much of it, but with a significant percentage opened, censored, and resealed. Thus, with few exceptions, all mail from the U.S. to China, including air mail, should bear evidence of censorship.

On May 27, 1941, Pan American Airways (PAA) inaugurated a biweekly extension of FAM 14 service from San Francisco to Singapore, via Manila, alternating with the established route via Manila to Hong Kong. At the same time the Hong Kong post office established regularly scheduled steamer service to carry airmail to Manila to meet the PAA flight from Singapore to the U.S. mainland on the weeks there were no flights leaving Hong Kong.

Similarly, on August 15, 1941 the Shanghai post office dispatched the first shipment of air mail on the cargo/passenger ship, S.S. *Santa Inez* destined for Manila to connect with the *Anzac Clipper* from Singapore that left on August 21st, and reached Manila later in the day. The ship, capable of 13 knots, completed the 1117 nautical mile voyage in a little more than 3.5 days making possible a round trip voyage in one week's time.

The 50-cent cover shown here was postmarked October 17, 1941, in time to meet the *China Clipper* departing from San Francisco on October 22. Bound for Singapore, not Hong Kong, it reached Manila on November 3 after delays at Midway and Wake Islands. There it was off loaded to await *Santa Inez's* scheduled

arrival, having been coordinated to meet next inbound PAA flight from Singapore, which arrived on November 5. The cover was placed aboard the steamer and carried to Shanghai on the return voyage. It received a Shanghai arrival backstamp on November 10.

The writer's "Via Manila, P.I." directive on the face of the cover makes sense, as it directs attention to a deviation from the long established route through Hong Kong.

Why, after nearly 70 years, have so few covers emerged paying the 50-cent airmail rate to the Philippines, with onward dispatch to Shanghai by steamer? Two significant reasons may exist. First, the published airmail rate to China transiting Hong Kong was 70 cents, a rate that had been in effect for nearly four years. However, neither the *Official Foreign Air Mail Guide* nor *The U.S. Postal Bulletin* ever published the 50-cent rate. Thus, most postal clerks, long accustomed to the 70-cent rate,

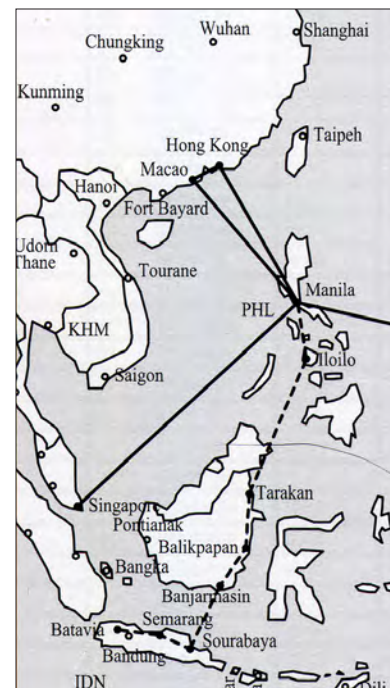


Figure 2. FAM 14 route from the U.S. after addition of the Singapore spur in May 1941.



Figure 3: Registered airmail to Shanghai paying the published 70-cent rate. No Hong Kong censorship. Thus, carried by ship from Manila to Shanghai. Transit time: 29 days.

may have been unaware of its existence and therefore could not advise postal patrons of this cheaper, but equally efficient routing.

In fact, the Manila-to-Shanghai route took approximately 24 hours longer than the Hong Kong-to-Shanghai route. But the absence of censorship at Manila may have evened out the transit time differences. The transit times from San Francisco via either route took approximately 27-30 days.

Second, opportunities to take advantage of this routing were limited. Between August 15 and November 29, 1941, Clipper ships made 10 flights from Singapore to Manila. However, the *Santa Inez* failed to complete the last three of these scheduled voyages. On November 16, 1941 the vessel ran aground on an island off the north China coast and was wrecked. Thus, only seven round trips between Shanghai and Manila could have occurred.

Finally, a note about the two correspondents on this cover. Many collectors eschew philatelically inspired mail, and avoid correspondence to or from a known stamp dealer. This mail appears to be legitimate commercial correspondence between two people with a common philatelic

interest. The cover is addressed to a Shanghai post office box likely at the main post office in the Shanghai International Settlement. This new steamer service was well publicized by the Shanghai post office, so the addressee likely informed his correspondent who was then able to take advantage of the reduced rate. How many other types of postal patrons would have been in the know?

### 70-CENT RATE, SAME ROUTING

The second example, shown in Figure 3, suggests a reality more complex than the first. This cover illustrates registered mail from New York to Shanghai, postmarked August 28, 1941 and transiting San Francisco the next day. A Shanghai receiver documents the cover's arrival on September 25, after a transit time of 29 days.

Unlike the first example, the full 70 cents airmail postage is affixed here, in addition to a 15-cent registry fee paid. Note the absence of Hong Kong censor markings, which suggests this cover, like the first one, went from Manila to Shanghai directly by ship rather than from Hong Kong.

But do the bookend dates, August 29 and



September 25, 1941 allow coordination of an outbound FAM 14 flight from San Francisco to Manila with an incoming flight to Manila from Singapore and the arrival of the *Santa Inez* from Shanghai?

The only scheduled Clipper flights that would avoid this registered cover from transiting Hong Kong and inevitable censorship are:

	<u>Lv. S.F.</u>	<u>Arr. Manila</u>
<i>China Clipper</i>	Sept 05	Sept 14
<i>Philippine Clipper</i>	Sept 10	Sept 15
	<u>Lv. Sing.</u>	<u>Arr. Manila</u>
<i>Philippine Clipper</i>	Sept 18	Sept 18

Given the September 25 Shanghai arrival date, these flights line up nicely.

Specialists of FAM 14 mail should check their holdings to and from North China during the August to October 1941 period and look for covers that bears no evidence of Hong Kong

censorship. Surely more examples exist, and they should be reported.

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- Sieh, Ping-wen and J. Lewis Blackburn. *Postage Rates of China, 1867-1980*. (Taiwan: The Directorate General of Posts, 1981.)
- Whittington, Richard A. "1941 Covers Sent by Sea to Manila to Connect with the Pan Am Trans-Pacific (Singapore to San Francisco) Air Mail Route." (Hong Kong Study Circle Journal, No. 378, July 2016.)

## Special Air Mail Rates to Allied Armed Forces

by Dickson Preston



I always enjoy picking up a cover which shows a feature I do not understand. In this case my investigation led me into an area of World War II air mail rates I had not encountered before. The cover was addressed to the "C. M. F." in the United Kingdom and forwarded to Taranto, in southern Italy. The unusual feature is the 33-cent air mail rate.

The letter was mailed at the Jamaica Post Office in New York City and postmarked on February 19, 1946 (the date is visible under two of the 6-cent transport stamps). It was found to be short paid, probably at the Morgan Annex of the Main Post Office in New York, which handled foreign mail. Although the transatlantic rate to Europe was 30 cents per half ounce, this letter was rated at 33 cents per half ounce because it was addressed to the Central Mediterranean Force (CMF) of the British Army. Special air mail rates to Allied Army Forces were set in May 1943 (PB18591), but the 33-cent CMF rate first appeared in the February 22, 1944 Postal Bulletin (PB18695) and was reaffirmed in the July 27, 1945 Bulletin (PB18844).

The British Central Mediterranean Force was formed in North Africa in 1943 and participated in the invasions and subsequent occupations of Sicily, Italy, Greece, and the Balkans, as well as of Austria.

This double weight (one ounce) letter was originally franked with 30 cents paying the one half ounce rate to Europe, so the amount due was 36 cents ( $36¢ = 33¢ \times 2 - 30¢$ ). Because the Jamaica Post Office is located within New York City, the letter was "Returned for Additional Postage" rather than forwarded as postage due or, more likely, surface mail since less than one air mail rate step was paid. When remailed with the additional postage on February 23, the second postmark was struck on the back of the envelope, probably in error, so the six 6-cent transport stamps received dummy oval cancels.

The 33-cent rate was equivalent to the 30-cent transatlantic air mail rate plus 3 cents surcharge for air dispatch from Europe to North African countries implemented in 1939. This likely provided the rationale for assigning this rate to the CMF. However, by the time this letter was mailed much of the CMF was in Southern Europe - in Italy, Greece, and other countries. The addressee was engaged in welfare work (CVWW = Council of Voluntary Welfare Work), "stationed at Taranto, Italy," as noted by the sender. Although the letter was flown to Europe, the CMF equivalent to the old North African rate still applied until 31 October 1946.

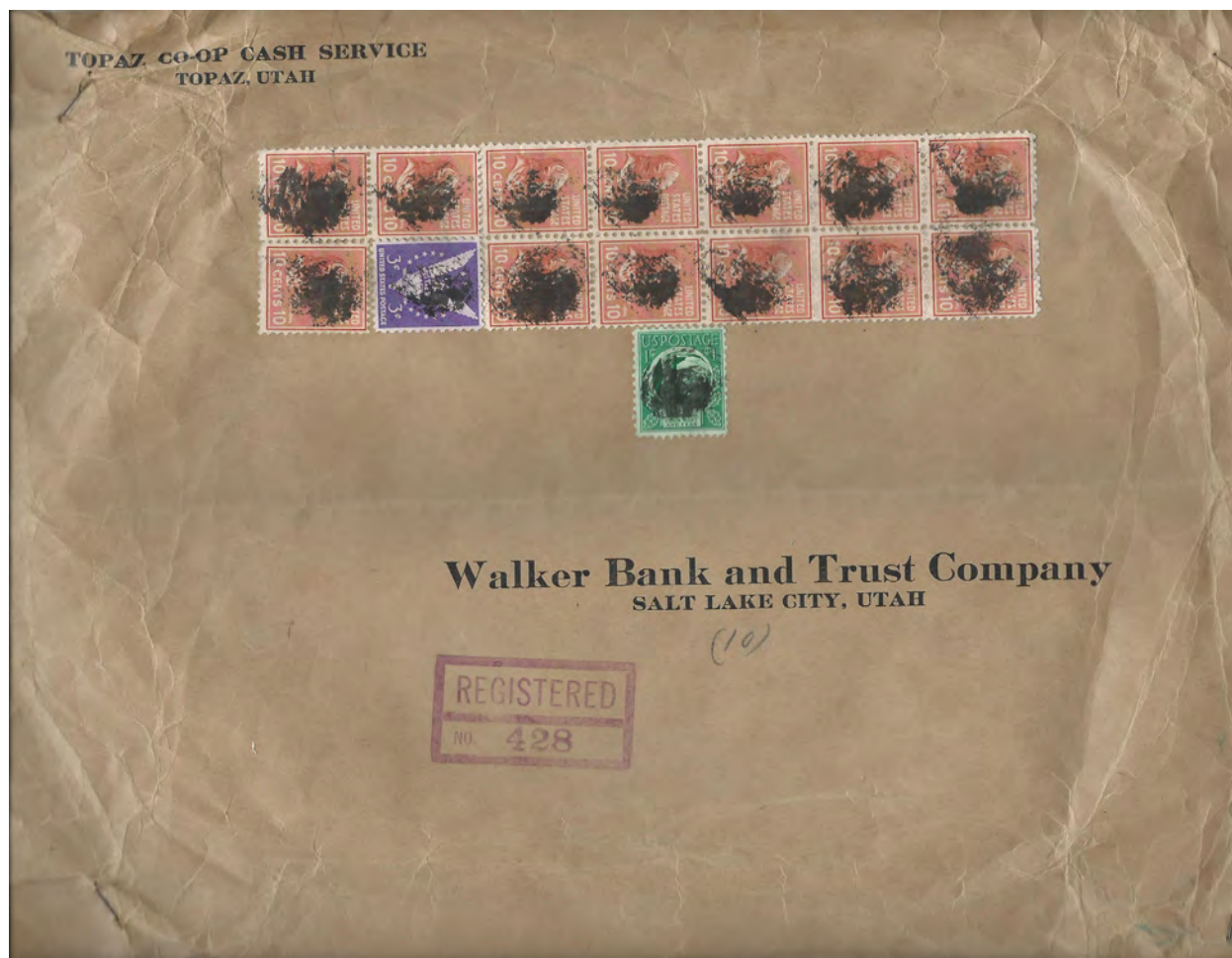
I would be happy to see other examples of special air mail rates to Allied Armed Forces associated with World War II.

The following rates are fixed for air-mail articles addressed as indicated:	
Articles for—	Rates
Middle East Force (except V-mail), Paiforce (except V-mail), India Command and Ceylon Command.	70 cents per half ounce.
East African Force .....	60 cents per half ounce.
West African Force .....	50 cents per half ounce.
British or French North African Force and Central Mediterranean Force.	33 cents per half ounce.
The above instructions supersede those published in the Postal Bulletin of May 7, 1943.	

PB 18695 (February 22, 1944).

# Unusual Registration Use from a World War II Japanese American Relocation Center -- A Recent Discovery

by Bob Akaki



The registered cover illustrated here is a recent discovery of mail originating from a War Relocation Authority Relocation Center that held Japanese Americans during World War II. What makes this cover particularly remarkable is its origin -- **TOPAZ CO-OP CASH SERVICE/ TOPAZ, UTAH**.

This 9" x 12" registered envelope has affixed \$1.34 postage to pay for first class letter service and registration fee. The stamps are cancelled with a non-distinct mute black killer as required on registered mail. The back of the envelope bears several strikes of the magenta double circle **DELTA UTAH/TOPAZ BR** canceler, dated

July 25, 1945 near the end of the war. The possible postage breakdowns are as follows:

- \$.09 (.03 x 3) first class postage + \$1.25 registry fee (\$800.01-\$900.00 indemnity)
- \$.39 (.03 x 13) first class postage + \$.95 registry fee (\$400.01-\$500.00 indemnity)
- \$.54 postage (.03 x 18) first class postage + \$.80 registry fee (\$300.01-\$400.00 indemnity).

Judging from the size of the envelope and likely





value of the contents, I'm guessing the total weight was either 13 or 18 ounces. Outgoing registered mail from the Relocation Centers is uncommon, especially larger and valuable items such as this. As a result, the double circle magenta marking from the centers is also seldom seen.

Topaz, which took its name from a nearby mountain, was officially known as the Central Utah Relocation Center. It became one of 10 relocation centers set up and administered by the War Relocation Authority (WRA) to confine Japanese Americans for the duration of the war. Like all WRA centers Topaz had its own on-site branch post office, run by civil servant employees and staffed mostly by inmates. The post office at the town of Delta, located about 16 miles away, served as the Topaz Branch parent post office. At its peak, the branch served 8,130 patrons, most of them from the San Francisco Bay area.

The first inmates started arriving in August 1942. The Topaz post office was officially opened September 1, 1942 and offered the same range of postal services as the parent post office. It received its distinctive cancelling devices around November 1, 1942. Mail processed before that time bears Delta, Utah postmarks. The post office closed down on November 30, 1945.

Since the centers had no available retail outlets, all centers had co-ops run for and by the inmates, offering the residents a number of useful sundries. Inmates wanting clothing, small appliances (like a radio - initially not allowed in the centers) and other items had to resort to mail order houses, such as Sears

Roebuck and Montgomery Ward, or take a bus into a nearby town. Complicating matters was the absence of banks at the centers.

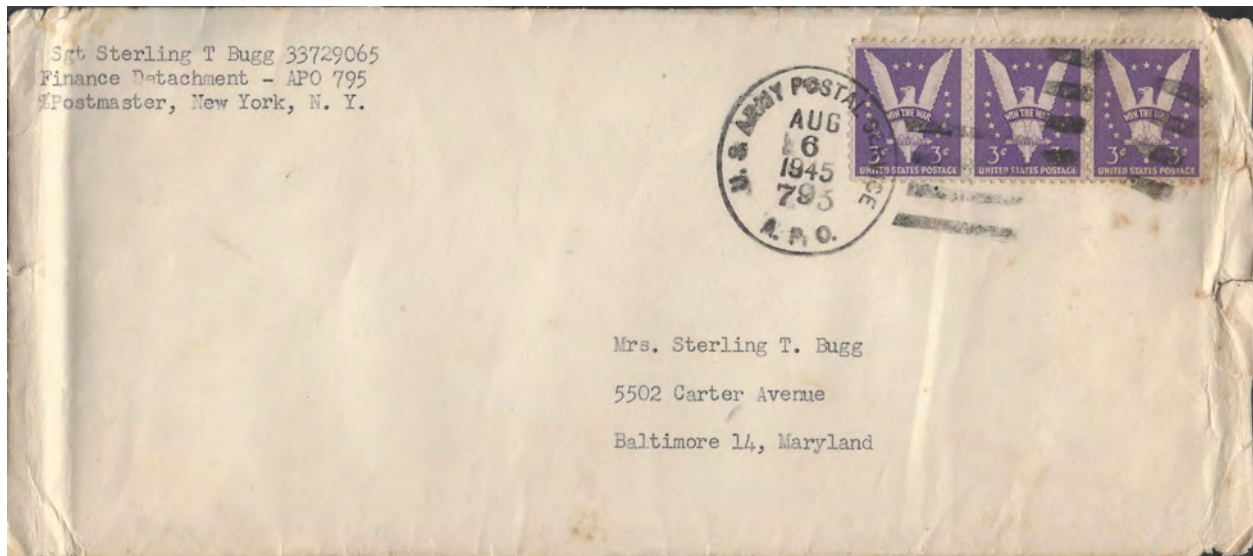
The Topaz Co-Op, established in October 1942, offered a Cash Service subsidiary to allow inmates to cash checks (including paychecks from jobs in the center or from jobs in Delta or the surrounding area) and purchase money orders. With the nearest bank 16 miles away in Delta and not easily accessible this service quickly became a huge convenience. Both the Topaz post office and Topaz Co-Op made brisk sales of money orders for mail order purchases. Purchasing money orders from the Co-Op was encouraged so members could share in the profits from their sale. According to Co-Op records, at its peak Cash Service moved over \$1,000 per day.

That said, this envelope and ones like it must have been sent as often as daily and at least, weekly. According to sources at the Topaz Museum, the envelopes may have been printed at the office of the local Delta newspaper. The Topaz Co-Op Cash Service handled these transactions for over 30 months so potentially there could have been well over 100 of these envelopes.

July 25, 1945 occurred on a Wednesday. Given this late date, with the center population at about half its peak, daily transaction volume had declined significantly by now. Cash Service mailings might still have gone out daily or several times a week. At any rate the example shown here appears to be the only one reported in collectors' hands. It is amazing what one finds some 70+ years after the fact.

## Obscene World War II Military Mail, Some Privileged, Some Not

by Ken Lawrence



Most World War II first-class surface mail covers posted at U.S. military post offices were transported postage free under the concessionary privilege granted April 1, 1942. The illustrated 6 August 1945 cover posted at APO 795 (Khorramshahr, Iran) is an exception. It is franked with 9 cents postage for up to three ounces of mail.

Postmaster General's Order No. 17352, placed these restrictions on the free mail privilege: "Messages on post cards may be accepted under this provision but it shall not apply to packages or parcels or any matter other than messages in the form of ordinary letters or cards." In practice, certain enclosures, such as snapshots and money orders were also accepted within the meaning of "ordinary letters."

The contents of this cover was not an ordinary letter, so it did not qualify. In his spare time the sender, Sgt. Sterling T. Bugg, fancied himself a writer of fiction — pornographic fiction that included explicit narrative descriptions of seduction, submission, sadism, and pedophilia. This envelope enclosed a copy of parts of his manuscript, thus it had no intrinsic value that needed to be declared. It was therefore not a

letter, but also not qualified to be mailed as other than first class. But the salacious content added a twist. Being an Army accountant, the sender was a stickler for rules, but also an expert in complying with them in ways probably not intended by the lawyers and bureaucrats who crafted them.

The manuscript would not have been permissible as mailable matter in the United States, which banned obscenity (contemporaneous examples included Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn*), but the Army's Judge Advocate General had ruled that censorship of morals was not the examiner's job and that "no action will be taken in case of obscene matter mentioned or found in the mail, unless the case brings the U.S. or Allied armed forces into disrepute." Once legally accepted as mail, it was sealed against inspection when it entered the United States mails.

Three days earlier Sgt. Bugg had used the free mail privilege to send his wife a letter that enclosed two snapshots, one of a Persian belly dancer at an NCO club, the other of a fellow soldier engaging in sexual congress with a

local woman, his staff at full salute, tall and upright at the center, she with customary head scarf in place, dress hiked up to her waist, bare rump facing the camera, mounting him. I have seen and collected several salacious V-Mails,

but for World War II military correspondence the contents of Sgt. Bugg's covers are the most extreme examples I have encountered, all mailed according to regulations.

## A Beautiful Ebay Hit and Miss

by Daniel S. Pagter



The illustrated eye candy wrapper to Finland was clearly a hit as it sold for \$2,177.00 plus \$3.95 shipping on April 7, 2018. Examination shows what it is -- and what it is not.

This September 1948 usage with unclear day of month cancel is a partial wrapper from a Special Delivery Air Letter sent from New York to Helsinki, Finland.

Here is what it is not; insured, registered or sent as International Air Parcel Post, a service started six months prior. Nor was it an under eight ounce small letter packet, since Finland was not a country which accepted such matter.

