

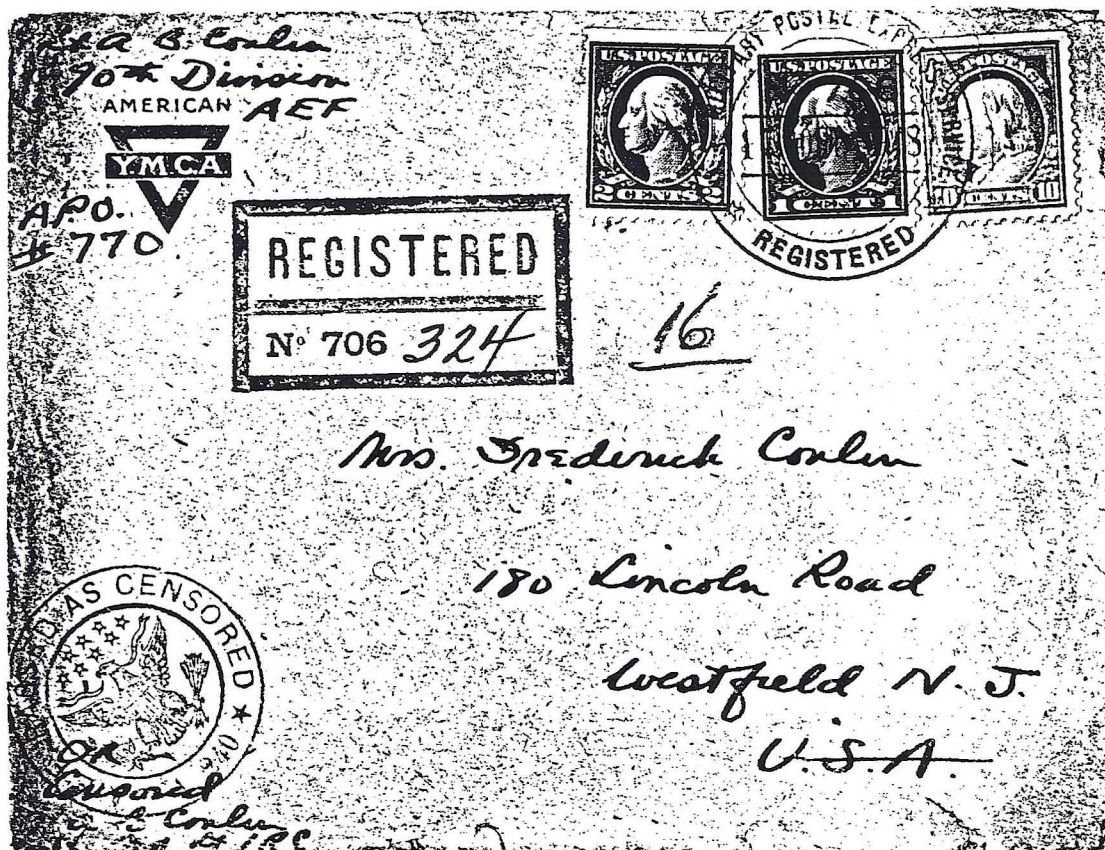
OVER THERE

U.S. Forces Abroad in WWI and its Aftermath

On 6 April 1917 the United States declared war on Germany and began the process which would send more than 2 million soldiers and sailors overseas (and which left 115,000 of them in foreign graves). Before the American Expeditionary Forces returned home, they had learned new skills -- the use of airplanes, tanks and chemical warfare -- repaid their country's Revolutionary War debt to France, participated in the occupation of parts of Germany, Russia and Jugoslavia, helped plant the seeds for animosities that would foster wars, hot and cold, for the next 75 years and set the U.S. on the road to becoming a global superpower.

This exhibit focuses on both the history of the U.S. forces abroad during World War I through the ensuing occupations and interventions, and the postal systems which served them.