Finland did accept Parcel Post and Air Parcel Post to 44 pounds. It was one of the original 23 countries participating in International Air Parcel Post service. However, the wrapper lacks the required forms and markings to designate the package a parcel or, specifically, an air parcel item.<sup>1</sup>

Special delivery (EXPRES) to Finland cost 20 cents regardless of weight, but with the restriction that the service was only provided in cities. This wrapper has both a 20-cent Special Delivery stamp and the required Form 2977. Air carriage required Form 2978, which is also affixed. The air letter rate was 15 cents per half



ounce to the 4 lb. 6 oz. (70 ounce) maximum.

The contents is noted “medicine”, which can only be shipped with pre-approval for one of two types; regular pharmacy formularies, or compounds, which may be considered as a poison. Such medicines were treated as merchandise when approved. Finland allowed merchandise, dutiable or not, to be sent in letter matter, which included air letters. Such matter in a letter then required Form 2976 (C 1) to be attached. And again, it is here.

Noting the Customs (Douane) 2976 (C 1) Form, this air letter was examined by Finnish customs and subsequently marked, FREE (TULLI) DUTY (VANPAA) and FREE (TULLI) TOLL (FRITT) in two bold straight-line hand stamps in violet, shown inverted in the illustration.

Postage as affixed to this wrapper totals \$3.50 which pays for 23 half ounces or 11.5 ounces total. But there remains a 5 cent over payment.

Now for the “miss.” Look to the upper right of the stamped portion of the wrapper and you will see an area that looks as if a stamp is missing. The cancellations, multiple at that, do not extend to the area where a stamp likely was. Examination of the edge shows the wrapper was not folded there at an edge for the cancellation device to miss the paper, twice.

I believe a 10-, 25-, 40-cent or \$1.00 stamp is missing, likely a Prexie, that paid an additional one, two, three or seven half ounces respectively. No single stamp of any other denomination would provide for exact airmail letter rate postage on this wrapper.

### **New Website Includes Prexie Covers to Sweden**

The Swedish Postal History Society (SSPD) has developed an excellent set of reference web pages. Included is a complete listing of Prexie frankings known to Sweden as well as mail quantities between USA and Sweden by year.

As a bidder, I sent the seller a message stating I believed a stamp was missing. The auction closed, however, before it could appear in the description. Twenty-six minutes after the auction closed the seller wrote me the following message:

Thanks for the message. Can you show me how it is calculated because I have no clues about usa (sic) postal history. I just take picture and list the item.

I explained my thoughts and the rating breakdown in a reply sent about one and a half hours later. The seller, in Finland, advised me the next day that he and the buyer agreed to cancel the sale.

<sup>1</sup> For clarity, in addition to the 20-cent special delivery fee, International Air Parcel Post (IAPP) rates for Finland (four ounce increments) were \$3.43 for 24 ounces, \$3.94 for 28 ounces, \$4.45 for 32 ounces and \$4.96 for 36 ounces. None of these rates could be exactly reached with one additional stamp should this package have been sent as IAPP, which it was not.

### **REFERENCES**

- *United States Official Postal Guide*, July 1948 Part II, International Postal Service, Table 1, page 3; Section 16, page 16; Section 18, page 17; Section 19, page 18; Finland in the alphabetical country listing, pages 159-162.
- Also reviewed for changes (none found) were the July and October 1948 Quarterly Supplements for Part I and II of the *United States Official Postal Guide*, which modify the July 1948 “annual” guide.

Collectors wishing to make a contribution to the site with additional cover scans are invited.

Swedish language: <http://sspd.se/>

English language: <http://sspd.se/in-english/>



No. 82 Summer 2018

# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
lfiset@outlook.com

## Development and Deployment - U.S. Atomic Bomb 1942-1946

by Joseph Bock

### Part 1

Albert Einstein  
Old Grove Rd.  
Nassau Point  
Peconic, Long Island  
August 2nd, 1939

F.D. Roosevelt, -  
President of the United States,  
White House  
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

Some recent work by E. Fermi and L. Szilard, which has been communicated to me in manuscript, leads me to expect that the element uranium may be turned into a new and important source of energy in the immediate future. Certain aspects of the situation which has arisen seem to call for watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action on the part of the Administration. I believe therefore that it is my duty to bring to your attention the following facts and recommendations:

In the course of the last four months it has been made probable - through the work of Joliot in France as well as Fermi and Szilard in America - that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of uranium, by which vast amounts of power and large quantities of new radium-like elements would be generated. Now it appears almost certain that this could be achieved in the immediate future.

Figure 1: Albert Einstein letter to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 2 August 1939.

The history of the U.S. atomic bomb is generally understood to begin with this letter signed by Albert Einstein (but composed by physicists Leo Szilard and Eugene Wigner) warning that physicists in Nazi Germany were working on atomic experiments that could result in a highly destructive new bomb (first two paragraphs only in scan). The letter resulted in the President approving the creation of committees on uranium research. In early 1942 the Corps of Engineers under the direction of General Leslie Groves secretly purchased large tracts of land in rural Tennessee and Washington State for the enrichment of raw uranium.



Figure 2: From the Clinton Engineer Works, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, 22 September 1943.

The cover in Figure 2 is the earliest reported use from the secret Clinton Engineer Works in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. This large facility processed raw uranium by separating the desirable, rare uranium isotope U-235 from the more common U-238. Over 80,000 men and women were employed there including scientists, construction workers, clerical and military. The majority of workers, however, were women. (1)

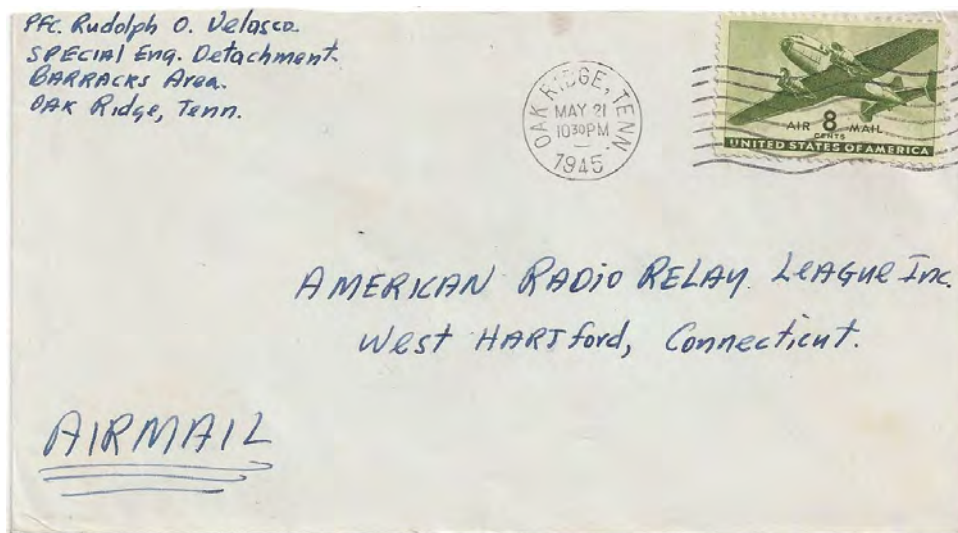


Figure 3: From Oak Ridge, Tennessee, 21 May 1945.

An 8-cent Transport airmail use from a Private First Class soldier assigned to a Special Engineer Detachment. The airmail rate in the U.S. was increased from 6 cents to 8 cents per ounce on 26 March 1944 and included military APO and FPO mail within the continental U.S. However, overseas military personnel retained the 6 cents per half ounce special military rate through September 30, 1946.





Figure 4: From a Dupont (Federal) employee at Hanford, Washington, 23 February 1944.

A second secret facility was constructed at Hanford, near Pasco, Washington on the Columbia River. The facility refined and converted raw uranium into weapons grade plutonium. Until a recent family correspondence became available, only two covers had been reported from Hanford. This cover (Figure 4) was sent by Carol Wentz Doriss to her husband, a Corporal in the U.S. Army, stationed at Camp Kearney, Utah. The 6-cent airmail rate is paid by a pair of 3-cent Prexies. All outgoing mail from Oak Ridge, Hanford, and Los Alamos was submitted unsealed for censorship. Consequently, no physical evidence of censorship on outbound mail exists that would compromise the secrecy of ongoing activity at those facilities.

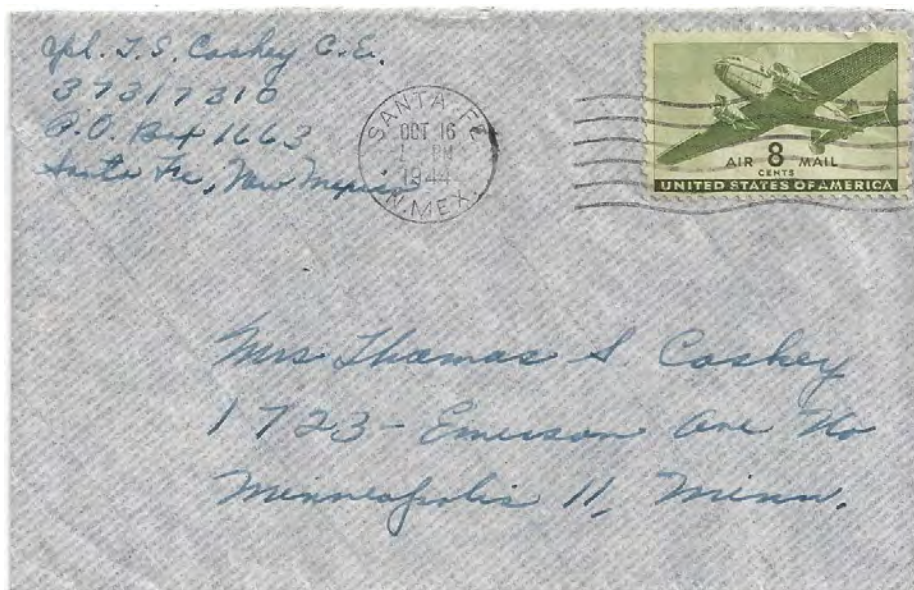


Figure 5: Outbound from Los Alamos, P.O Box 1663 Santa Fe, New Mexico, postmarked 16 October 1944.

The world's first controlled nuclear chain reaction was conducted at the University of Chicago on 2 December 1942 by physicist Enrico Fermi and provided the scientific feasibility for a

nuclear bomb. In 1943 a former boarding school in Los Alamos, New Mexico was acquired for the Manhattan Project by the Army to become the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, under the direction of physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer.

P.O. Box 1663 Santa Fe, New Mexico was one of several undercover postal addresses for military and scientific personnel at the secret Manhattan Project facility in the foothills above Santa Fe. Outbound mail was submitted unsealed to facilitate censorship and avoid obvious markings left by the censors.

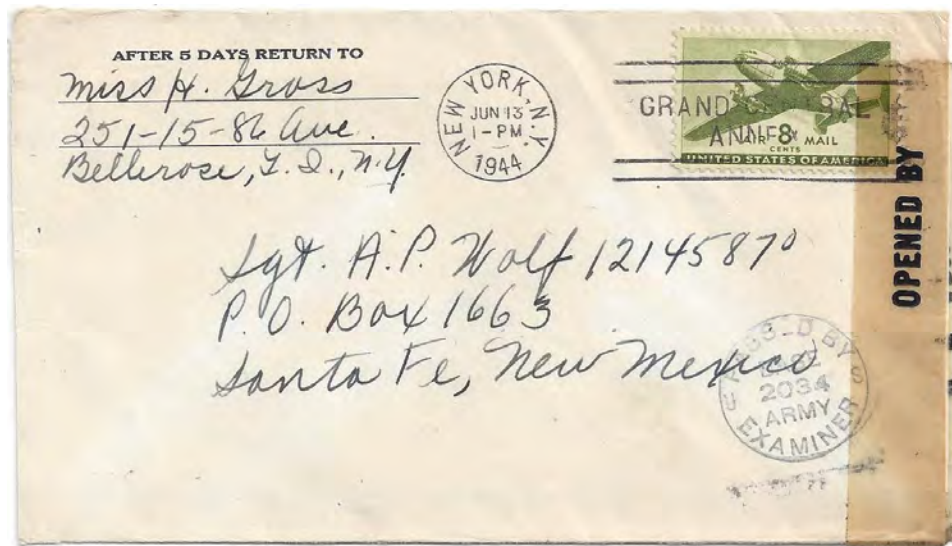


Figure 6: Inbound to Los Alamos, P.O. Box 1663 Santa Fe, New Mexico, postmarked 13 June 1944.

Incoming mail to Los Alamos, New Mexico displayed U.S. Army censorship. All mail, both incoming and outgoing, was censored, but only incoming mail displayed the telltale censorship markings, including rubber stamp examiner markings and resealing tapes.

The development of the U.S. atomic bomb, which became known as the Manhattan Project, was the greatest secret of World War II. Postal censorship played a major role in maintaining this secrecy.

- (1) Kiernan, Denise; *The Girls of Atomic City*. (Touchstone by Simon and Schuster, 2013.)
- (2) Lawrence, Ken; "Postal history and postal historians of the Atomic Bomb," Part 3; *Linn's Stamp News*, December 2016.

### ***The Prexie Era Newsletter Now Online***

The United States Stamp Society has posted on its website a complete run of *The Prexie Era* newsletter, through Issue No. 72 (Winter 2016). It is available to USSS members.

The run is searchable by year/issue, author, as well as by key words or topic.

From the Home Page, click on "Resources" at the top right. You will be given a choice of "Prexie Browse" or "Prexie Search". Then, simply follow the instructions.

Issues will be added each year so that only the most recent two years are not included.

## An East Coast December 7, 1941 Cover

by Albert “Chip” Briggs



Figure 1: Postmarked December 7, 1941 to Vichy France and returned to sender from Bermuda.

Being a Sunday, there are not a large number of covers found bearing postmarks the day Japan attacked the United States. Certainly, examples from Honolulu during the bombing are coveted.

The cover illustrated here was mailed from New York in the early morning hours of what would later become a “day which will live in infamy”. It was sent by a Dr. Julius Wildstosser in Bronx, New York to Miss Ellen Rosen at Chateau de Charbannes, St. Pierre de Fursac, in the department of Creuse, unoccupied (Vichy) France. The cover is franked with a five cent James Monroe stamp paying the Universal Postal Union surface mail rate in effect at the time.

As mail service to Vichy France was temporarily interrupted on December 12, 1941 and this letter had not made the entire journey across the Atlantic, it was returned to sender. It was censored at Bermuda on the outbound trip and closed with British P.C. 90 censor resealing tape. It was eventually returned to New York in January, 1943 as revealed by the receiver on the back. While the postmark date is eye catching, it is the address that is particularly interesting.

Chateau de Charbannes was an OSE (Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants) facility administered by Felix Chevrier, journalist and composer. The OSE was a worldwide Jewish organization for children’s welfare and health care. During World War II the OSE created a network for the



rescue and sheltering of children in occupied France known as Circuit Garel. During the war years 284 Jewish children received shelter there.

After two raids by French gendarmes under the Vichy government and increasing concerns over safety as the Nazis expanded control in late 1942, the decision was made to close the home. In late 1943 the children were dispersed to the network run by Georges Garel. The vacated home was later used by the French Resistance.

Chevrier ran the home from November 1939 until it closed in 1943.



Figure 2: Chateau de Charbannes, where Jewish children were sheltered during World War II.

## U.S.S. *Indianapolis* at Pearl Harbor

by Joe Bock



The cover shown here originated with an Army PFC aboard the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* (CA 35) on 7 October, 1941, while the ship was stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The 20 cents postage affixed paid the half-ounce civilian airmail rate to the mainland then in effect. The 6-cent concession airmail rate did not begin until 26 December 1941.

The *Indianapolis*, a heavy cruiser, was sunk on 30 July 1945 by a Japanese torpedo while returning from Tinian Island in the Pacific after delivering the first atomic bomb to the U.S. Army Air Force.

Only 317 of 1,196 the crewmen survived the sinking. A search team financed by Paul Allen located the wreckage on 19 August 2017 lying in the Philippine Sea at a depth of 18,000 feet.

# Sender's Statement and Certificate of Bulk Mailing

by Robert Schlesinger

Form 3606

## SENDER'S STATEMENT AND CERTIFICATE OF BULK MAILING

This statement to be prepared in ink in duplicate by mailer. Original to be returned with postage stamps affixed covering fee, after being certified to.

POSTMASTER,  
Madison Square, New York

There are presented herewith 11,303 identical pieces of 3<sup>rd</sup> class matter, each subject to 1 1/2 cents postage. Number of pieces to the pound 48 Total number of pounds 237 Total postage paid 169.55 Fee paid 48 Mailed for Neibart Assoc. Press Inc. Per Neibart  
by Neibart Assoc. Press Inc.  
64 W. 23rd St. N. Y.

It is hereby certified that the above-described mailing has been received and number of pieces and postage verified.

FEE FOR CERTIFICATE	
1 to 200 pieces	10 cents
201 to 1,000 pieces	15 cents
Each additional 1,000 pieces or fraction thereof	3 cents

If the time consumed in making the count and issuing the certificate is longer than 30 minutes, the fees charged shall be based on the actual time consumed at the rate of \$1.25 per hour. Additional certificates, 5 cents each.

JOHN H. SHEEHAN Postmaster  
Per Joseph A. Neibart  
16-51114-1 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

Third class bulk mailing all were rated at the third class single piece rate in effect at the time of mailing. Most Prexie era collectors are familiar with the 1-cent and 1.5-cent third class bulk rates. After that, the 'nitty gritty' of what happens next is not always clear.

The figure above shows an example of the POD Form 3606, SENDER'S STATEMENT AND CERTIFICATE OF BULK MAILING. The instructions on the certificate explain how the postage – and how the verification and fees – actually worked. "This statement to be prepared in ink in duplicate by mailer." In other words, the mailing firm, in this case, Neibart Assoc. Press, Inc., was required to tell the post office at time of mailing, what it was mailing – 11,303 identical pieces of third class mail.

"Original to be returned with postage stamps affixed covering fee after certified to." Here is where the mailing count was verified. The "fee" for the counting is explained right on the certificate itself. The first 200 of the 11,303 pieces cost 10 cents to verify (certify), and

the next 800, 15 cents. Each additional 1000 pieces or fraction thereof) cost another 3 cents to certify, or a total of 33 cents. This amounted to the 48 cents postage affixed to the front of the certificate itself. I believe these certificates were returned to the mailers for their files. This could explain why the forms are hard to find.

The Certificate of Bulk mailing shown below is slightly different, in form and use. In January 1955, (see lower left corner) the POD changed the format of Form 3606. The wording was identical to the previous form. The more important difference was the fact that this bulk mailing being sent by Neibart Assoc. Press, Inc., was by first class mail, as shown in the WHAT CLASS OF MAIL box. The 3 cents postage per piece confirms the first class nature of the mailing. The fee structure for verification of the number of pieces mailed remained as it was; the 33 cents paid correctly verified the 6666 pieces mailed.

This second certificate is interesting in that it begs the question of why was it used at all.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT  
**SENDER'S STATEMENT AND CERTIFICATE OF BULK MAILING**

**INSTRUCTION:** Mailer is to prepare this statement in ink in duplicate. Original to be returned with postage stamps affixed covering fee, after being certified to.

**Postage (uncanceled) stamps in payment of fee and canceled by postmark**

**FEE FOR CERTIFICATE**

Not exceeding 200 pieces . . . . . 10 cents  
 Not exceeding 1,000 pieces . . . . . 15 cents  
 Each additional 1,000 pieces or fraction thereof . . . . . 3 cents

If the time consumed in making the count and issuing the certificate is longer than 30 minutes, the fees charged shall be based on the actual time consumed at the hourly rate of a substitute clerk, Grade 1. Additional certificates, 5 cents each.

**TO:** Postmaster, *Madison* (City and State)

**Presented herewith is the mail described below:**

NUMBER OF IDENTICAL PIECES	WHAT CLASS OF MAIL	POSTAGE EACH SUBJECT TO	NUMBER OF PIECES TO THE POUND	TOTAL NUMBER OF POUNDS	TOTAL POSTAGE PAID	FEE PAID
6666	1st	3	34	196	199.58	33

**MAILED FOR** *Baxter Inter Comm Co* **MAILED BY** *Robert H. Schaffer, PM* **PER** *L. Verbaan*

**POSTMASTER'S CERTIFICATE**

It is hereby certified that the above-described mailing has been received and number of pieces and postage verified.

*Robert H. Schaffer, PM*  
 (Postmaster)  
 BY *[Signature]*

POD Form 3606 (Jan. 1955) Replaces previous editions of this form which may be used. 16-51114-5 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

If the correct first class postage of 3 cents per ounce was paid, it can be viewed as just another first class mailing, not some special rate. Comments are welcome.

## Prexie Era Book Awarded A Large Gold at Stampshow 2018

*Prexie Era: Stamp Production and Postal History, 1938-1962*, came away with a large gold medal in the literature competition at Stampshow 2018, held this past August at Columbus, Ohio.

Steve Schumann, writing for the jury, had this to say regarding originality, significance, and research:

“The scope of this work is enormous, however the work gives the appearance

of being complete due to the careful choice of the various chapters. For example, the workhorse of the era was the 3¢ prexie stamp. What happened with this stamp could have happened with any stamp of the period. But yet each chapter is significant in its own right. This could serve as an example for studies of other areas.”

Hats off to the authors.



## A Registered Berlin Airlift Cover

by Jeffrey Shapiro



Figure: August 1948 registered airmail to Berlin, entering the city as part of the Berlin Airlift designed to break the Soviet blockade of goods into the British, U.S., and French sectors.

The cover illustrated here bears 35 cents postage to pay the 15-cent airmail rate to Europe (in effect 1946 through 1961) and 20-cent registration fee. At first glance this August 10, 1948 cover is fairly ordinary, since registered mail to postwar Germany resumed on March 25, 1948 and airmail service even earlier, on August 28, 1946. What makes it special is that it was flown into Berlin during the famous Berlin Airlift (June 1948-May 1949). An August 15, 1948 Berlin receiving mark appears on the reverse.

The Berlin Airlift occurred in response to the Soviet Union's attempt in the Spring of 1948 to limit the ability of the United Kingdom, France and the United States to supply their occupied sectors of Berlin, which lay within Russian-occupied Eastern Germany. This was seen as an initial attempt to force the Western Allies to abandon their post-war jurisdictions in the western sections of Berlin.

Many historians believe The Soviet Union's actions precipitated the first major crisis of

the Cold War. In June 1948 the Soviet Union blocked access to road, rail and canal routes into western Berlin. While the possibility of war loomed, the Western Allies formulated a new strategy, to supply the huge population by a massive airlift. The first planes left West Germany on June 26, 1948, and by the height of the operation American, British, French, South African, Australian and New Zealand crews were delivering 9,000 tons of food and fuel to the people of Berlin every day.

The Soviets never interfered with Airlift operations, fearing provocation of open warfare. With the Allies flying in more supplies by air than had been delivered by rail before the Airlift, the Soviets began negotiations early in 1949 to end the Blockade, which officially came to an end on May 12, 1949.

Correspondence flown into Berlin during this period is scarce. Most of the limited space on cargo planes was used to bring the people of Western Berlin the necessities of life. Mail moved on a space available status.

## More Bomber Pouch Mail

by Louis Fiset



Figure: Bomber pouch mail to the newspaper, *PM*, containing newspaper copy by one of its columnists in August 1945 after the war in Europe had ended.

In an earlier issue of the newsletter (No. 75, Autumn 2016) I introduced the subject of an expedited letter service from Europe during World War II whereby stripped down fighter planes and B-24 bombers shuttled mail of time sensitive importance to the U.S. The cover shown here is similar to the legal size cover in the earlier article. This example, however, advances our knowledge of this service by illustrating the type of content of some essential mail allowed on these flights.

This correspondence was written by Tom O'Reilly from a Paris hotel that served as a journalist hangout and addressed to an editor at the New York progressive newspaper, *PM*. The cover bears the notation, "O'Reilly's Copy," suggesting an article for an upcoming issue. It passed U.S. Army press censorship on 2 August 1945, was postmarked Washington, D.C. August 6, 1945, 3:30 pm and delivered

at New York 12 hours later. The cover bears required U.S. postage to pay for domestic mail service, although the 9 cents paid remains somewhat confusing.

The correspondence reached *PM*'s newsroom in time for the August 8, 1945 edition. The article, headlined, "Ah! Paris, at Last," appeared in the writer's regular column, "O'Reilly."

O'Reilly described himself as a postwar correspondent. In fact, he was a postwar gossip columnist traveling throughout France, Germany, and England, to offer light hearted diversions from the brutal conflict that had recently ended. During the month of August 1945 he published ten columns in *PM*, bearing such headlines as, "Tom Meets General Patton" (Nuremberg); "How One Lieutenant Got to His Wedding" (London); and "Franks in Frankfurt" (Frankfurt).





No. 83 Autumn 2018

# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
lfiset@outlook.com

## Yet More Bomber Pouch Mail

by Louis Fiset



Figure 1: Bomber pouch (packet) mail originating at Paris and addressed to the editor of a news outlet in the U.S. Flown to Prestwick, Scotland via the British ADLS service, then onward to Washington, D.C. via a modified B-24 Bomber where it then entered the mail stream without censorship.

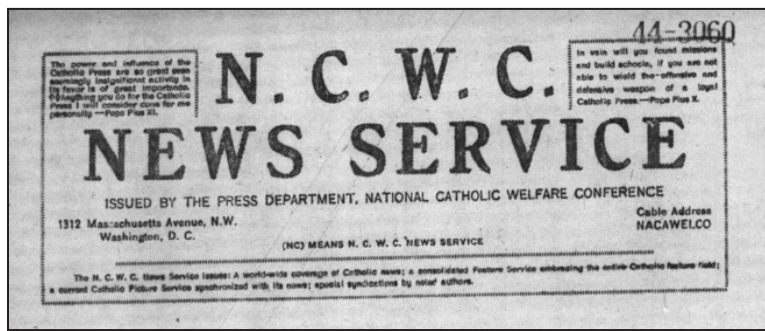
The cover in Figure 1 shows another example of Bomber Pouch mail that I first introduced in Issues 75 (Autumn 2016) and 82 (Summer 2018). The correspondence, originating in Paris, was mailed to the editor (Frank A. Hall) of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) weekly, located at 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, D.C. The masthead, in Figure 2, confirms the address.

Like the earlier examples, it bears a dated **PASSED**

**FOR PUBLICATION** boxed Field Press Censor censor marking, this one dated 15 November 1944, a “Bomber Packet” directive, and domestic postage canceled with a November 20, 1944 Washington, D.C. postmark. On the back (Figure 3) may be found U.S. Army Examiner translucent resealing tapes.

To review, the U.S. Air Transport Command operated a free transatlantic shuttle service using stripped down, long range B-24 bombers





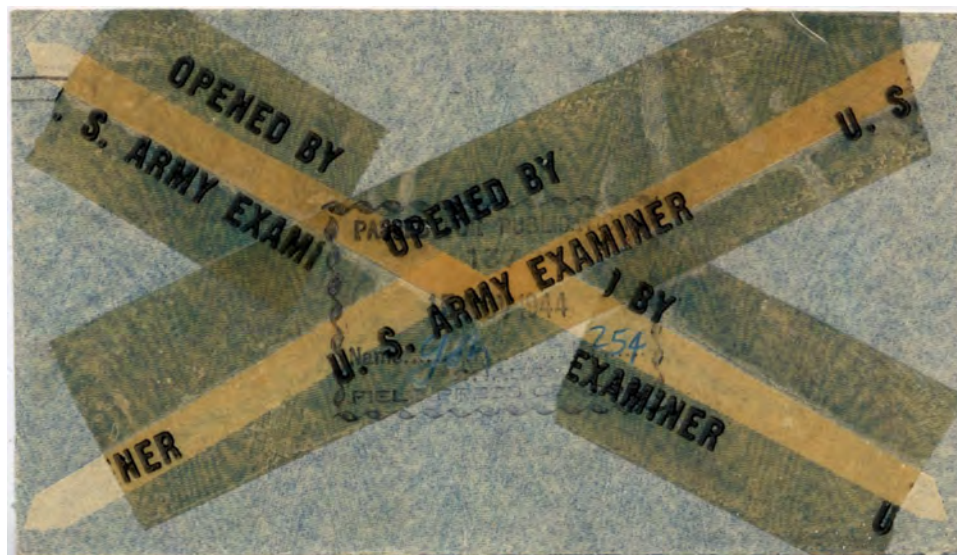
*Figure 2: Masthead of the NCWC News Service weekly publication showing 1312 Massachusetts Avenue as the news media headquarters.*

to transport important communications between Washington, D.C. and London, via Prestwick, Scotland. Eligible mail, which included copy for news outlets in the U.S., was to have a directive indicating it should be included as “bomber mail.” The Office of War Information underwrote the service, but correspondents had to apply postage for onward domestic postal service from Washington, D.C.

All covers shown in this article originated in France, which raises the question how such mail reached Prestwick for onward transatlantic transmission. The Royal Air Force provided

a service to ferry important dispatches between Europe and London, a service that lasted throughout the war using re-outfitted fighter planes. This service was known as the Air Despatch Letter Service (ADLS), and correspondents using this service often applied ADLS lettering to the front of the covers. This service suggests how Paris correspondents may have linked up their press copy with the B-24 bombers in Scotland.

While the postal history of expedited mail service between Europe and the U.S. provides collectors with an interesting side bar, the



*Figure 3: Reverse side of cover showing U.S. Army censorship resealing tapes. Covers may have been presented to the censors unsealed. Visible is the Press Censor’s rubber stamp marking dated 15 November 1944.*

story of the originator of this particular correspondence is compelling from a personal view. The Rev. Anthony Coppens, a Jesuit Catholic, was the Belgian correspondent for the NCWC News Service during World War II and beyond. However, Coppens left Brussels in 1940 following the invasion of his country. He fled to Pau, in Vichy (“unoccupied”) France where he ran considerable risk forwarding copy to the NCWC regarding current events in Belgium.

Following the Allied invasion of North Africa resulting in the German occupation of the south of France in November 1942, Coppens was sent to safety at a convent in Sarlat, a village in Dordogne department north of Toulouse. Here it was hoped he would avoid capture and interrogation by the Gestapo. His whereabouts remained unknown until he showed up in Paris after the city’s liberation in August 1944.

The News Service copy enclosed in the cover above, postmarked Washington, D.C. November 20, 1944, was one of four short pieces Coppens mailed via bomber pouch in time to be included in the November 27, 1944 edition of the NCWC weekly paper.

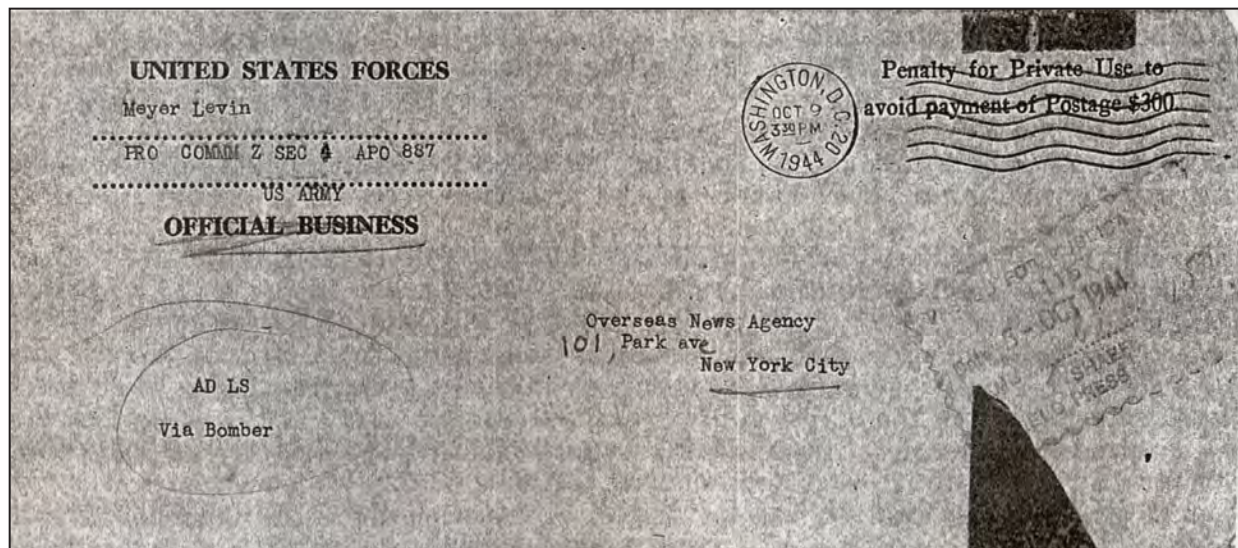
Given the flimsy envelopes, likely each story was sent separately. These represent the first communiques since he resurfaced in Paris.

Reverend Coppens continued to submit copy to NCWC from Paris until he returned to Brussels shortly after the end of the war.

### **Bomber mail/ADLS covers**

In my first article on this subject I asked readers if they could show a single cover bearing both ADLS and bomber pouch markings. There were no takers, but I have since found two examples hiding in publications I read with ongoing interest. Although neither author made reference to the ADLS directive, nevertheless, the documentation is there.

The first cover appeared in Thomas Boyle’s *Airmail Operations during World War II* and is illustrated in Figure 4. It shows official correspondence from the Public Relations Office (PRO) of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force at Paris (APO 887) to a news agency in New York. Postmarked October 9, 1944, the cover, likely contained an official press release. It bears the directive, ADLS/Via Bomber, which confirms the British



*Figure 4:* Press Relations Office (PRO) mail on official stationery containing an official press release to a news agency in New York City. Passed by Army press censors 5 October 1944. The cover details both ADLS and Via Bomber directives, thus linking the two services.



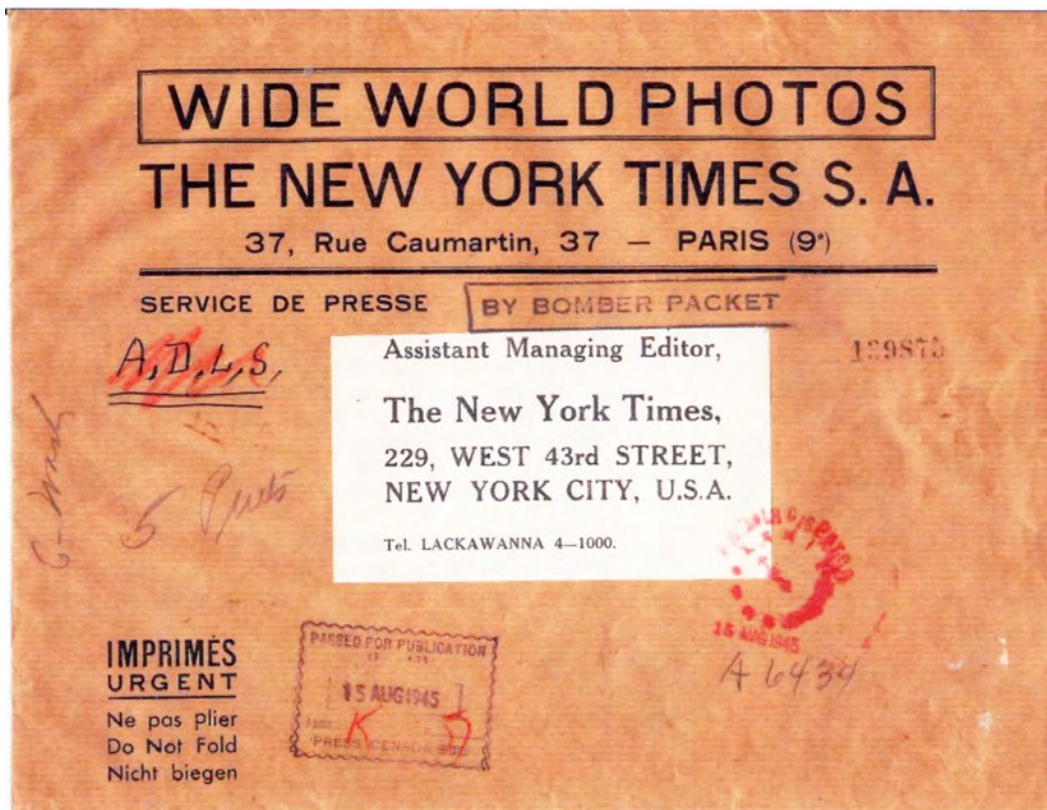


Figure 5: A New York Times oversized envelope of photos sent from Paris to New York by Bomber Packet. Passed for publication by Army press censors two weeks before the end of the war. Directives include both Bomber Packet and A.D.L.S. markings.

and US joint services role to expedite time sensitive mail.

The second cover (Figure 5) appeared in a *Military Postal History Society Bulletin* article by Dr. Thomas Richards, entitled “Bomber Pouch Mail & Press Censorship Markings.” The cover, with photos enclosed, bears both **BY BOMBER PACKET** and **A.D.L.S.** directives, although the latter inexplicably has been crossed out. Nevertheless, a relationship between the two services is confirmed here.

Too few examples of Bomber Pouch/ADLS mail has surfaced to draw definitive conclusions on how the two services operated jointly. However, what mail has surfaced shows how news of the war and postwar was conveyed to publishers in the U.S. prior to

resumption of fast and reliable mail service and uncensored cable traffic.

In addition, Prexie, Transport, and Win the War postal history collectors have a new opportunity to be on the lookout for additional examples of this mail, which will certainly dress up any collection or exhibit.

## References

- Boyle, Thomas Jr. *Airmail Operations During World War II*. Mineola, NY: American Airmail Society, 1998, p. 132.
- Richards, Dr. Thomas. “Bomber Pouch Mail & Press Censorship Markings.” *Military Postal History Society Bulletin*, 51:2 (Spring 2012), pp. 6-8.



## Civilian Public Service Camp Cover

by Stephen L. Suffet



*Figure 1:* From the Menonnite-run conscientious objectors Camp No. 8 near Marietta, Ohio, October 2, 1942.

According to Section 5(g) of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, the USA's first peacetime draft:

Nothing contained in this Act shall be constructed to require any person to be subject to combatant training and service in the land and naval forces of the United States who, by reason of religious training and belief, is conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form.

That section went on to say:

Any such person claiming such exemption from combatant training and service because of such conscientious objections whose claim is sustained by the local draft board shall, if he is inducted into the land or naval forces under this Act, be assigned to noncombatant service as defined by the President, or shall if he is found to be conscientiously opposed to participation in such noncombatant

service, in lieu of such induction, be assigned to work of national importance under civilian direction.<sup>1</sup>

While about 25,000 World War II era conscientious objectors served as noncombatants within the United States Armed Forces, primarily in the Army Medical Corps, local Selective Service boards granted nearly 12,000 men the opportunity to do "work of national importance under civilian direction." Of these, approximately 2,000 worked as attendants or aides in mental hospitals, while the remaining 10,000 were assigned to one of the 152 Civilian Public Service (CPS) camps scattered throughout the USA and Puerto Rico. Most of these camps were located in rural, often very remote areas, although a few sat closer to urban centers. Some had been Civilian Conservation Corps camps. In most CPS camps the men worked on projects involving forestry, flood control, soil conservation, park maintenance, or fire fighting.<sup>2,3</sup>

In addition, approximately 6,000 conscientious objectors went to federal prison during World

War II, either because their local Selective Service boards failed to recognize their claims, or because they refused to cooperate with the Selective Service System altogether.<sup>2,3</sup>

The photo shows a cover from Civilian Public Service Camp No. 8, located along the Ohio River about seven miles southeast of Marietta, Ohio, and served by the Marietta post office. According to one report, “The men worked in the sixty-eight acre Forest Service nursery containing between 25-30 million pine seedlings. They sowed seeds, cultivated seedlings, transplanted young trees and prepared them for shipment to Ohio forests and farms.”<sup>4</sup>

Here are two quick observations regarding the cover:

Use of the 3-cent Win the War stamp is rather ironic.

Although this cover is from the camp administration rather than from an individual assignee, it is not an official business “penalty” envelope. While a handful of CPS camps for recalcitrant assignees were operated directly by the Selective Service System, almost all of the CPS camps were run by non-governmental agencies, in particular the historic pacifist churches. Thus, the postage had to be paid.



When it opened in June 1941, this particular camp was first run jointly by the Mennonite Central Committee and Brethren Service Committee. By the time the cover was postmarked in October 1942, the camp had been run solely by the Mennonites for five months. CPS Camp No. 8 closed in April 1943, whereupon its men were presumably reassigned to other camps.<sup>4</sup>

The Civilian Public Service program ended in March 1947 when the last extension of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 lapsed. The following year, when conscription was reinstated under the Selective Service Act of 1948, a provision for conscientious objection was again included. The Civilian Public Service program, however, was never revived. Conscientious objectors who did not serve in the United States Armed Forces as noncombatants were assigned to civilian alternative service jobs, most often in mental hospitals, but they lived in ordinary civilian housing rather than in special camps.

Footnotes (all retrieved December 3, 2018):

1. <https://www.revolvy.com/page/Selective-Training-and-Service-Act-of-1940>
2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilian\\_Public\\_Service](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilian_Public_Service)
3. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conscription\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conscription_in_the_United_States)
4. <http://civilianpublicservice.org/camps/8/1>

*Figure 2: Photograph of CPS Camp No. 8 near Marietta, Ohio, circa 1941-1942. [Digital Image © 2011 Brethren Historical Library and Archives. All Rights Reserved.]*

# Development and Deployment - U.S. Atomic Bomb 1942-1945

by Joseph Bock

## Part 2



*Figure 1:* Free frank letter posted on 20 January 1945 from Army Air Field, Alamogordo, New Mexico. No outbound covers have been reported from participants associated with this historic atomic test, either at this location or specific date period.

**Trinity Test 16 July 1945:** In late 1944 a small group of Army Engineer troops were dispatched to Alamogordo Air Field in south central New Mexico to establish a base camp in a remote desert area of the base. On 16 July 1945 the first atomic bomb was detonated from a 150 foot steel tower. It produced a gigantic mushroom cloud that rose to a height of 10,000 feet. The brilliant flash of light was visible in Santa Fe, 180 miles to the northwest.



*Figure 2:* Photograph taken 20 July 1945 at the Trinity test site showing melted remains of the mostly vaporized 150 foot steel tower after detonation of the first atomic bomb. Present are two prominent test observers, physicist Robert Oppenheimer, who directed the Los Alamos Laboratory, and General Leslie Groves who served as the overall head of the Manhattan Project. Success of the test meant an atomic bomb using plutonium was feasible and could be readied for use by the U.S. military.