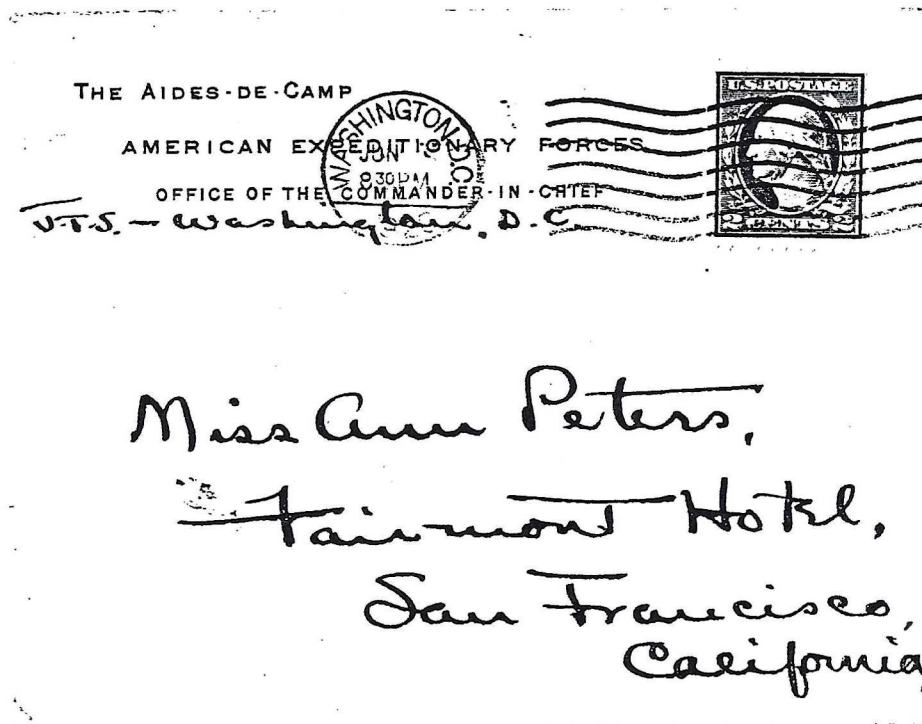
The story begins and ends with the departure and return of the troops, so that Stateside operations beyond the ports of embarkation are excluded. Also excluded are ongoing U.S. occupations in the Western Hemisphere during the period, which had nothing to do with World War I. Emphasis is on the American Expeditionary Force in western Europe and its successors, as these involved by far the largest number of troops for the longest time. Beyond that, disproportionately large coverage is given to U.S. intervention forces in Russia, in light of the exotic nature and difficulty of this material. Limited coverage is given to the U.S. Navy, reflecting its relatively minor role in and after WWI.



Only recorded registered cover franked with both 1c and 2c AEF booklet pane stamps. Posted at APO 706, serving the AEF General Headquarters at Chaumont.

OVER THERE
U.S. Forces Abroad in WWI and its Aftermath

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 - 4. Forces in France
 - 5. Forces in Belgium & Channel Is.
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 - D. Intervention in Russia
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 - 2. Rates
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 - C. U.S. Navy
 - 1. Ashore
 - 2. Afloat