**“Gadget”:** The successful test of the first atomic bomb, nicknamed the “Gadget”, took place in a remote section of the very large and mostly uninhabited air base, abandoned immediately afterwards. Enrico Fermi, one of the observers,, calculated the explosion at 10,000 tons of TNT.

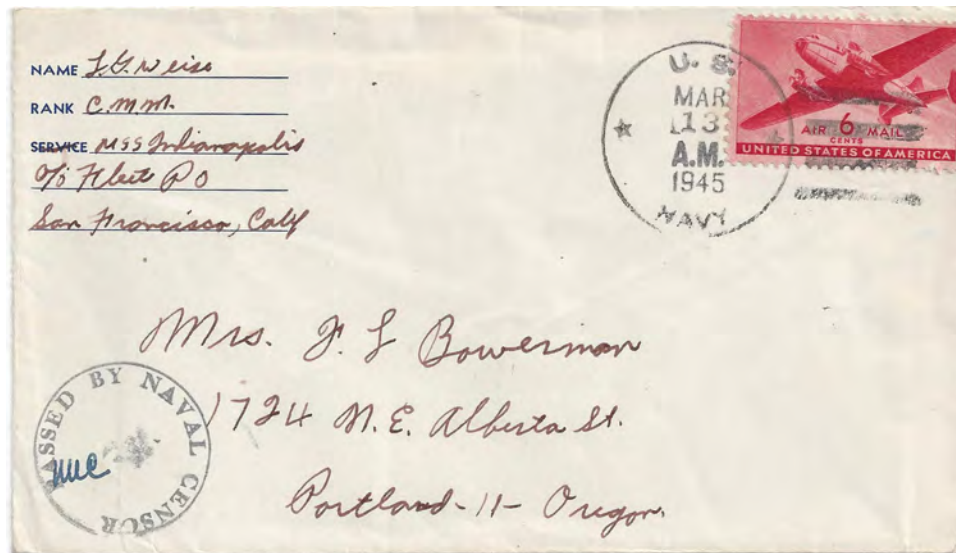


Figure 3: From a sailor aboard the USS Indianapolis, posted 13 March 1945. U.S. Navy censored. The sender, chief machinist mate L.G. Weiss, was not aboard the ill fated ship in July, and survived the war.

**Transport of “Little Boy” to the Pacific:** On the same day of the Trinity Test, the heavy cruiser, USS Indianapolis, CA-35, departed San Francisco under high security for Tinian Island in the northwest Pacific Ocean. Except for the Captain and one officer in charge, the crew was unaware of the special cargo consisting of enriched uranium components being transported for the “Little Boy” atomic bomb. Upon the ship’s return voyage to Leyte, on 30 July 1945 it was torpedoed and sunk in the Philippine Sea by a Japanese submarine. Of the 1,100 crewmen aboard, approximately 900 men escaped into the water, but only 317 survived the five-day shark infested ocean ordeal due to a much delayed rescue resulting from a tragic failure in communications.



Figure 4: Posted 28 April 1945 from Wendover Field, Utah. Sender Lieutenant Fred J. Olivi was the copilot on “Bockscar”, the B-29 that on 9 August, 1945 dropped the second atomic bomb, on Nagasaki.

**Pilot Training:** Under strict secrecy, a select group of Army Air Corps personnel known as the 509th Composite Group was activated on 17 December 1944. The pilots, under the command of Colonel Paul Tibbets, began bombing training in a remote desert location near Wendover, Utah to fly modified B-29 bombers in preparation for carrying the first atomic bombs.

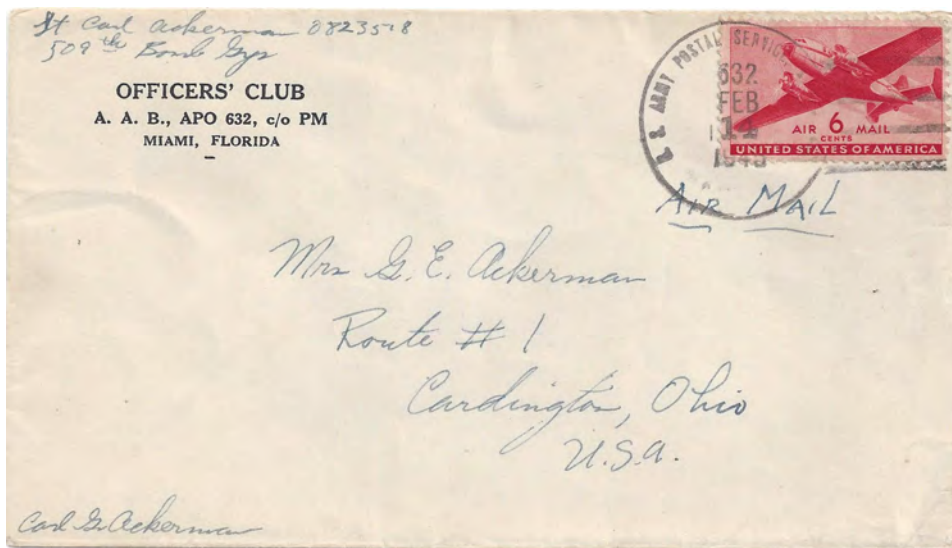


Figure 5: 14 Feb. 1945 cover from APO 632, sent by Lieutenant Paul Ackerman, a member of the 509th Composite Group, whose pilots were undergoing high altitude bombing training over waters near Batista Field, Cuba.

**Tinian Island**, in the northern Mariana Islands, became the world's largest airfield in 1945 whose strategic location enabled almost daily aerial bombing of Japan. Following capture from the Japanese, the entire northern end was converted into runways to accommodate the entire 313th Bombardment Wing of Boeing Superfortress B-29 bombers. In May 1945 the 509th composite group was transferred to Tinian. Independent and secret from all affiliated military units on the island, it consisted of 1,767 military personnel, and 15 B-29 and five C-54 aircraft.

Figure 6: Posted 30 June 1945 from Tinian Island (APO 247). Sent by Lt. Fred J. Olivi, copilot on the B-29 "Bockscar" on the Nagasaki mission.



**Nagasaki Target:** Nagasaki was not the initial target for the deployment of the third atomic bomb, called "Fat Man". But weather obscured the target over Kokura and the alternate city of Nagasaki was bombed instead. The delays wasted precious aviation fuel, and the plane was unable to return to distant Tinian. Instead the B-29 made an emergency landing at closer Okinawa with one engine shut down and the fuel gauges reading zero.





Figure 7: Posted 7 July 1945 (APO 247 - Tinian) from Staff Sergeant George R. Caron, tail gunner on the B-29 "Enola Gay" that flew the Hiroshima Mission.

**Photographing Hiroshima:** Sgt. George R. Caron was an amateur photographer and with a small camera took the only surviving photo of the atomic mushroom cloud over Hiroshima. Caron's photo was released to the news services and seen all over the world. The original photo includes his handwritten signature "George R. Caron tail gunner - Enola Gay Hiroshima 6 Aug. 1945."



Figure 8: Posted at Tokyo Bay, where the Japanese formal surrender took place on 2 Sept. 1945 on board the Battleship USS *Missouri*. U.S. Navy cancel and "Tokyo Bay" cachet from USS *Siriana*, AKA-43, an amphibious cargo attack ship.

**Tokyo Bay:** In a massive show of force, naval ships of the U.S., Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand began assembling near Tokyo Bay during the last week of August 1945. Almost 300 battleships, destroyers, tenders, hospital ships and minesweepers awaited their turn to sail through the mine fields guarding the entrance to Tokyo Bay. The surrender itself, conducted by General Douglas MacArthur, took place on 2 September 1945 aboard the battleship USS *Missouri*. Several U.S. ships with postal facilities prepared their own cachets for the event, most of them dated between 29 August and 25 September 1945.





No. 84 Winter 2019

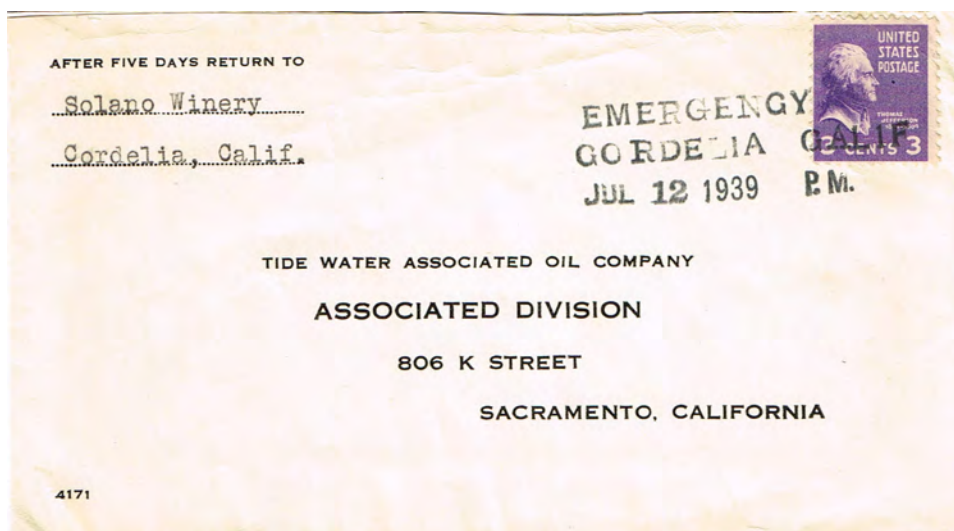
# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
lfiset@outlook.com

## **Provisional Canceled from Post Office Destroyed by Fire**

by Albert "Chip" Briggs



*Figure 1:* Cover and reverse-side advertising label from Solano Winery in Cordelia, California bearing a cancellation produced by a provisional device used after destruction of the town post office from fire.

Initially named Bridgeport in honor of the city in Connecticut, the town was renamed Cordelia in the early 1850's after the wife of clipper ship captain Robert Waterman. After Benicia, it is the second oldest town in Solano, California and is located just northeast of San Francisco. Grape growers and farmers were some of the earliest inhabitants. Today, Cordelia is practically a neighborhood of Fairfield.

On June 22, 1939, fire visited its wrath upon Cordelia. As reported in the *Santa Cruz Evening News* of that same day, the town's six



principal buildings, including the post office, were destroyed in a blaze that began shortly

after 3:00 AM. Four rural fire departments were required to finally bring it under control.

The only business district structures to survive were a hardware store and a dance hall. No mention was made of any injuries. The June 23, 1939 issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle* estimated the damage at \$50,000 and reported that citizens planned to rebuild immediately. The June 24, 1939 edition of the *Sacramento Bee* (Figure 2) reported that a temporary post office had been established in the Cordelia Fire House by Postmaster Aletha Erickson.

As part of her efforts to maintain mail service, Postmaster Erickson devised a temporary cancelling device to be used on mail from Cordelia until replaced by standard equipment. Figure 1 illustrates a first class cover mailed from the Solano Winery to an oil company in Sacramento bearing a cancellation from the provisional device. It shows a three line handstamp with EMERGENCY at top, CORDELIA CALIF in the second line, and date along with A.M. or P.M. in the bottom line. This example is dated almost 3 weeks after the fire.

How long this temporary cancellation was in use is currently not known. One would expect the canceling devices of the post office to be replaced well before rebuilding of the post office itself and the period of use of the temporary device to be fairly limited.

Thanks to Ken Lawrence and Len Piskiewicz for assistance in locating newspaper resources.



Figure 2: *Sacramento Bee*, June 24, 1939.

## Airmail Return Receipts

by Bob Hohertz

Until recently few examples of airmail return receipts bearing Prexie postage have been reported. Tony Wawrukiewicz wrote in his U.S. Domestic Postal Rates book: "At present I'm aware of five examples for the 1954 Liberty series, but only one example for the 1938 Presidential series." Here I show two examples of the latter.

The return receipt in Figure 1 was mailed prior to the initiation of the airmail postcard rate on January 1, 1949 so required airmail letter rate postage. Not only that, but the original registered letter with return receipt requested

was sent from Los Angeles to Hawaii, so the airmail return receipt postage required a full 20 cents.

The registered letter was mailed from Los Angeles. But we don't know when it was mailed and therefore can't tell if it traveled by air or sea. It was delivered on December 18, 1941, and the airmail return receipt entered the mail stream via the provisional Information Control Board (I.C.B.) censorship unit next day. Examiners would have seen at a glance what it was and passed it quickly. If censorship ran it through quickly, it might have gone on

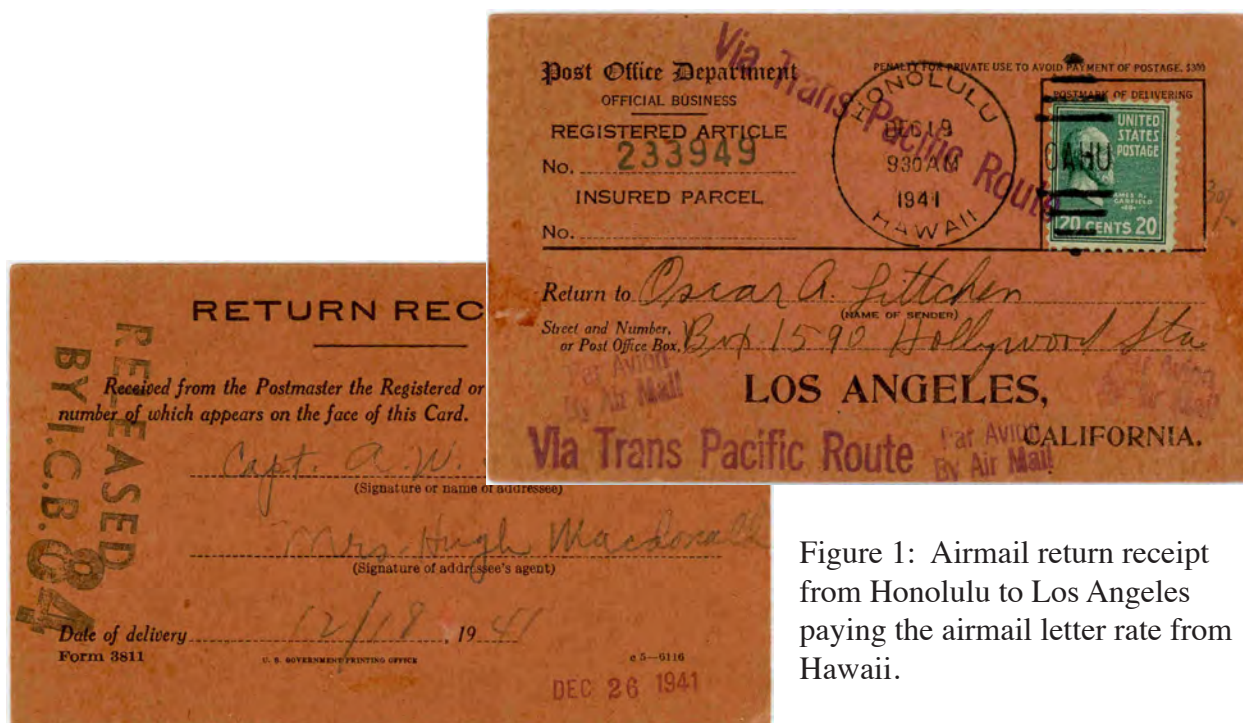


Figure 1: Airmail return receipt from Honolulu to Los Angeles paying the airmail letter rate from Hawaii.



Figure 2: Airmail return receipt from the Baltimore IRS office to Guam

one of the first regular eastbound flights from Hawaii after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The stamped date of DEC 26 1941 on the reverse side likely means it was back in Los Angeles by then.

The more benign return receipt illustrated in

Figure 2 acknowledges a registered letter sent to the I.R.S. from Guam in September 1955. It bears the 4-cent airmail postcard rate.

These two items add to the number of Prexie airmailed return receipts. Surely others exist worthy of sharing with *Prexie Era* readers.



## Civilian Public Service Camp Mail: a Follow-Up

by Stephen L. Suffet

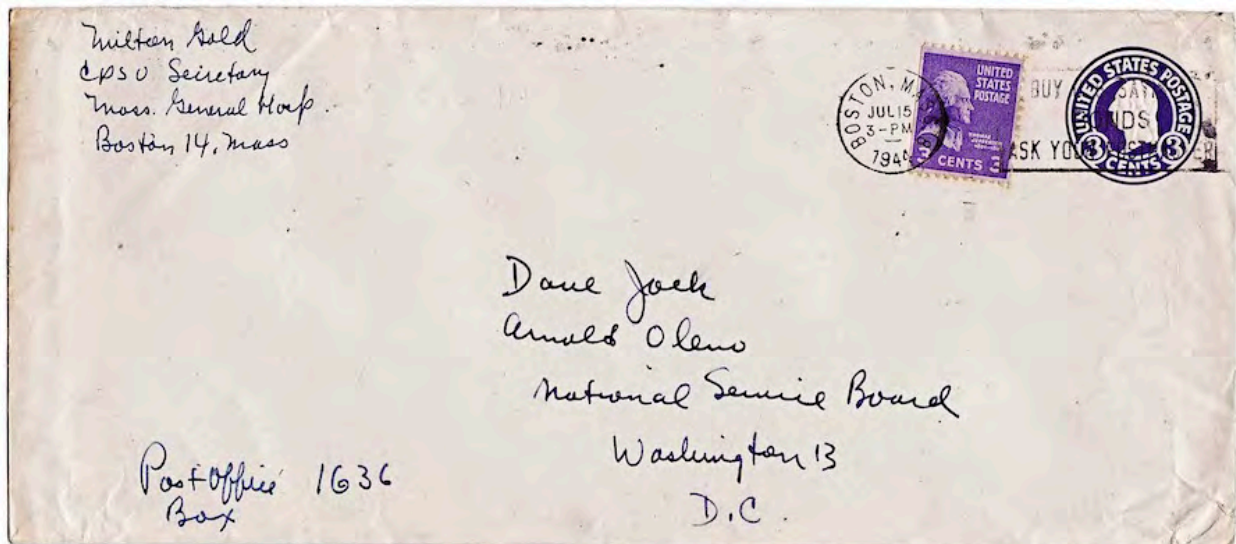


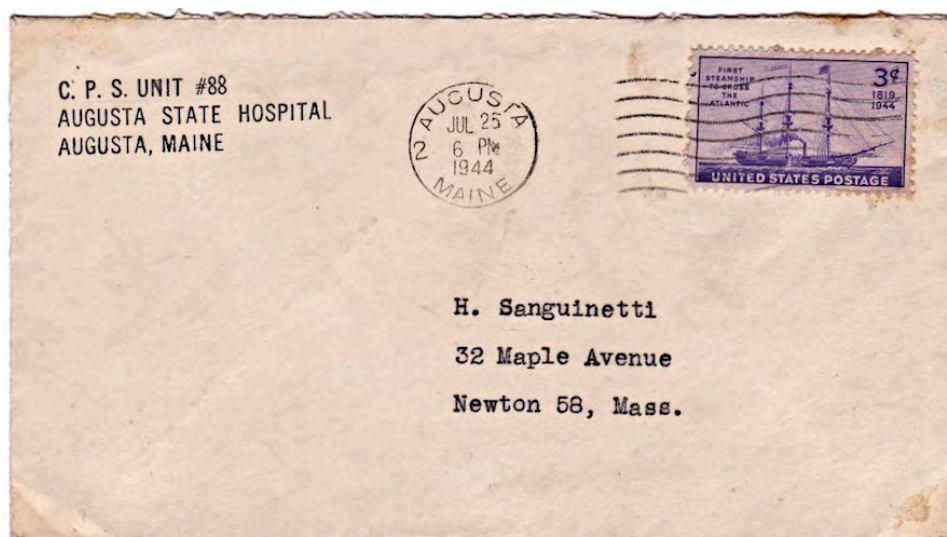
Figure 1: From the Secretary of the Civilian Public Service Unit (“CPSU”) at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. July 15, 1944. Although not indicated in the return address, this hospital was one of thirty-seven sites of CPS Unit No. 115 scattered throughout the country. Men who volunteered for this detached unit, administered by the Brethren Service Committee, participated in various medical and nutritional research studies. Addressed to the National Service Board [for Religious Objectors] in Washington, D.C. 6 cents postage = double 3 cents per ounce letter rate.

In Issue No. 83 of *The Prexie Era* I showed a cover mailed from Civilian Public Service Camp No. 8 for conscientious objectors, located near Marietta, Ohio. I wrote that during the period from 1941 to 1947, in lieu of military service, “local Selective Service boards granted nearly 12,000 men the opportunity to do ‘work of national importance under civilian direction.’ Of these, approximately 2,000 worked as attendants or aides in mental hospitals, while the remaining 10,000 were assigned to one of the 152 Civilian Public Service camps scattered throughout the USA and Puerto Rico.”

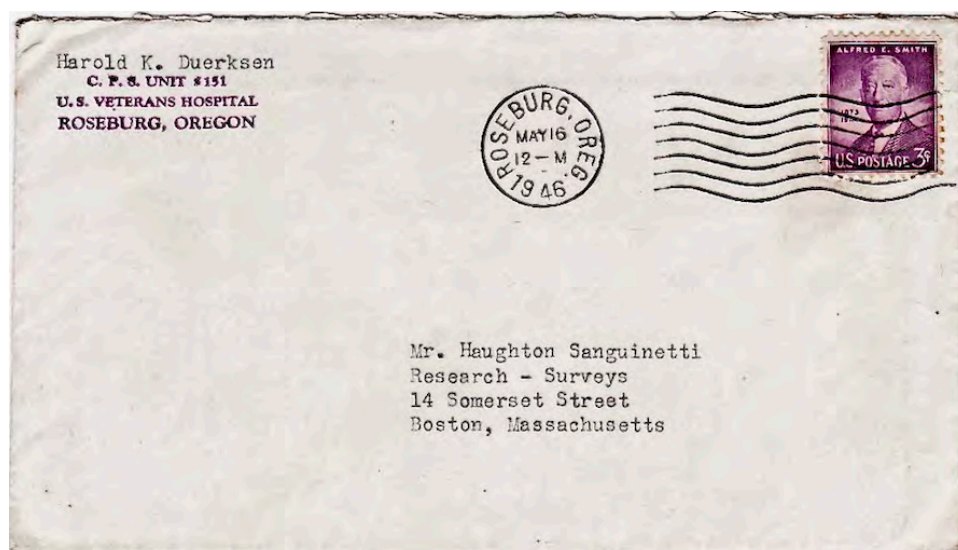
That statement is not entirely accurate. In reality, all of the nearly 12,000 men who served in the Civilian Public Service program were initially assigned to work camps, where they were not paid but had to provide for their own

maintenance. Of that number, approximately 2,000 were later given the opportunity to voluntarily leave the camps and work in public institutions that were severely understaffed. Most of the 2,000 went to work in state mental hospitals, but some volunteered to work in state training schools for the mentally retarded, state reformatories for youthful offenders, veterans hospitals, or other institutions. A small number served as human subjects for medical or nutritional research studies conducted in university or hospital settings.

While no longer confined to camps, those 2,000 men were housed in so-called CPS detached units within the institutions where they worked. Each detached unit was administered by a religious organization, almost always affiliated with one of the historic peace churches such as



*Figure 2:* From CPS Unit No. 88 at Augusta State Hospital in Maine. July 25, 1944. The Brethren Service Committee administered the detached unit in this state mental hospital.

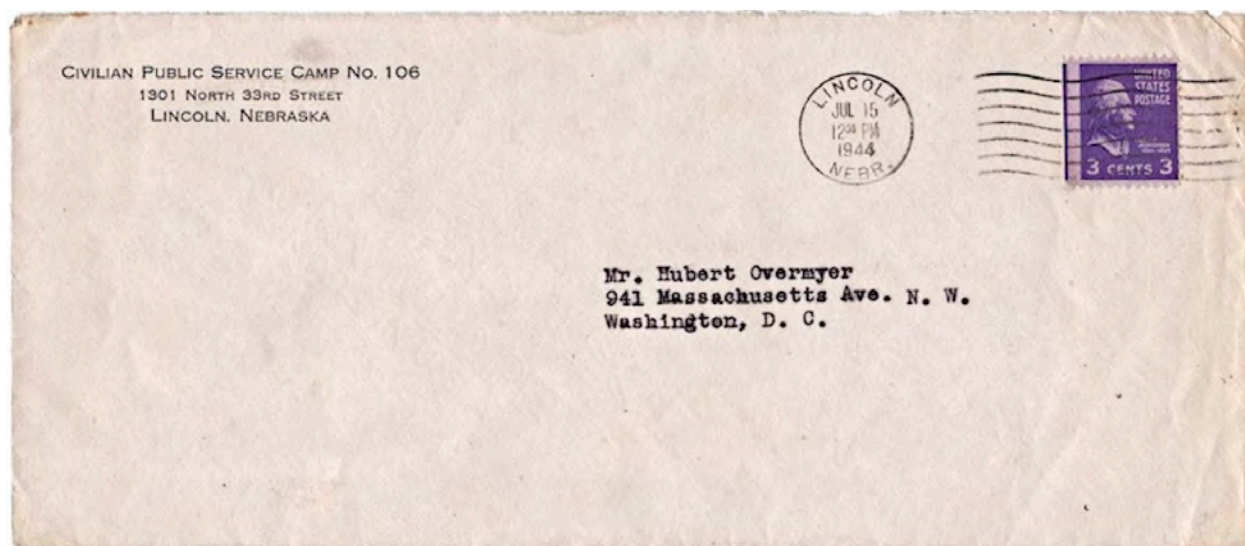


*Figure 3:* From CPS Unit No. 151 at the U.S. Veterans Hospital in Roseburg, Oregon. May 16, 1946. This detached unit, administered by the Mennonite Central Committee, opened in January 1946, well after the war ended. Nevertheless, both the military draft and the CPS program remained in effect through March 1947.

the Mennonites, the Brethren, or the Religious Society of Friends. To leave the unit when off-duty, a conscientious objector had to obtain a pass from the unit administrator, just as a CPS camp assignee had to do when he wanted to leave camp. The “152 Civilian Public Service camps” stated above represent the total number

of both camps and detached units.

My own recent research shows that oft-cited total of 152 is incorrect. The Selective Service System did in fact assign the CPS camps and units numbers 1 through 151, and it also assigned one of the very first camps the letter A,



*Figure 4:* From CPS Unit No. 106 at the University of Nebraska Agriculture Experiment Station in Lincoln. July 15, 1944. Although the return address says “Civilian Public Service Camp No. 106,” this was actually a detached unit administered by the Mennonite Central Committee. It was not a camp.

so the total appears to add up to 152. However, six of those camps or units (Nos. 38, 65, 96, 99, 101, and 145) never became operational, so that brings the total down to 146. Even that number is not accurate, since a few of the camps and many of the detached units had multiple sites. CPS Unit No. 115, for example, had thirty-seven sites scattered throughout the country. It was the unit that provided CPS volunteers for medical and nutritional research studies. Should it be counted as one unit or as thirty-seven? You can see the problem.

It will take further study to find the true number of CPS camps and units, but my best estimate is that it will prove to be somewhere around 220. Until then, for the record we can say that 146 CPS camps and units became operational, with the understanding that some camps and many detached units had multiple sites.

One major benefit of working in a detached unit rather than a camp was that the employing institution generally paid for the conscientious objector’s maintenance expenses. Any additional wages, however, ultimately went to the United States Treasury. In a few units,

however, the men were each allowed a small stipend ranging from \$2.50 to \$15 per month.

A cover from a CPS detached unit can usually be identified as such because it has a CPS unit number rather than a camp number in the return address. Sometimes, however, it simply has a CPS number with neither the word “Camp” nor “Unit.” A handful of detached units, nevertheless, used the word “Camp” in their return addresses. Fortunately, the return address from a detached unit nearly always included the name of the institution. Figures 1 through 3 are all examples. Figure 4, however, is an exception. Although the return address says “Civilian Public Service Camp No. 106,” and although no institution is indicated, the cover was actually from the CPS detached unit based at the University of Nebraska Agriculture Experiment Station in Lincoln, NE.

For philatelists interested in Civilian Public Service mail, information about the CPS camps and units can be found on-line at <http://civilianpublicservice.org/camps/> and at several other websites.



## Special Delivery Stamps during the Early Prexie Era

by Louis Fiset

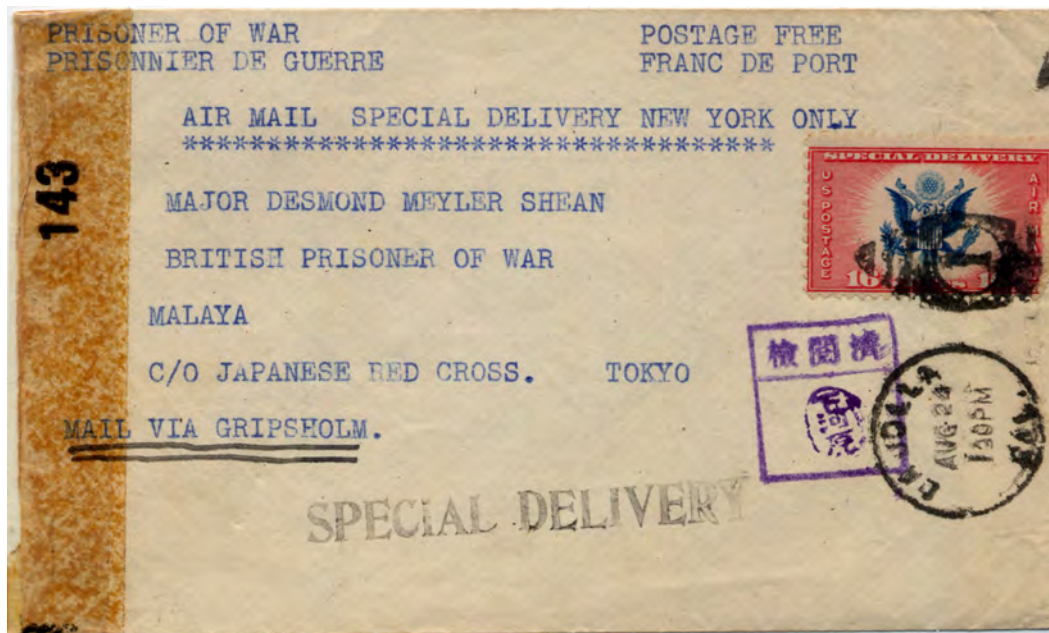


Figure 1: Letter for a British POW held in Malaya, posted in California on 24 August 1943, and sent via air mail special delivery in order to reach the *Gripsholm* prior to its departure from New York Harbor on 3 September.

In considering stamps of the Prexie Era, often overlooked are two workhorse adhesives that came into being prior to the beginning of the Era, but received heavy use throughout the first six years of the Prexie series, including most of World War II. The 10-cent rotary special delivery stamp appeared 17 November 1927 and remained in use until the 13-cent value replaced it on 30 October 1944 when the special delivery fee for first class matter went up the next day.

Similarly, the bicolored air post special delivery stamp, issued 10 February 1936, saw continued use until 6 March 1944 when the one ounce airmail rate for first class mail went from six to eight cents. Unlike the special delivery stamp, this definitive was not replaced.

This article illustrates two unusual World War II uses of these stamps. Both involve prisoner of war mail and the diplomatic exchange ship,

*M.S. Gripsholm*.

The Swedish cruise ship, *Gripsholm*, was in service to the U.S. State Department as a repatriation ship from 1942 to 1946, returning to the motherland interned civilians and wounded POWs in exchange for equal numbers held in enemy hands.

The ship completed two exchanges with Japan, rendezvousing with Japanese ships at neutral Portuguese ports. Large volumes of bagged mail for POWs and repatriating civilians were transported on the second voyage, which left New York harbor on 3 September 1943 and returned there on 3 December.

The letter in Figure 1 was carried to the exchange site at Mormugao, Goa on the outbound trip, and the postcard in Figure 2 on the return voyage.

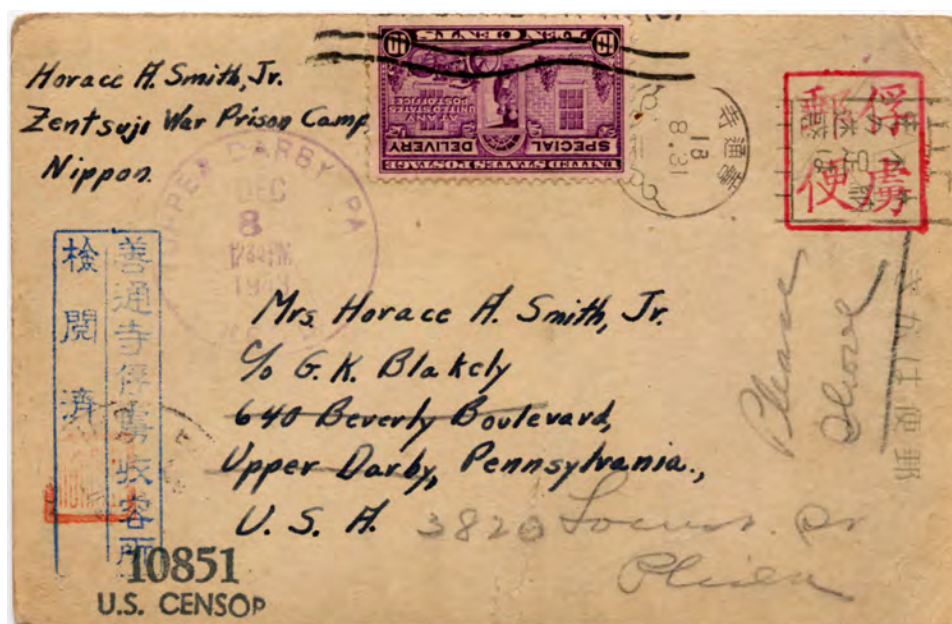


Figure 2: Postcard from a U.S. POW held in Japan to his wife in the U.S. Postmarked 31 August 1943. Transferred from a Japanese exchange ship to *Gripsholm* at Mormugao, Goa, at the start of the return voyage to New York. Remailed to the addressee at Philadelphia by special delivery.

This second voyage was well publicized in the print media, although the sailing date wasn't determined until the last minute. Therefore, writers wishing to communicate with loved ones were encouraged to send letters to New York as soon as possible. The cover in Figure 1 was sent from LaJolla, California. Taking no chances of missing the sailing, the writer sent the letter via airmail, paying an additional fee for special delivery service to the ship berthed at New York. Censor markings indicating censorship at the New York (POW Unit #143) censor station, and again, by Japanese censors in Asia, confirm the letter reached the ship on time.

Only two covers involving *Gripsholm* mail are known to the writer bearing the air mail special delivery stamp. The other resided for years in Hideo Yokota's stellar Air Mail Special Delivery exhibit.

The postcard in Figure 2 was postmarked 31 August 1943 (Showa 18), in time to reach the Japanese exchange ship at Yokohama, which

sailed on 14 September and rendezvoused with *Gripsholm* at Mormugao. There, repatriates and mail were exchanged. The postcard was off loaded at New York on 3 December, censored, and delivered to Upper Darby, Pennsylvania on 8 December.

By now the addressee, the POW's wife, had relocated to Philadelphia. The card was then remailed with special delivery service demanded and received at Philadelphia the same day. A manuscript marking in pencil reads, "Please share."

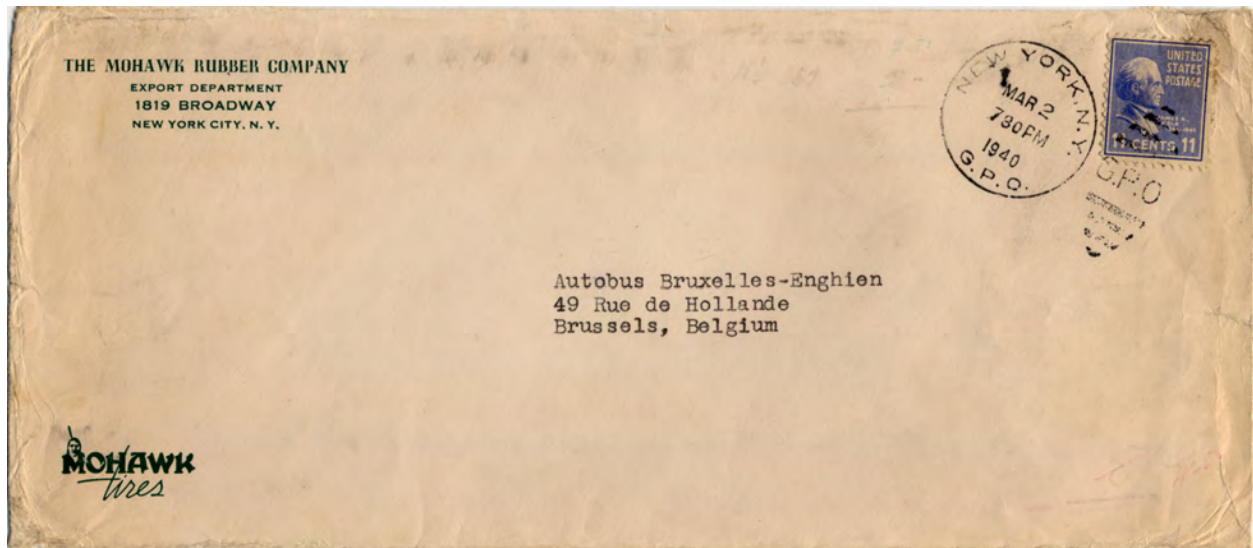
During World War II mail to and from POWs and their loved ones occurred infrequently, if at all. These two pieces of POW mail illustrate the sense of urgency to communicate when opportunities arose.

## Reference

Louis Fiset. *Detained, Interned, Incarcerated: U.S. Enemy Noncombatant Mail in World War II*. (Chicago: Collectors Club of Chicago, 2010), Chapter 6 - "M.S. Gripsholm and the Diplomatic Exchanges with Japan."

# Solo Prexie to Belgium during the Phoney War

by Art Farnsworth



*Figure:* Business correspondence weighing three ounces and paid with a solo 11-cent Prexie.

The cover illustrated here contained business correspondence to Brussels and bears a solo 11-cent Prexie paying the three ounce international letter rate of 11 cents (5¢ + 3¢ + 3¢).

The item was postmarked March 2, 1940. At this time World War II was seven months old, but German forces had not yet undertaken additional land invasions since it conquered Poland at the outbreak of the war. The period between September 1939 and May 1940 is known as “The Phoney War.”

The next day, March 3, Hitler finalized the date for the invasion of Norway and Denmark. On that same day Soviet Union troops began attacks on Finland’s second city, and eight days later concluded an armistice between the two countries.

Despite the war going on, this cover bears no evidence of censorship. At this time the regular route of ordinary mail to Belgium went through Great Britain or France. Both countries were

censoring mail at that time, although not at a 100 percent rate.

More, in mid-January 1940 British censorship established a Bermuda censor station to examine air and surface transatlantic mail. However, censorship activity was sporadic until mid-1941 and during that time examiners focused primarily on air mail. Thus, it is not surprising this early war cover escaped examination.

German armies invaded the low countries on May 10, 1940 bringing an end to the so-called Phoney War. For a brief time mail from the U.S. to Belgium was suspended, but then resumed until Germany declared war on the U.S. on December 11, 1941.

The Belgian government returned to power on September 8, 1944 after the liberation of Brussels by Allied troops four days earlier. Resumption of mail (postal card) service to Belgium began on November 23, 1944.



# Marine Aircraft Squadron Losses at Pearl Harbor

by Jeffrey Shapiro



During the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor the Marine Aircraft Group 21 suffered seventeen deaths and the loss of all 21 of their aircraft. Two months after this devastation, the letter shown here was sent from the Communications Office of Group 21 at Pearl Harbor to Marine Corps headquarters, Washington, D.C. By then the 6-cent airmail concession rate for the military had been in effect for six weeks.

After Group 21's devastating losses, the rebuilt Squadron went on to fight at the Battles of Wake Island, Midway and Guadalcanal. By June 1943 the Squadron was fighting Japanese forces in the Solomon Islands, before moving on to Efate, a military base in Vanuatu.

At the end of the War, the Squadron was relocated to the Marine Corps Air Station in Miramar, California. There it was deactivated in April 1947.

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# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

No. 85 Spring 2019

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
lfiset@outlook.com

## Mail to Displaced Persons (DP) Camps Following World War II

by Jeffrey Shapiro



*Figure 1:* Airmail correspondence addressed to Rosalie Camp, a displaced persons facility in the British Zone of occupied Germany providing aid and shelter to non-German refugees.

This article shows two pieces of mail addressed to displaced persons in the British zone during the occupation of Germany following the end of World War II. Both bear Prexie frankings paying the unified airmail rate to Europe that went into effect in November 1946. Resumption of letter mail service to Germany began on April 1, 1946, with airmail service

following on August 28 of the same year.

Building on the experience by the U.S. government after World War I, in June 1943 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt proposed that the Allies ("The United Nations") assist the International Committee of the Red Cross and other private organizations in providing aid to



Figure 2: Airmail to the DP camp at Camp Grohn, in Bremen, where 5,000 refugees would await ship transport to North America.

displaced persons (DP) in areas liberated from the Axis Powers. The DP term was coined by military personnel to identify war refugees.

With overwhelming destruction from the War, it became obvious that such private organizations could not handle the daunting task alone. Following multilateral negotiations, in November 1943 44 nations met to establish the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). Interestingly, UNRRA used the term “United Nations” before the United Nations was officially chartered in April 1945.

With an estimated 6,000,000 displaced persons in Germany alone, UNRRA began operations in liberated areas of the country in the Fall of November 1944. This followed an agreement with General Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF).

After SHAEF was dissolved in the Summer of 1945, military commanders took over supervision in the American, French and British Occupation Zones, providing aid to

refugees who could not or would not return to their homelands.

The Soviet Union did not participate in this program because of its policy to return displaced persons to their homelands no matter the consequences.