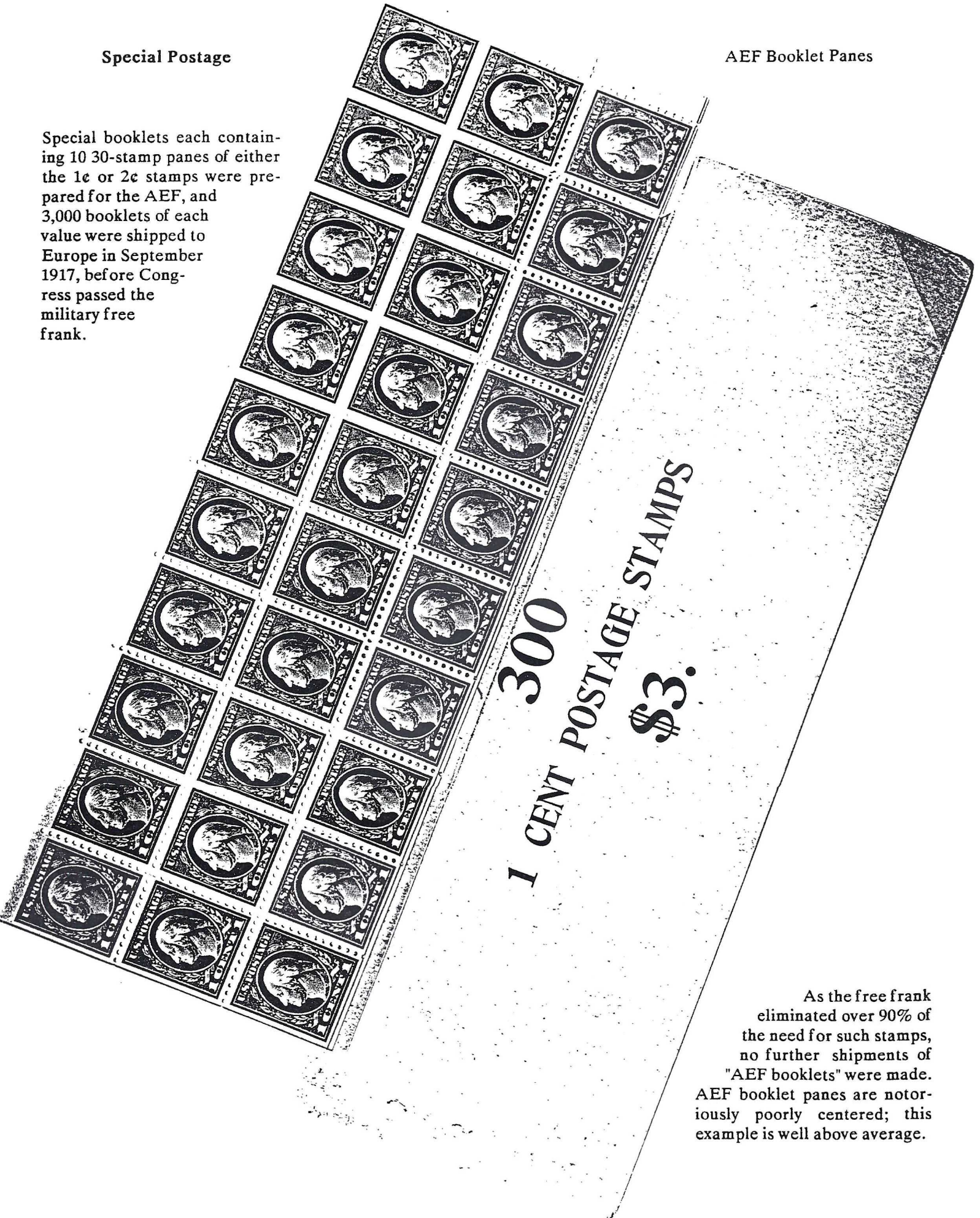


Having transferred control of U.S. troops in Europe to other commands the GHQ of the AEF left for the US aboard *SS Leviathan* on 1 September 1919. From 8-13 September it operated from the Waldorf Hotel in New York, and after that in Washington, DC. On 31 August 1920 the American Expeditionary Force was formally discontinued.

Special Postage

Special booklets each containing 10 30-stamp panes of either the 1¢ or 2¢ stamps were prepared for the AEF, and 3,000 booklets of each value were shipped to Europe in September 1917, before Congress passed the military free frank.

AEF Booklet Panes



As the free frank eliminated over 90% of the need for such stamps, no further shipments of "AEF booklets" were made. AEF booklet panes are notoriously poorly centered; this example is well above average.

Special Postage

AEF Booklet Panes

While 1c AEF booklet panes are uncommon the 2c pane is one of the rarities of 20th Century U.S. philately. No complete 2c booklets are recorded.



300
2 CENT POSTAGE STAMPS
\$6.

General Pershing.
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL

Soldier's Letter.



Personal.

AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL

France, December 29, 1917.



Mrs. Cora E. Nye,
628 Washington Street,
Wellesley, Massachusetts.

My dear Mrs. Nye:

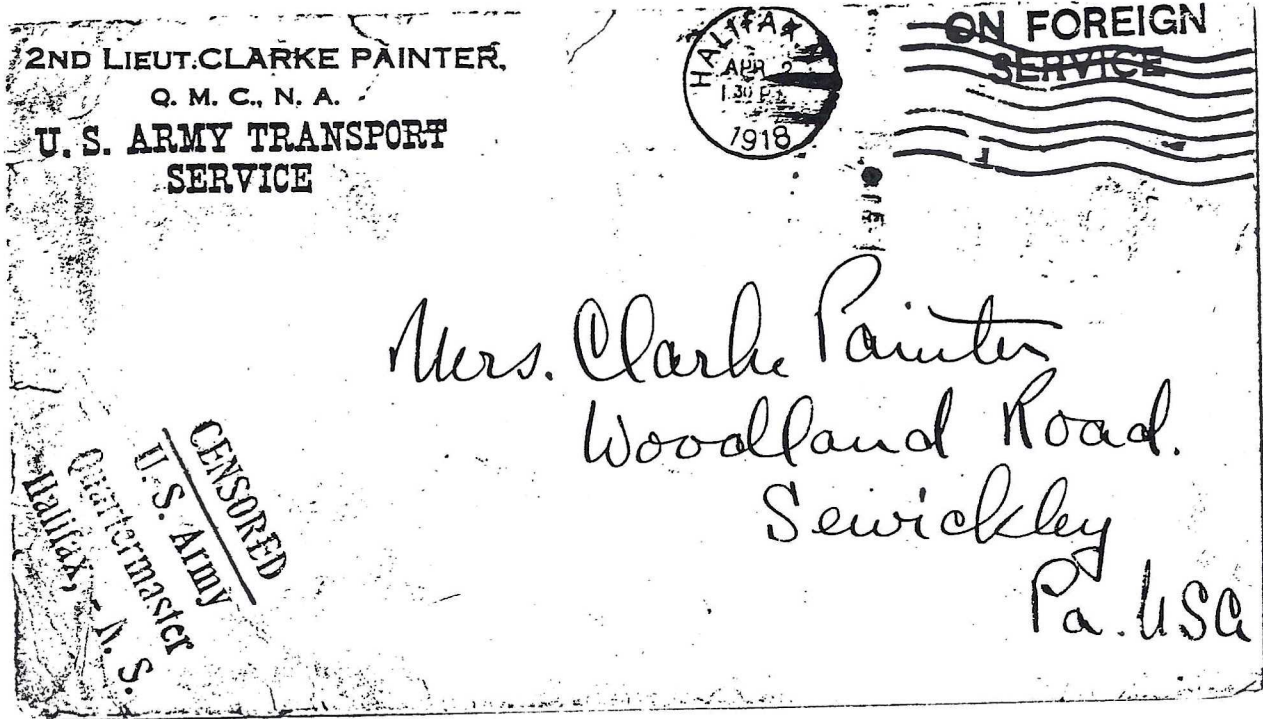
Please accept my sincere thanks for your Christmas note. It recalls most vividly to my mind past days which can never be forgotten. I cannot tell you how deeply I appreciate your friendly thought of me at this time.

With assurances of every good wish for the New Year, I am, as always,

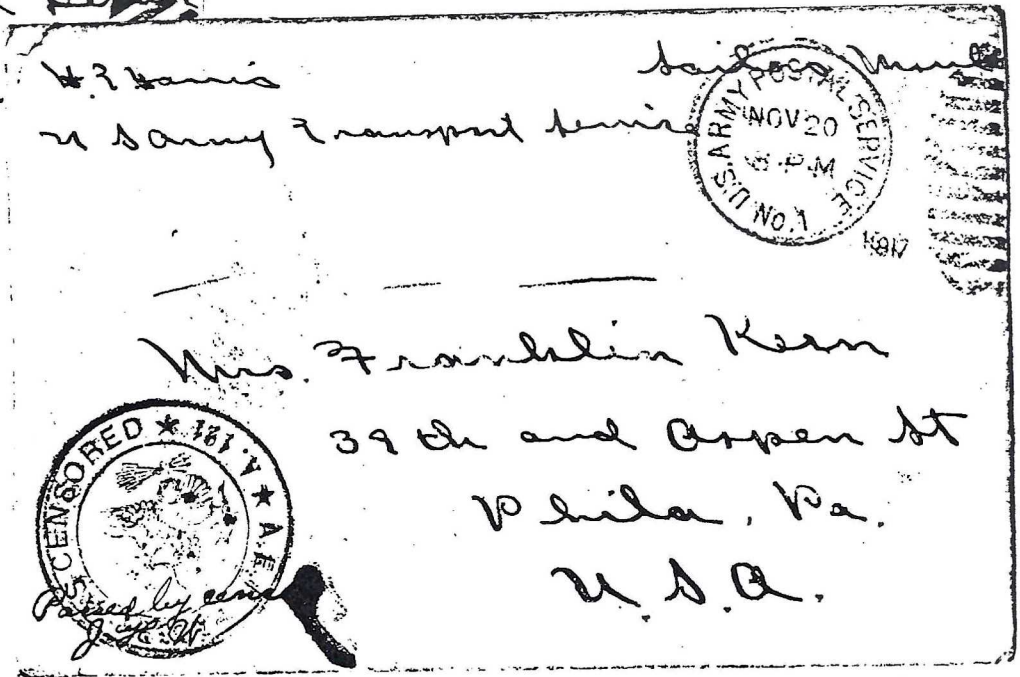
Yours sincerely,

John J. Pershing

On 26 May 1917, Maj. Gen John J. Pershing assumed command of the American Expeditionary Forces that would be sent to Europe. On 8 October 1917 he was promoted to full General. On 31 August 1920, peace treaties having been signed with all belligerents, Gen. Pershing's command was terminated. (U.S. troops remained in Germany into 1923, but not as part of the AEF.)