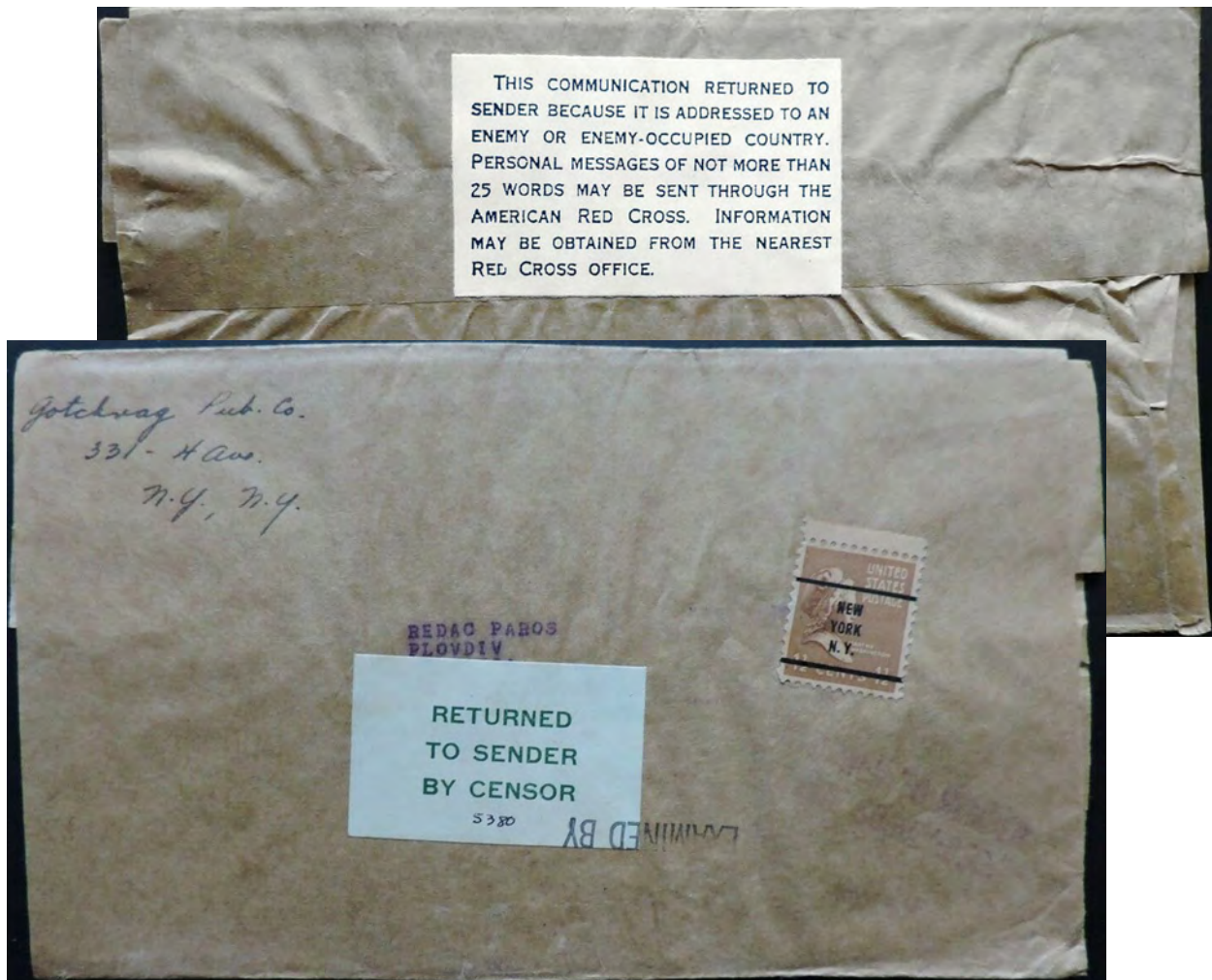
Approximately 900 UNRRA refugee camps were established in Western Germany, 440 of them in the British Zone, location of the major cities of Bremen, Cologne and Hamburg. Managed by the British Army of the Ruhr (BAOR), here DP camps provided essential services to non-German exiles from Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Yugoslavia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Because of continuing anti-Semitism, separate camps were established for Jewish survivors of the Holocaust.

Camp Rosalie (Figure 1) was located on the outskirts of the city of Brunswick. This DP camp sheltered approximately 1,000 Polish refugees. Camp Grohn (Figure 2) was located in the port city of Bremen, a staging area for 5,000 emigres leaving for North America.



## A Fake (Non-)Enclosure Form

by Dann Mayo



*Figure 1: A legitimate newspaper wrapper properly franked, censored, and returned to sender, but with a bogus, facsimile “enclosure slip” glued on the back. Such wrappers continue to be offered on eBay.*

Figure 1 illustrates a lot that sold on eBay on January 29, 2019 for \$9.99 plus postage. In the early 2000s I was offered (at \$1 a pop) a group of similar wrappers to religious organizations in Eastern Europe with the illustrated “enclosure form” on the back. I decided they were bogus and tried to corner the market to keep them off of it. No such luck -- I gave up after buying 30+ of them. They still show up on eBay via Al Tohn or his son, and others. (I know Al to be a straight shooter, and guess he brought his son up the same way. I don’t think either produced

these fake “forms.” Besides, while I don’t remember the name of the seller, I am certain it was someone new to me. Al would never have offered them so cheaply, anyway.)

The following three tip offs provide evidence this particular enclosure form is not legitimate:

- The forms were produced on a laser printer (you can scrape off the letters).
- The paper is wrong. They appear on bright white modern paper, much less porous than the paper used for World War II enclosure

forms.

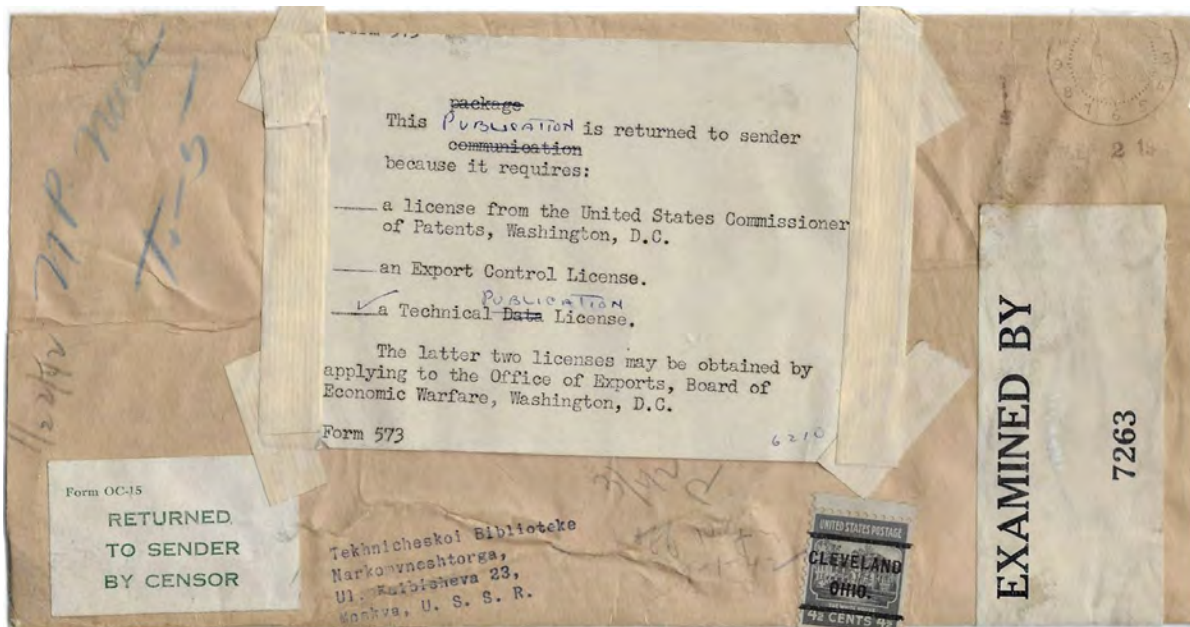
- They appear stuck on with some sort of paste (based on the example that I lifted, apparently flour and water), while the censors of the day would have used tape (most likely paper tape -- see Figure 2) to affix an un-gummed form.

These fake forms were copied from a legitimate World War II form, specifically Carter<sup>1</sup> Type C12.2 with the bottom cut off. Russ illustrated an example of the fake as Figure 14 on page 19 of his book. When I brought the information above to his attention, Russ responded:

As to the Figure 14: I picked up several of these from Tohn many years ago because of the different “Return to Sender” handstamps. In taking a close look at them, I see what you mean. I can’t think of a “printing process” from the 1940s that would have the “ink” laying on top of the paper. I will change the info in my files and the book.

What I find strange, given how little I had to pay for my examples (which I no longer own), is that everything on the face of these wrappers – stamp, postmark, censor handstamp (and service suspended handstamp on most of my examples) and the returned to sender by censor form – are, in my opinion, legitimate. It appears these wrappers were sent by a printing firm in early 1942 to religious addressees in Europe. I am guessing this was some sort of quarterly publication, and that the previous edition had gone through while the U.S. was still a neutral country with ongoing postal connections to Axis-occupied territory. So, ignoring the garbage on the back of the wrapper (which I found to be not that hard to remove), you have a very nice reasonably priced Prexie item.

I have seen one example of an enclosure form used externally that I consider legitimate. See Figure 2, below. I have no documentation to prove this so am relying on gut instinct. Since this was one of my covers, it may be wishful thinking, but after over four decades of



*Figure 2: A wrapper with an un-enclosed enclosure form (the only usage I have seen that I consider legitimate; the usage makes sense, and the paper tape attaching it is consistent with that used supplementally on other US-censored covers), a non-resealing sealing tape (I have seen other examples of tapes used in lieu of handstamps on postcards and wrappers), and with a RTS label incorrectly applied (not over address, as with Carter’s Figure 14).*

collecting this stuff I have learned to trust my gut.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Figure 3: An enclosure slip applied externally on mail with no return address.

To avoid any misunderstanding, I should mention one instance of Office of Censorship forms routinely used on the outside of covers. Form 862 was placed on service suspended

mail for which there was no return address. These forms were printed on soft porous paper and are, in my experience, glued on the back of the covers so as to be un-removable.

Carter records two varieties ("Date\_\_\_\_\_" above and below other text, which may be the result of miss cutting). He also records a similar Form 852, which I have never seen.

<sup>1</sup> Carter, Russ W. *WWII US Censor Enclosure Slips and Return-to-Sender Labels*. (Military Postal History Society, 2010.)

*Editor's note:* I solicited this article from Dann because these bogus items continue to appear on eBay. As of this writing, one seller (**aztec-collectibles**) continues to list two of them for \$149 each despite my several requests that he redescribe or take them down.

### Unusual 13-Cent Surface/Airmail Rate



Kiyoshi Kashiwagi provides this scan of a cover with a solo 13-cent Prexie paying the 5-cent UPU rate with an additional 8 cents for airmail service within Japan. The cover was censored and returned from San Francisco because ocean mail to Asia ceased after November 4, 1941.



# Transatlantic, not Transpacific Route to Cameroon

by Louis Fiset



Figure 1: Airmail to Cameroon, West Africa with a directive for the transpacific route and airmail within Belgian Congo. [Steven M. Roth collection]

World War II Prexie era postal history offers many opportunities for collectors to acquire international covers bearing franking paying for combined surface/airmail service as well as air service with additional surcharges for within-country airmail. The 13-cent solo Prexie cover shown elsewhere in this issue provides an example of the former, while the one in this article attempts to show the latter.

This all-airmail cover to French Cameroon, postmarked February 24, 1941, bears 79 cents in Prexie adhesives, an odd rate for a World War II letter. But, given the typewritten and manuscript directives, the rate makes sense. The sender paid 70 cents for transpacific airmail service and an additional 9 cents for airmail service within Belgian Congo. The free French censorship at Cameroon confirms the letter reached its destination. So far, so good.

Several problems with this cover call into question whether it actually went on the prescribed route.

- Transpacific service likely would have included transit through Hong Kong and Cairo. At this time in the war, almost 100 percent of airmail letters passing through these cities bear censorship markings indicating the mail was opened or passed without examination. This cover bears only Free French censorship at its destination.
- The *Postal Bulletin* (PB 17698) identifies airmail service beginning May 23, 1939 at 50 cents per half ounce for transatlantic service to Europe and onward air dispatch to Ft. Lamy or Douala.
- From November 1, 1940 until December 2, 1941 air service to West Africa was not available (PB 18065A).

The unavailability of air service to West Africa affected 19 French, British, and Belgian colonies and protectorates as a result of the combined Axis control of Mediterranean airspace and suspension of Air France service. Thus, transatlantic airmail was carried by ship from Lisbon, while surface mail left from New

Figure 2: Airmail to French Equatorial Africa via Douala and Berbérati. By surface from Lisbon subsequent to transatlantic air service. Likely the same routing as the cover in Figure 1.



York. Figure 2 shows a piece of mail to French Equatorial Africa, via Douala, which paid the published rate of 50 cents per half ounce as indicated in *PB* 17698. Like the cover in Figure 1, this one received Free French censorship in Cameroon. The September 8, 1941 transit marking on the back indicates a transit time to its destination exceeding 100 days.

Had the cover in Figure 1 gone via the transpacific route, a more likely route would have taken it on the Horseshoe route all the way to Durban. Then, from Durban or Capetown by steamer to Douala.

More likely, the cover didn't go anywhere near the Pacific Ocean, but was dispatched by air from New York to Lisbon, and then onward by steamer and overland routes to its final destination.

Such routing would change with the initiation of FAM 22 service on December 2, 1941 via Leopoldville that enabled air service (at 60 cents per half ounce) to West Africa once again.

My thanks to Bill Forte, Steven M. Roth, and Ken Lawrence for help with this article.

TRANS-ATLANTIC AIR MAIL SERVICE—Continued		
Air mails for the countries in the preceding list prepaid at the rates indicated will be made up for air dispatch from Italy, to be carried by such onward air service as may be available.		
It appears that there is no air mail 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	Sierra Leone
French Guinea	Mauritania	Spanish Guinea
		Togoland
For air service to countries in East and South Africa, please see the items hereinafter stated under the heading "TRANS-PACIFIC AIR MAIL SERVICE."		
Mails may be sent by steamship to Europe and onward by air service where available to European countries, with payment of postage at the rate of 3 cents per half ounce in addition to the ordinary postage. Articles so sent should bear the "Par Avion—By Air Mail" label and be marked "By Air in Europe."		

"Foreign Airmail Service." Appendix to the *U.S. Postal Bulletin* of November 1, 1940 (*PB* 18065A), p. 3.

## Censorship on Domestic Mail to A German POW

by Jeffrey Shapiro



*Figure: Domestic censorship on German POW correspondence between family members. The Prexie franking was unnecessary.*

During World War II more than 425,000 German and Italian prisoners of war arrived by ship to the U.S. from the North Africa and European theaters of operation. They were held for the duration at more than 100 major military sites throughout the mainland. Outgoing POW correspondence back to the motherland on official letterform and postcard stationery has flooded the philatelic market in recent years, as has return correspondence on plain stationery.

Unusual is domestic correspondence to and from POWs held in the U.S. The figure above shows such an example. Despite this letter

being of domestic origin, all such mail was subject to censorship and inspected by POW Unit censors assigned to the New York censor station. This cover represents one of several types of domestic (mainland) mail subject to censorship during World War II.

Correspondence with POWs was not limited to relatives, but in this case the same last name suggests the two correspondents were related, providing yet additional interest to this cover.

Effective November 6, 1942 the free frank (PB 18513) was authorized on ordinary mail



to and from POWs (as well as civilian enemy detainees and internees) held in US camps and abroad. Thus, the franking on this letter was unnecessary.

Serial numbers assigned to POWs often identified where they were taken captive. A serial number beginning with 81G indicates the soldier was taken in North Africa, while 31G denotes capture in the European Theater. However, many POWs were not assigned serial numbers until they reached the U.S. and arrived at a POW camp. The country was divided into nine military districts, and POWs received IDs related to where they ended up. In this example, Obergefreiter (ie., PFC) Kemper was in District 7, a multistate region located in the midwest. 7WG stands for District 7, War Department, German POW.

The Fort Riley Military Reservation currently occupies 101,135 acres surrounding the Kansas (Kaw) River in North Central Kansas, and situated between Junction City and Manhattan. During WWII, Kansas became a center for military training where approximately 150,000 soldiers trained for combat at and around the installation. The state also housed about 8,000 POWs at two locations, near Salina and Concordia, most of them Germans from the North Afrika Korps. Fourteen smaller POW camps were established to relieve overcrowding around the state, including Fort Riley.

From December 1943 thru May 1946, 1,806 POWs were housed at Fort Riley, many of them employed outside the facility by area farmers prior to their repatriation, which began in September 1945.

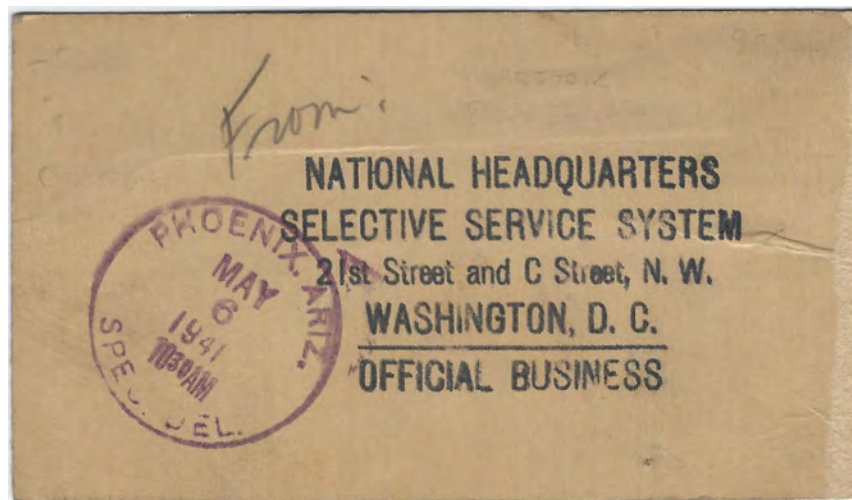
## Special Delivery Service for Non-First Class Matter

by Robert Schlesinger



Special delivery service in the United States began on October 1, 1885. Originally designed just for first class matter, the service expanded to non-first class matter exactly one year later, on October 1, 1886. The 10-cent fee for special delivery service was applied per piece, irrespective of class.

On April 18, 1925, things changed a little. The weight of the item to be delivered determined the fee. For an item weighing two pounds or less, the fee remained at 10 cents per item, for any class. For items weighing more than two, but less than 10 pounds, the fee went up to 15 cents per item. The highest fee was for items



weighing over 10 pounds. This fee was 20 cents per item.

This fee structure lasted a little over three years, at which time the class of the mailable item came into play. The new rates went into effect on July 1, 1928. First class matter had a lower fee schedule than non-first class mail. The 10-cent fee for first class matter weighing under two pounds remained the same, at 10 cents per delivery.

The 2-to-10 pound mail fee was raised (for the first time in 43 years!) to 20 cents. The heaviest items – over 10 pounds – would now cost 25 cents per delivery.

The special delivery fee for non-first class matter, however, went up higher. For a package weighing less than 2 pounds, the fee was raised to 15 cents. For packages weighing up to 10 pounds the fee went to 25 cents. The fee for packages exceeding 10 pounds now cost 35 cents.

This fee schedule remained in place until

November 1, 1944 when the fee for both first class and non-first class items weighing up to two pounds was raised to 13 and 17 cents, respectively. Many Prexie era collectors will recognize this day as the date many postal rates changed.

The figure provided here shows both sides of a tag and illustrates an interesting piece of postal history. The national headquarters of the Selective Service System, in Washington, D.C., sent out a package to its Phoenix, Arizona, office paying 35 cents for an item weighing more than 10 pounds. It was postmarked May 3, 1941 and received May 6, three days later. (Try getting that speedy service today!) The package may have contained pamphlets or other documents intended for prospective military inductees.

Make note that since the package was mailed at Washington D.C., ordinary postage was free, but the special delivery fee was not. The **Special Delivery/FEE PAID, 35 CENTS** hand stamp was applied at Washington, D.C.

### ***The Prexie Era Now Online***

This is a reminder that The United States Stamp Society has posted on its website a complete run of *The Prexie Era* newsletter, through Issue No. 72 (Winter 2016). It is available to USSS members. The run is searchable by year/issue, author, as well as by key words or topic.



No. 86 Summer 2019

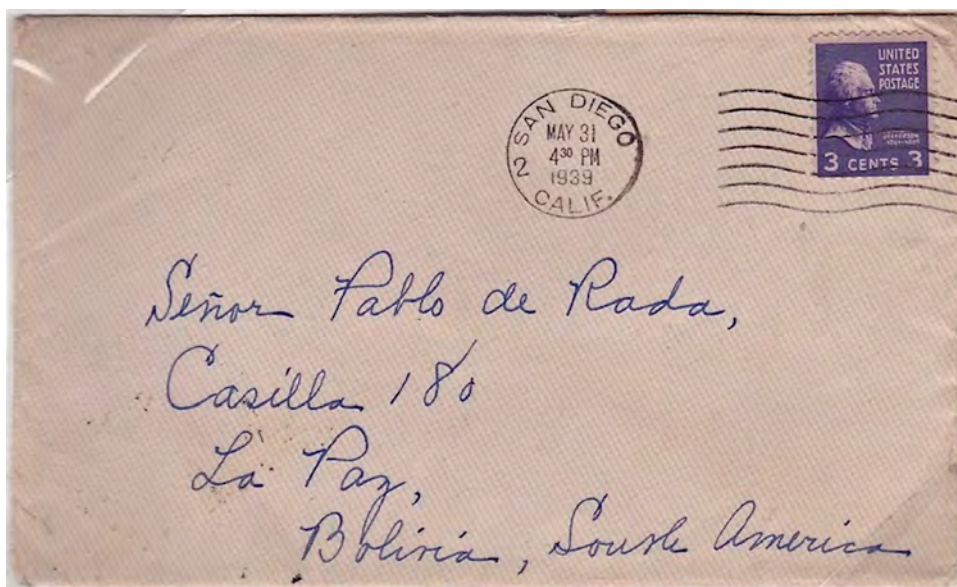
# *The Prexie Era*

Publication of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

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## **The 3-Cent PUAS Convention Letter Rate during the Prexie Era An Introduction with Illustrations**

by Stephen L. Suffet



*Figure 1:* 3-cent PUAS rate. San Diego, CA, to La Paz, Bolivia, May 31, 1939.