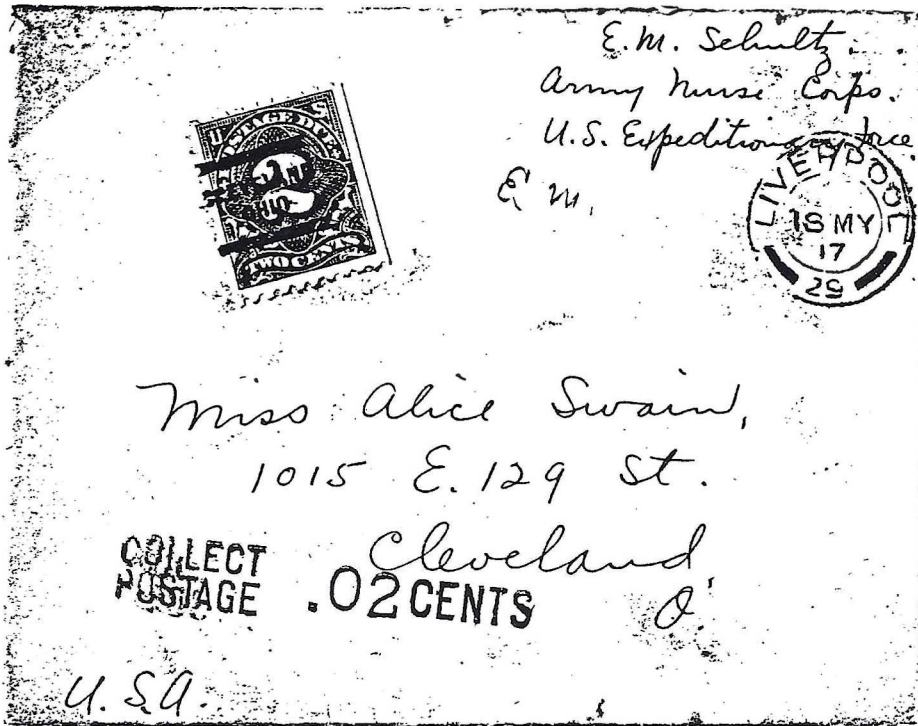


Hansen & Harris
Gun crew # 38
armed guard detail
Phila, Pa



Letter headed SS
Howick Hall, at sea.

In addition to Navy and civilian hulls, the U.S. Army Transport Service was used to move the AEF to Europe. All mail from members of this service is very scarce.

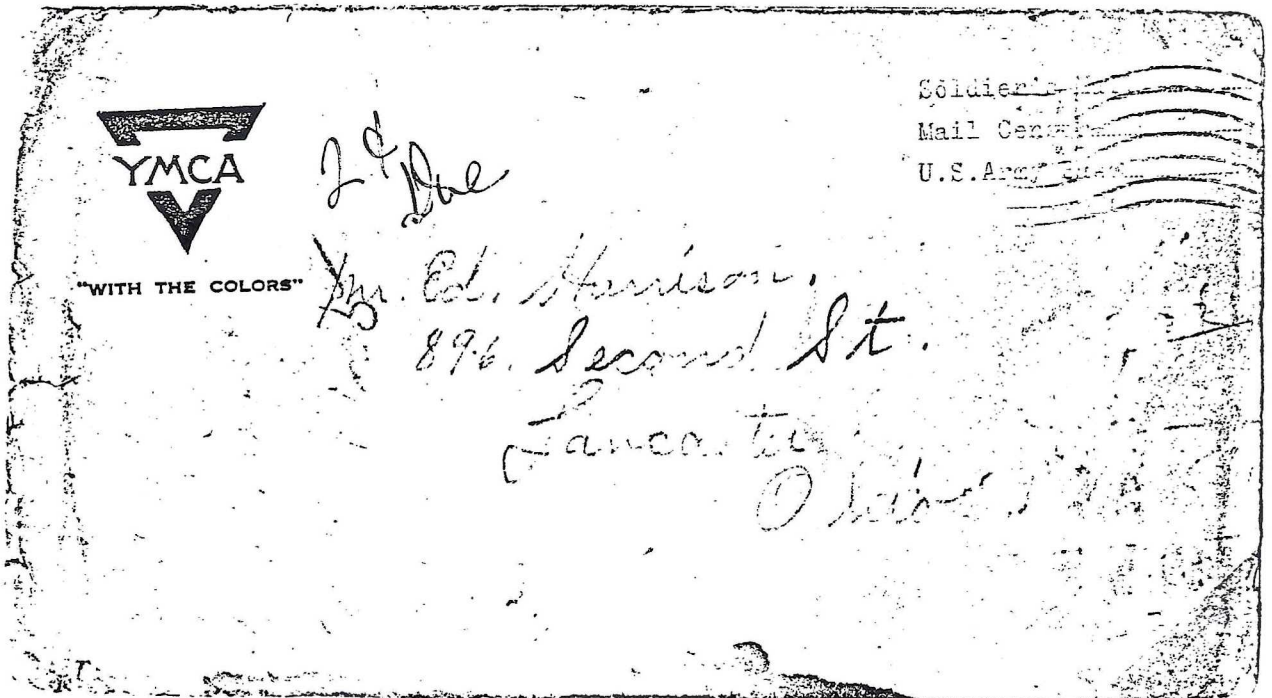


**Earliest Recorded
Mail from Europe**

The first units to leave the U.S. were Base Hospitals which had been organized by the American Red Cross. Base Hospital 4 was first to arrive, on the SS *Orduna*, 18 May 1917.

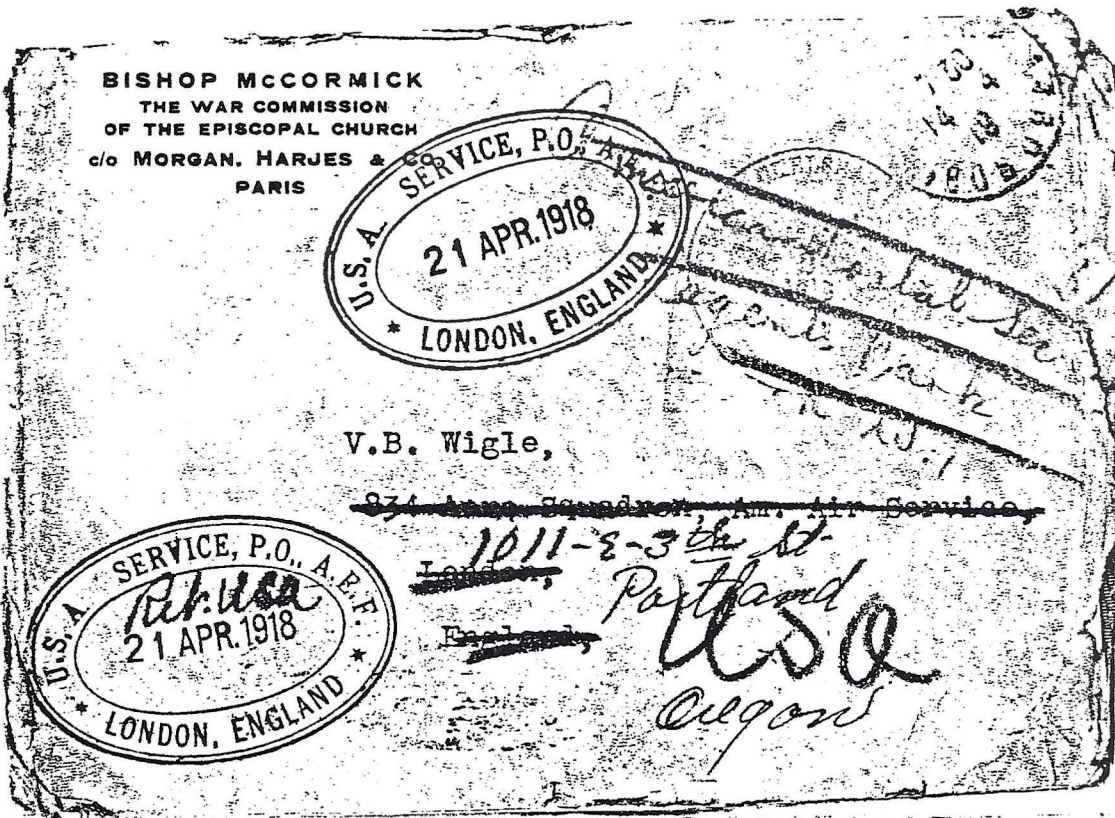
1st Division

Combat units did not begin leaving the U.S. until June 1917. Elements of the 1st Div. were the first ground combat forces to reach France, on 26 June 1917. Cover from member of 1st Machine Gun Bn.