From before the United States Presidential Series was introduced in 1938 through the end of October 1953, the U.S. surface letter rate to member states of the Postal Union of Americas and Spain (PUAS) was 3 cents per ounce, the same as the U.S. domestic surface rate. This was in effect 2 cents per piece less than the general Universal Postal Union (UPU) surface letter rate, concurrently 5 cents for the first ounce plus 3 cents for each additional ounce.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1 shows a typical example of the 3-cent

PUAS rate on a 1939 cover sent from San Diego, California, to La Paz, Bolivia.

Philatelists often mistakenly refer to the 3-cent PUAS rate as a treaty rate. It is not. The proper term is convention rate because the United States established the rate under the terms of a convention, or more properly a series of conventions, but not a treaty. The difference is not purely semantic. A treaty is a legally binding international agreement that imposes certain obligations upon its parties.



In the United States, ratification of a treaty requires the advice and consent of the Senate. A convention is a document that states the rules, procedures, or actions that its signatories agree upon regarding a specific topic, but it does not necessarily carry the same force of law that a treaty does. Some conventions are in fact treaties, but the PUAS conventions are not among them. They did not carry the full force of law, and U.S. Presidents were able to ratify them without the advice and consent of the Senate.

What later became the PUAS was founded as a so-called restricted union within the UPU in 1911 at a regional postal congress held in Montevideo, Uruguay. Initially called the International Office of South American Posts, it was also known as the South American Postal Union. As either name implies, its only members were the countries of South America.<sup>2</sup>

At its congress held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1921, the South American Postal Union admitted the United States, Mexico, Cuba, and the independent nations of Central America. In so doing, it reconstituted itself as the Pan American Postal Union (PAPU). Other nations would join, including Spain, which did so in 1926. At its congress held in Madrid, Spain, in 1931, the PAPU changed its name to the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain. At that time its membership consisted of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Spain,<sup>3</sup> the United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

These twenty-three countries would constitute the PUAS membership throughout the 1938-1953 period that is the focus of this article. They comprised all the fully independent nations of the Americas and the Caribbean, as well as Canada, then a British Dominion. Newfoundland, also a British Dominion at the

time, was not a member. Nor were any of the British, French, or Dutch colonies and overseas territories in the Western Hemisphere.

Each congress of the PUAS and its predecessors produced a new convention that superseded any prior conventions.<sup>4</sup> The 1931 PUAS convention, which went into effect on March 1, 1932, contained the following provision:

#### Article 4

##### *Postage rates*

The postage rates of the domestic service of each country will govern in the relations of the countries which constitute the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain, except when said domestic postage rates are higher than those applicable to the correspondence destined for the countries of the Universal Postal Union, in which case the latter will govern.

This provision provided the basis for the 3-cent PUAS letter rate, although the United States “jumped the gun” by raising its PUAS convention rate for letters from 2 cents to 3 cents per ounce on April 1, 1932, while it waited until July 6, 1932, to do the same for the domestic letter rate. (The U.S. letter rate to Canada had already increased from 2 cents to 3 cents per ounce on September 1, 1931, but that was a little over two months before Canada joined the PUAS.)

This same provision appeared again as the first paragraph of Article 5 in the next three PUAS conventions, those of 1936, 1946, and 1950. It was, however, absent from subsequent PUAS conventions, beginning with the one adopted in 1955 in Bogota, Colombia. By that time the United States had already abolished its PUAS convention rate for letters, except to Canada and Mexico. Effective November 1, 1953, surface letters to PUAS countries, other than Canada and Mexico, were subject to the

same rate as letters to other UPU countries, 8 cents for the first ounce and 4 cents for each additional ounce. (At the same time the United States abolished its PUAS convention rate for postal and post cards, but that will be the subject of a separate article.)

Figures 2 through 10 show nine additional examples of the 3-cent PUAS letter rate used during the Prexie era.

Historical epilogue: At its 1990 congress held in Buenos Aires, the PUAS admitted Portugal to membership, and so it became what it is today, the Postal Union of the Americas, Spain, and Portugal (PUASP).

#### Footnotes

1. Rate information throughout this article is from *U.S. International Postal Rates, 1872-1996*, by Anthony S. Warukiewicz and Henry W. Beecher (Portland, OR: Cama Publishing Company, 1996).
2. Historical highlights of the PUAS, now the PUASP, and its predecessors can be found in Spanish at: <https://www.upaep.int/upaep/la-organizacion> (Spanish is the official language of the organization.)
3. According to *The Postal Bulletin* of March 12, 1932 (No. 15853) and of March 14, 1932 (No. 15854), Spain also included Andorra, the Balearic Islands, the Canary Islands, and certain Spanish possessions in Northern Africa. See those issues of *The Postal Bulletin* for the complete list. *The Postal Bulletin* of November 12, 1937 (No. 17312) added Rio de Oro, Spanish Guinea, and the Spanish Zone of Morocco. It also specified that Andorra meant Andorra via Spain. During the 1938-1953 era, therefore, the 3-cent PUAS rate would apply to letters going to any of those destinations. The 3-cent PUAS rate would continue to apply to letters going to Canada or to Mexico through July 31, 1958. The 3-cent domestic letter rate continued through that date as well.
4. The PAPU and PUAS conventions can be found online at several sites. Unfortunately the author has not been able to find them all in one place. The earlier ones can also be found in print in the State Department series, *Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States of America 1776-1949*, compiled by Charles I. Bevans. The series has been digitized by the Library of Congress and can be found online at: <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans.php> The later conventions can be found in print in another State Department series, *United States Treaties and Other International Agreements*. The Library of Congress has not yet digitized the series, although some volumes can be found through Google Books online.



Figure 2: 3-Cent PUAS rate. Used to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from the S.S. *Argentina*, an American passenger ship with New York and Buenos Aires Sea Post facilities on board. July 13, 1941.

Figure 3: 3-Cent PUAS rate. Chicago, IL, to Montevideo, Uruguay. September 21, 1941. 5-centesimo Uruguayan stamp accounted for the fee collected from the addressee for a letter addressed to Lista de Correos (General Delivery).



Figure 4: 3-cent PUAS rate. Washington, DC, to Tartagal, Salta, Argentina. March 7, 1942. U.S. Wartime censorship. Government Printing Office official business usage. Federal government agencies, other than the Post Office Department, were required to pay postage on official mail to foreign countries other than Canada or Mexico.

There are two towns named Tartagal in Argentina, one in the Province of Salta and the other in the Province of Santa Fe.



Figure 5: 3-Cent PUAS rate. Frederiksted, U.S. Virgin Islands, to Cap Haitien, Haiti. April 11, 1942. U.S. and Haitian wartime censorship.

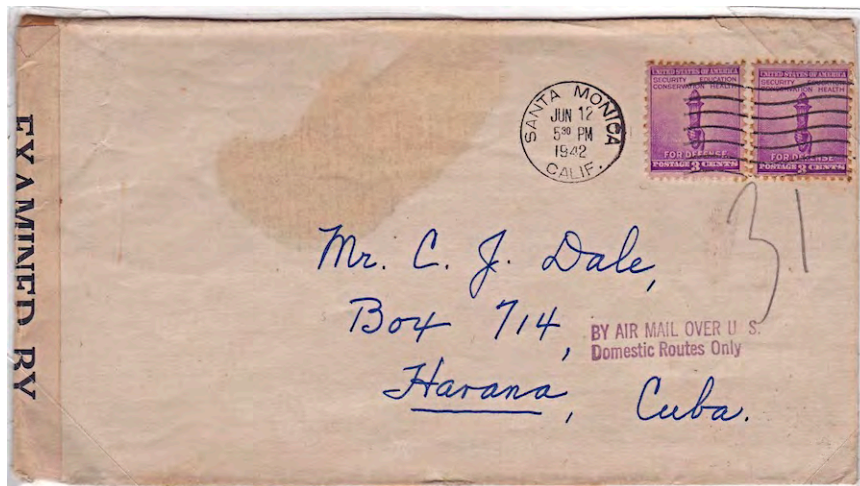


Figure 6: 6 cents = 3-cent PUAS rate + 3-cent per ounce surcharge for airmail service within the continental United States to the exchange office. Santa Monica, CA, to Havana, Cuba. June 12, 1942. U.S. wartime censorship.

PARTI

Figure 7a, 7b: 3-cent PUAS rate. Washington, DC, to San Antonio Abad, Ibiza, Balearic Islands. December 31, 1943. Ibiza, misspelled "Iviza" on the cover, is one of the Balears or Balearic Islands, a Spanish possession in the Mediterranean Sea. U.S. and Spanish wartime censorship. Returned to sender, addressee gone, as per "PARTI" auxiliary marking on reverse.







Figure 8: 3-cent PUAS rate. Carried by diplomatic pouch from the U.S. State Department in Washington, DC, to the American Consulate in Cali, Colombia. December 20, 1944. This was a personal rather than an official business article, so the postage had to be paid, even though it was carried outside the mail. Since it was carried in a diplomatic pouch, it was not subject to wartime censorship.

Figure 9: 3-cent PUAS rate. Palisade, NJ, to Quito, Ecuador. December 1947 (day illegible). Marked "FRAUDULENT Mail to this address returned by order of Postmaster General" and returned to sender without being dispatched.

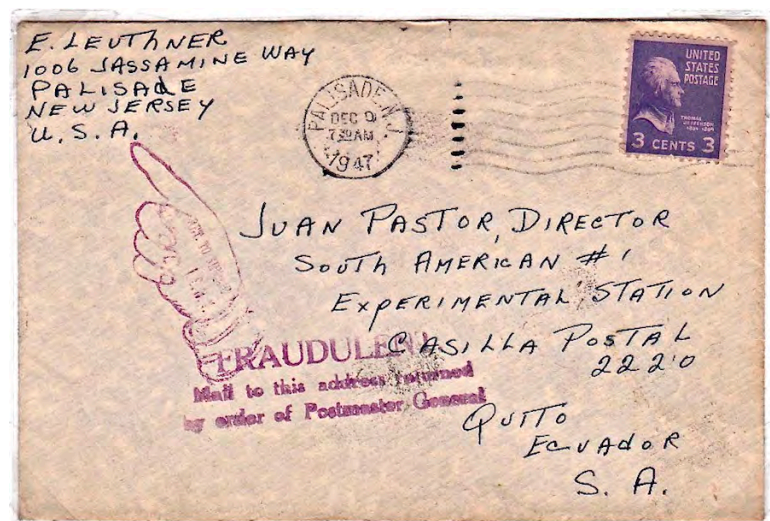


Figure 10a, 10b: 43 cents = 3-cent PUAS rate + 40-cent registry fee to a PUAS member other than Canada. Santa Ana, CA, to Tijuana, Mexico. June 22, 1955 (as per post-

marks on reverse). The 3-cent PUAS rate to Canada and Mexico remained in effect through July 31, 1958, as did the 3-cent domestic letter rate. The 40-cent registry fee to PUAS members other than Canada remained in effect through June 30, 1957. The registry fee to other foreign counties, including Canada, was 55 cents at the time. The registry fee to all foreign countries became 50 cents on July 1, 1957.

## Combined Third-Class Mail with First-Class Mail Attached

by Hal Klein



A combined third-class mail with first-class mail piece is probably one of most rarely seen usages, following one of the lesser known postal regulations of the Prexie era. The Domestic Mail Manual – PL&R (Postal Laws and Regulations) Sec. 583 relates to “Third or fourth-class matter accompanied with communication,” or “Second-class publications accompanied by communication”.

P.L.& R. Sec. 583 reads as follows:

583. When the sender desires that a parcel of third- or fourth-class matter on which the postage is fully prepaid at ‘the rate for the respective class, or a package of second-class matter pre-paid at the rates prescribed in paragraph 1, section 545, or at publishers’ second-class rates,

be accompanied with a communication, or other matter of the first class, which is not a permissible inclosure at the lower rate, the communication may be placed in an envelope, and after the full amount of postage at the first-class rate is affixed to the envelope it may be tied to or otherwise securely attached to the outside of the parcel or package in such manner as to prevent its separation therefrom and not to interfere with the address thereon. The envelope shall be addressed to correspond with the address on the parcel. Combination envelopes or containers having separate portions for a letter and matter of a lower class may be used for mailing together two classes of matter. Parcels or packages with which communications



are mailed in this manner shall be treated as second, third, or fourth-class matter, as the case may be. When second-class matter accompanied with a communication under the provisions of this section is prepaid at publishers' second-class rates, a notice of entry as second-class matter shall be placed in the upper right corner of the address side of the package. Properly prepaid third-class matter inclosed in unsealed envelopes indorsed "Third class" may be mailed with fully prepaid packages of second, third, or fourth class matter under these conditions.

I first encountered the application of this postal regulation, about 60 years ago, in my first after-school job as a "retail store stock boy" (at a whooping 50 cents-an-hour in the 1950's). One of my first jobs was to prepare the store's fourth-

class mailings. I packed merchandise, weighed and computed the postal zone with insurance, wrote-up the shipment in the company's U.S.P.O. firm mailing book, placed correct postage (usually Prexies) on the package, and took the packages to the back dock of the local post office a half-block from the store. Retail customers got a packing slip on the outside of the fourth-class mailing, with separate first-class postage paid. Vendor returns, on the other hand, got a packing slip tucked between merchandise on the inside of the fourth-class mailing, and separate first-class postage that was required but never paid (Don't ask!)

So, about thirty years ago when I decided to specialize in "Prexie" postal history, my hunt for this obscure usage began. Truthfully, I thought I would never find a valid usage, but my search ended this past March.

## Census of Covers Bearing \$5 Prexies Paying Excess Value Registry Fees

by Ed Field

Date	# \$5	Franking	Zone	Decl Value	Source	Comment
10/5/39*	1	\$9.87	6	\$80K	---	IL bank to TX corp
6/14/44*	28	\$141.36	1	\$1281K	Helbock	DE bank to PA bank
??/??/44	16	\$84.26	3	\$600K	ex-Preston	Ithaca NY trust co to NYC broker
10/23/44*	6	\$30.53	4	\$201K	---	Intra-CA BofA; SF-to-SD
??/??/45	1	\$5.04	1	\$42K	Rustad p330	NYC corp to NYC individual
5/17/46*	72	\$361.60	2	\$3012K	Prexie Era #74	CA SF bank to CA Sac bank
5/17/46	48	\$241.19	2	\$2008K	Prexie Era #74	CA SF bank to CA Sac bank
6/16/46*	37	\$186.38	8	\$1034K	Linn's 1/15/18	IL bank to CA bank
??/??/47	5	\$29.16	5	\$180K	Rustad p330	LA corp to OH corp
12/7/47	57	\$283.33	8	\$600K	Rustad p331	NYC bank to CA bank
1/12/48*	1	\$9.11	4	\$56K	Prexie Era #55	OR law firm to CA bank; airmail
illeg	38	\$289	2	~\$2400K	Rustad p67	CT ins co to NY bank; \$99 meter



For the past eight years I have searched for \$5 Prexie stamps on registered covers with high supplementary surcharges. That search has included auction catalogs, exhibits, philatelic literature, the internet, and long-running ads in several society newsletters. So far I have identified a mere dozen such covers. The table summarizes those covers, organized by posting date.

The table above is mostly self-explanatory, but some comments are in order: "Helbock" refers to the frontispiece of La Posta Monograph; Volume 2, 1968. "Rustad" refers to the well known 1994 book, *The Prexies*. An asterisk

(\*) by the posting date indicates the six covers in my possession. Figures 1 and 2, show scans of the October 5, 1939 and October 23, 1944 covers, respectively, for which I know of no published reference.

Incidentally, I am almost through a similar census for \$5 Fourth Bureau Issue covers. That population seems to be about double that of the \$5 Prexie covers.

Any census is a work in progress. I seek corrections and, hopefully, additions. I will provide two-sided scans of the six covers in my possession for anyone interested.



## Resumed Registered Mail Service to Japan, 1948

by Louis Fiset



Resumption of mail service to countries whose postal relations with the U.S. were severed during World War II was a process that began in February 1944 (Italy) and not completed until 1948 (Japan, Germany). The cover shown here provides an interesting example of registered mail to Japan, a service that resumed on February 26, 1948 (*PB* 19109). Airmail service had resumed the previous September.

The letter, posted from Guam on May 5, 1948, bears 51 cents postage. It pays the uniform 25-cent airmail rate to Asia, plus 20 cents registration and 5 cents RRR fees, with a penny of convenience franking. Interestingly, it was missent to Manila, where it received a May 7 transit marking, then on to the Tokyo

destination. The letter was opened and examined by the Allied Civil Censorship Detachment (C.C.D.), likely at Tokyo. Allied censorship of incoming/outgoing international mail continued until 1949.

Newsletter subscriber, Kiyoshi Kashiwagi, takes the cover to a second level of interest with the following translations:

- 1 Kanji denoting airmail
- 2 Kichijohji, a place in Musashino, Tokyo
- 3 Kanji denoting "Under investigation"
- 4 Re chops of two Japanese postal clerks
- 5 Red boxed handstamp reading "Confirmation of Stamps Affixed/Tokyo Central Post Office Foreign Mail Section"

Tokyo postal workers may have been unfamiliar with the airmail rate from Guam, no doubt a scarce origin, requiring an "investigation."





No. 87 Autumn 2019

# The Prexie Era

Publication of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

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## 3-Cent Convention Letter Rate to Non-PUAS Countries during the Prexie Era

by Stephen L. Suffet



Figure 1

In Issue No. 86 of the newsletter, I discussed the 3 cents per ounce surface letter rate from the United States to members of the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain (PUAS). This convention rate, often incorrectly called a “treaty rate,” was the same as the basic domestic first class letter rate. It was already in effect when the Presidential Series was introduced in 1938, and it remained in effect through July 31, 1958, to Canada and Mexico, and through October 31, 1953, to all other members of the PUAS. Those countries included the fully independent nations of the

Caribbean, Central, and South America; Spain and Spanish possessions; and Andorra via its Spanish post office.

The surface letter rate to almost all other foreign counties at the time was 5 cents for the first ounce plus 3 cents for each additional ounce. In effect it was 2 cents per piece higher than to PUAS countries. *There were, nonetheless, two non-PUAS countries to which the 3-cent convention rate applied for part of the Prexie era. One was Newfoundland; the other, the Republic of the Philippines.*

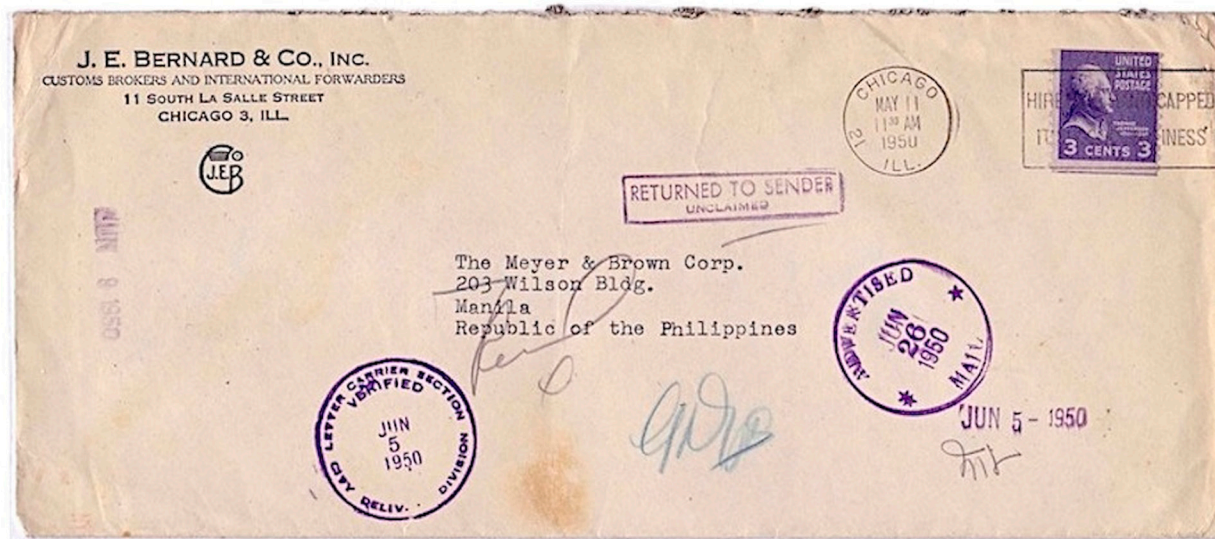


Figure 2

### Newfoundland

The surface letter rate of 3 cents per ounce to Newfoundland went into effect on September 1, 1931, the same day it went into effect to Canada. At the time, both Newfoundland, which included Labrador, and Canada were self-governing British Dominions. However, on February 16, 1934, facing crushing debts it could not repay, Newfoundland surrendered the right to govern itself. In effect, it became a British Crown Colony ruled by the United Kingdom, although it was still nominally a Dominion. So it remained until just before midnight on March 31, 1949, when Newfoundland joined Canada as its tenth province. The 3-cent rate to Newfoundland thus remained in effect through July 31, 1958, although as of April 1, 1949, Newfoundland was no longer a separate Dominion.

Figure 1 pictures a 3-cent rate cover postmarked on July 17, 1944, from East Detroit, Michigan, and addressed to someone working in the Meteorological Office at the airport in Gander, Newfoundland. In an attempt to reach the addressee, the cover was forwarded to the Royal Air Force Training Command at the airport in Dorval, Quebec, within Canada proper. It was then forwarded a second time to Goose Bay,

Labrador, the site of a large Allied air force base. Although located within the Dominion of Newfoundland, the Goose Bay Air Force Base was under the overall operational control of the Royal Canadian Air Force. For the duration of World War II, it was used jointly by the Royal Canadian Air Force, the British Royal Air Force, and the United States Army Air Force.

### The Republic of the Philippines

Except for the 1942-1945 period of Japanese occupation, the Philippine Islands were under control of the U.S. from 1898 until becoming an independent republic on July 4, 1946.

Beginning November 24, 1899, U.S. domestic postal rates applied to mail sent to the Philippines, so when the Prexie era began in 1938, the U.S. surface letter rate to the Philippines was the domestic letter rate of 3 cents per ounce. When the Republic of the Philippines came into existence in 1946, the letter rate from the U.S. became what it was to non-convention rate countries: 5 cents for the first ounce plus 3 cents for each additional ounce. Effective October 1, 1947, however, the letter rate to the Philippines reverted to 3 cents per ounce, and it continued as such through October 31, 1953.



Figure 2 shows a 3-cent rate cover postmarked on May 11, 1950, from Chicago, Illinois, and addressed to Manila in the Philippines. The addressee could not be found, so on June 26, 1950, the mail piece was advertised by the Manila post office. Eventually it was returned unclaimed to the sender.

Effective November 1, 1953, the U.S. surface letter rate to all foreign countries other than Canada and Mexico became 8 cents for the first ounce plus 4 cents for each additional ounce. The 3-cent convention rate to the Philippines thus ended after only six years and a month.

My own collecting experience is that 3-cent

letter rate covers to Newfoundland before it became a province of Canada in 1949 are not hard to find, especially covers addressed to the Rev. E.A. Butler, a well known Newfoundland philatelist. On the other hand, 3-cent letter rate covers to the Republic of the Philippines during the 1947-1953 rate period have proven surprising difficult to locate. In fact, the one illustrated herein is the only example I have been able to acquire even though I have been searching since 2009. I have no idea what accounts for the scarcity, but I would not be surprised if there are many 3-cent letter rate covers still in the Philippines that have never been repatriated to the United States.

## 1942 Holocaust Mail to Vichy France

by Jeffrey Shapiro



Although this ratty appearing cover will not meet the quality standard of all collectors, postal history gems are often found in less than perfect condition. In the case of the cover shown here, it's amazing it survived at all !

Basic information shows 20-cent and 25-cent

Prexie stamps paying the 30-cent transatlantic airmail rate plus the 15-cent international registration fee on May 1942 correspondence from Eric Meyer in Missouri to a relative, Israel Meyer, in Vichy (unoccupied) France. Auxiliary markings show this multi-censored cover was first sent to Camp Les Milles, then





forwarded to Camp Rivesaltes.

Originally built as a tile factory on the outskirts of Marseille, in September 1939 Camp Les Milles was transformed to a facility housing illegal aliens and “undesirables” (i.e., Spanish refugees and Jews). After Vichy authorities took over in July 1940, Camp Les Milles added other groups (Gypsies, Armenians, homosexuals) to its inmate population. By the time this letter arrived on June 10, 1942, the Camp had closed and the inmates transferred to Rivesaltes.

Camp de Rivesaltes, located 40 kilometers from the Spanish Border in Southeast France, was established in 1935 to house refugees fleeing the Spanish Civil War. By 1939 the area, now a haven for Jews fleeing Nazi persecution on their way to neutral countries, the French Third Republic built separate facilities to house various ethnic groups as these displaced persons awaited exit visas.

The Vichy regime transformed Rivesaltes into an internment camp for “undesirables” including not only Jews but also Armenians and Gypsies. By late 1940 3,500 artists and

intellectuals were detained at the facility. By early 1942, 6,400 individuals were housed there. In the Summer of 1942, Camp Rivesaltes was closed; the remaining 2,000 Jews (including Israel Meyer) were transferred to the Drancy Internment facility (near Paris), then onward to the Nazi concentration and extermination camps at Auschwitz in Occupied Poland.

### Epilogue

After 1944 thru 1948 Rivesaltes became a “guarded residence center” for POWs from Germany and Italy. In the mid-1950s the facility became a detention center for refugees from Algeria and the former French Indo-China. By 1986, it reverted back to its original purpose, to house Spaniards fleeing General Francisco Franco’s regime. The facility closed in 2007.

Camp de Milles reopened in 2012 as a museum to keep alive “the memories of racism and fanaticism of World War II.” In October 2015, the facility was designated as the new headquarters for UNESCO’s Center for Education for Citizenship, Human Services and Shared Memories of Genocide.

## Richard Levy Collection Auction Preview

by Albert “Chip” Briggs



Figure 1

Collectors of Presidential Series stamps and postal history will have an opportunity to add to their collections the first week of December when Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions LLC offers the Richard Levy collection of Prexie material. The auction, Keller Flagship Auction #731, will be held December 3-5. The collection is being sold in 21 lots (Lots 733-753).

This collection was initially offered as a single lot in a special catalog prepared by the Kelleher firm for their private treaty sale offerings at the international show, STOCKHOLMIA 2019, earlier this year. The asking price was \$27,000.00. As of this writing, it is still listed and viewable on the firm's website as Lot 66 in the Private Treaty Sale Catalog.

The collection has now been broken down into 21 lots, with many of the better postal history items listed individually. Included is a large

balance lot with numerous stamps and covers. A number of the covers will be recognized as illustrations in *The Prexies* by Roland Rustad and/or as ex-Suffet by long time collectors of this material.

The first lot is an eye catcher; folded open for display, it is a five times the 50-cent air mail rate cover to the Philippines franked with 50 copies of the 5-cent James Monroe stamp and used in June, 1939. This very cover is illustrated as figure 5-C on page 174 of *The Prexies*. It carries an estimate of \$400.00 to \$600.00 with an opening bid of \$200.00. While air mail uses to the Philippines are not scarce, a multi-weight use franked with 50 copies of the five cent Prexie is certainly unusual.

Also illustrated in Rustad's book (figure 11-C on page 214) and ex-Suffet is lot number 735; an 11 cent single franking used to pay for a three



Figure 2

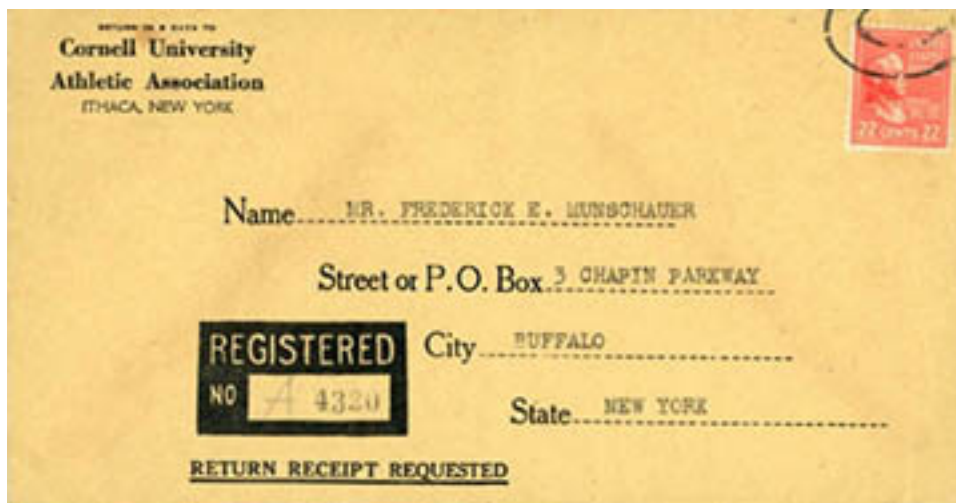


Figure 3

ounce surface mailing to Denmark. (Figure 1.) The catalog describes it as “one of the rarest 20th century stamp solo usages paying an exact rate”. This lot was also illustrated in color on the card insert as lot 1157 of the Nutmeg Sale #62 of the Steven Suffet collection in 2003. It’s sale price in that auction is not known as Nutmeg did not publish prices realized. (Some prices realized were compiled and published by contributors of this newsletter after the sale but this covered only a small fraction of the items sold.)

Eleven-cent single frankings on mail to foreign destinations can be found in several varieties. The three ounce UPU surface letter rate (5 cents first ounce plus 3 cents for each

of two additional ounces) is one way and 11 cents paying three cents air mail surcharge in the United States plus five cents UPU surface letter rate plus three cents air mail surcharge in Europe is another way for an exact rate franking. Others exist as well. Both of these types are listed in the *Scott’s Specialized Catalog*. The auction estimate is \$750.00 to \$1000.00 with an opening bid of \$375.00.

Two 13 cent stamp uses are lotted individually; a pair on cover used in 1955 paying correctly the then current 6-cent air mail fee plus 20 cents special delivery, and a single franking on a University of Notre Dame Athletic Department corner card cover. The pair on cover is illustrated on page 225 of *The*



*Prexies*. The single stamp use is ex-Suffet and was highlighted in his outstanding exhibit. Thirteen-cent pairs paying correct rates are not common and while thirteen cent single stamp uses on special delivery covers can be found, this particular cover was postmarked on October 31, 1944, the last day of the 10-cent special delivery fee.

Nineteen-cent and 22-cent single stamp uses are difficult to find, as reflected in their catalog values. Both are represented here (Figures 2 and 3). Both are ex-Suffet and interestingly, occupied the same page in his exhibit. Quite a page! Each usage pays for registered mail service and rely on 1-cent surcharge for unindemnified value to make the exact rate. Some specialists argue it is difficult to prove the 1-cent surcharge absent documentation. An argument for this exact rate could also be made by noting there were 18 cent and 21 cent stamps available at the post office and asking why would anyone intentionally overpay. These covers were lots 1165 and 1167 in the 2003 Nutmeg Sale of Steve's collection and carried estimates of \$700.00 and \$800.00 respectively at that time.

An item with an ambitious estimate is lot

number 743. It is a solo 22 cent stamp use paying combination air mail and special delivery fee and postmarked Nov. 3, 1945. The air mail rate at that time was eight cents per ounce and special delivery fee was 13 cents for less than two pounds, requiring payment of 21 cents and thus represents a convenience overpayment of one cent. It is estimated at \$1500.00 to \$2000.00 with an opening bid of \$750.00. Time will tell if the desire to own a 22 cent solo use representing an overpayment of required fees will support a realization anywhere near this lofty estimate.

Attractive uses of the 17 cent stamp are also featured in the individual lots. Lot 738 is a single franking used to pay the local letter rate at a carrier post office of two cents and 15 cents minimum registry fee. An interesting and attractive feature of this cover is the fact that it is a territorial use having been mailed on June 10, 1941 within Honolulu. This was lot 1163 in the Nutmeg sale and the lot description is almost identical. The estimate however was \$600.00 in 2003 and this time it is \$3500.00 to \$5000.00. This cover was also used as an illustration in *The Prexies* and appears as figure 17-B on page 249. Lot 739 is another 17 cent single stamp use paying the same registered



Figure 4

local letter rate in Cleveland, Ohio in August of 1940. It is estimated at \$1000.00 to \$1500.00. This combination of fees can be found on mail during the Prexie Era from the date of issuance of the stamps in 1938 until March 26, 1944, when the local letter rate at carrier post offices was eliminated and the registry rate was raised from 15 cents to 20 cents for no indemnity. It will be interesting to see how these estimates fare against a Scott's Specialized Catalog value of less than \$100.00 for this specific usage.

Lot 746 features a frequently under appreciated, possession-to-possession air mail use. (Figure 4) This August 1940 mailing from Puerto Rico to the Philippines is franked with \$2.40 in postage including two one dollar Prexies. As there was no stipulated air mail rate from Puerto Rico to the Philippine Islands, a summation of rates was used to arrive at proper postage. In this case the 10 cents per half-ounce rate from Puerto Rico to the continental United States and the 50 cents per half-ounce rate from the states to the Philippines was added together and multiplied by the requisite weight factor (in this case between 1- 1/2 and two ounces yielding a four times 60 cents per half-ounce rate). This cover is illustrated on page 318 of *The Prexies* as figure 100-G. It carries an estimate of \$400.00 to \$600.00 with an opening bid of \$200.00.

Two five dollar stamp uses, both ex-Suffet, round out the individual lots of postal history: the single Scott # 834 on parcel piece and a small registered cover franked with a single five dollar stamp and pair of two cent Nations United for Victory stamps. Perhaps the most intriguing of the two is the single five dollar stamp on piece, which is highlighted by Dan Pagter elsewhere in this issue.

The registered cover is also illustrated on page 330 of the Rustad book as figure 500-B. It is tantalizing to think, had return receipt service not been requested on the small registered

cover it would represent a fabulous \$5.00 solo use. These two items were lots 1173 and 1234 in the 3003 Nutmeg auction.

Lot 753 is the balance lot and it contains an impressive amount of both covers and stamps. There are reportedly over 360 covers which includes a small number of first day of issue items. There may be one or two first days for each denomination. The bulk of the covers are commercial type uses, including a number of interesting, scarce and attractive uses. There is an air mail cover to Switzerland in 1941 with a strip of six 4 -1/2 cent coils paying the bulk of the postage (Figure 5); a 5 cent single use to England censored by the Board of Economic Warfare (Figure 6); a double weight air mail use to New Caledonia (Figure 7); a postal penalty use (Figure 8); and two one dollar single frankings (Figure 9). This is just a small sampling of the better looking covers in the last lot.

There is a bonanza of stamps in the collection lot as well. Each denomination is represented by numerous plate blocks, collected as different plate numbers. A perusal of the six cent, seven cent, and eight cent values showed a plate block of every plate number used in the printing process. Even scarce plate numbers such as 24076 and 24107 used to print the eight cent Martin van Buren stamp are present. Both of these plates were only used for 12,100 impressions, a low number as Presidential Series plate usage goes. A dozen plate blocks of the one dollar stamp including both 832 and 832c were noted, with two of these being plate strips of 20 stamps. Complete sheets of the Canal Zone overprints are also in the lot.

Although the section of the sale devoted to Presidential Series materials is relatively small there should be something of interest for just about everyone.



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7





Figure 8



Figure 9

## \$5.00 Prexie “Solo” Piece Up For Auction

by Daniel S. Pagter



This wonderful \$5.00 Prexie single franking (solo) is a problematic item. There is no correct exact \$5.00 rate with what is shown, as I explain below. I welcome someone offering an exact rating based upon what is shown on the piece.

This does not display the correct markings to be Air Parcel Post (APP) as suggested in the Daniel Kelleher December 3-5, 2019 Auction, Sale 731, lot 751 description. Now if I overlook the deficient marking regarding APP Service there is another brick-wall roadblock. From March 15, 1952 until June 30, 1958 the maximum APP weight was 2 pounds. Thus, a zone 8 APP item was limited to a postage charge of \$1.60 (80 cents per pound or fraction). Japan (APO location) to the US mainland is over 1800 miles which is the minimum distance for zone 8. The exception was Official Mail but even with that at 80 cents per pound you hit \$4.80 for six pounds or \$5.60 for seven pounds not that this piece displays any reason to consider it as qualifying as Official Mail or APP.

With the “AIRMAIL” marking this was airmail at the then “airmail letter rate” of 6 cents per ounce, valid January 1, 1949 to July 31, 1958, which produces \$4.98 for 83 ounces (5 lbs 3 oz) or \$5.04 for 84 ounces (5 lbs 4 oz).

The regulations for APP stated if postage was paid at by least half, send it postage due without delay. If Airmail paid at 6 cents or over send it postage due without delay.

Given the current information as shown on this piece, it appears to have a convenience overpayment of 2 cents or more or be underpaid (postage due) by at least 4 cents.

Now I must ask, how is this different from and better than the single \$5.00, 834, used with a single meter tape, a combination that does exactly equal a properly paid rate?

Beecher and Wawrukiewicz, *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-2011* (Third Edition). Table 8-1, footnote a.18, page 87 ; Table 10, footnote e-p. 2, page 100.



## Customs Service for U.S. Armed Forces Related Items

by Tony Wawrukiwicz



Figure 1

Prior to World War II customs declaration tags were required on parcels of merchandise mailed at U.S. military bases. The first officially announced handling of a type of U.S. Armed Forces-related customs mailing appeared in mid-1941. The July 7, 1941 issue of the *U.S. Postal Bulletin* (PB 18233) stated that customs declaration tags were required on parcels of merchandise mailed at American bases, effective immediately. Specifically:

Although the domestic rates and conditions apply to mail matter exchanged between the United States and its possessions and the leased defense bases where the United States mail service is in operation, and no customs declaration tags are required in connection with parcels mailed from the United States to American forces at such bases, merchandise mailed from the bases to the United States is subject to custom duties. Therefore, parcels of merchandise mailed at the bases referred to must be accompanied with the customs declaration tags as prescribed by paragraph 9 (a), section 2229, 1940 PL&R.

Figure 1, above, shows a double weight 1943 letter from APO 788 (Heliopolis, Egypt) near Cairo, to Duluth, Minnesota. It was mailed at

the 6 cents per half-ounce airmail concession rate for military personnel stationed overseas. It was short paid 6 cents as indicated by the POSTAGE DUE 6 CENTS marking. Initially there was concern at St. Paul, the customs city, that the heavy letter contained dutiable matter. However, inspection revealed it contained only written material. Thus, St. Paul customs placed the 'DUTY FREE' handstamp and sent the letter on to Duluth. The 6 cents due was collected from the addressee, as indicated by the postage due stamps placed and cancelled. The 10-cent custom clearance fee was not collected.

Figure 2 illustrates a January 1945 airmail parcel from the Pacific Theater to Cleveland, Ohio, weighing 2 pounds 7 ounces. At the 6 cents per half ounce airmail concession rate, the \$2.35 postage affixed includes a convenience overpay of 1 cent. Since it was 'PASSED FREE' at Cleveland, delivery went duty free. Again, no clearance fee was collected.

Figure 3 shows an 8-ounce first-class parcel from APO 630 (Gaya, India) to Santa Maria, California, sent in September 1954. The 89 cents paid includes 24 cents postage (8 times 3¢) and 65 cents registry fee (\$25 to \$50 indemnity). Philadelphia, the customs





Figure 2



Figure 3

city, placed the 'PASSED FREE' handstamp. Thus, no duty was collected, and, as usual, no clearance fee collected (on military mail).

**I've found no reference regarding collection of clearance fees on pre-1957 military**

**customs use, and I've never seen an example.**

This article is adapted from Chapter 3 of my newest book, *Further Insights into U.S. Postal History, 1794 - 2019*, available from the American Philatelic Society.

## US to Barbados: A Nice Little Cupcake with Lots of Icing

by Dann Mayo



*Figure:* New York 23 January 1942; Barbados 28 January. Paying 2 x 25-cent rate. Via FAM 5 to Castries, St. Lucia, and onward via British West Indies Air (replaced KLM service on 27 November 1940).

I try to do daily searches on eBay for the term “censor.” While I do not collect Prexie covers, even I can recognize a solo 50 center on cover to Barbados, which turned up on one of those searches, as unusual. A look at the back side revealed that the censorship is also unusual. The tape is a scarcer provisional used by the New York field station of the Office of Censorship (Broderick and Mayo L 1.2.2), recorded used December 1941-January 1942.

When it looks as though it might be interesting, I also search the names of senders and/or addressees. Given that we were at war, and the sensitivity of censorship to coded messages “Acme Code Company” certainly looked promising. A Google search led to a delightfully titled article “Before LOL and BTW, There Were KUBIT and PYTUO” and a brief but a useful Wikipedia synopsis.<sup>1,2</sup>

The addressee, W.S. Monroe & Co., had its fingers in a wide range of pies, from insurance and shipping agencies to a dress shop,<sup>3</sup> and so would have been a likely heavy user of economically coded messages.

1 <https://www.saturdayeveningpost.com/2016/10/lol-btw-kubit-pytuo/>

2 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acme\\_Commodity\\_and\\_Phrase\\_Code](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acme_Commodity_and_Phrase_Code) [in which it was noted that “The Acme code consists of one hundred thousand five letter codes each intended to stand in for a phrase,” and that “This code was one of the few telegram codes permitted by the Allied powers during the Second World War.”]

3 [https://archive.org/stream/westindiescaribb1953unse/westindiescaribb1953unse\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/westindiescaribb1953unse/westindiescaribb1953unse_djvu.txt)