Wartime
History and Organization

Forces in Great Britain



Air Service Post Office

Found on incoming mail to U.S. air service personnel in Great Britain. Dates of operation unknown. Marking here should read 1919 based on other postmarks on this cover.

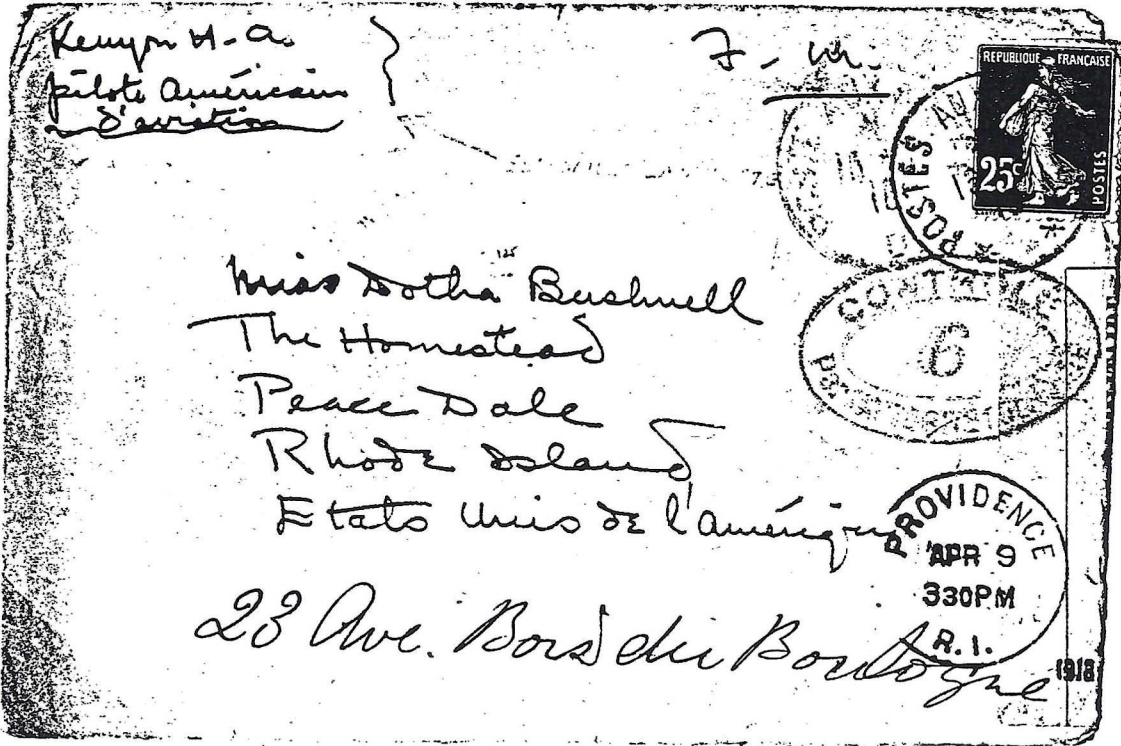
*CA Risley
Co a 339th of
american exp Corps*

339th Infantry

Arrived in England 22 July 1918 expecting to go on to France. Selected on 30 July as the main component of the AEF North Russia, and sent to Surrey for outfitting and training. Sailed for Archangel from Newcastle on 27 August.

*Mrs. C. Arvidy Risley
1055 W Main St
DeCATur
Illinois
U.S.A.*

Over 50,000 U.S. troops were permanently stationed in the British Isles during World War I. These tended to be concentrated in the Service of Supply and the Air Service. Additionally, over a million U.S. soldiers passed through the UK on their way to France, and some were sent back to hospitals there. Except for the Air Service post office (above) U.S. Army post offices did not operate in the British Isles.

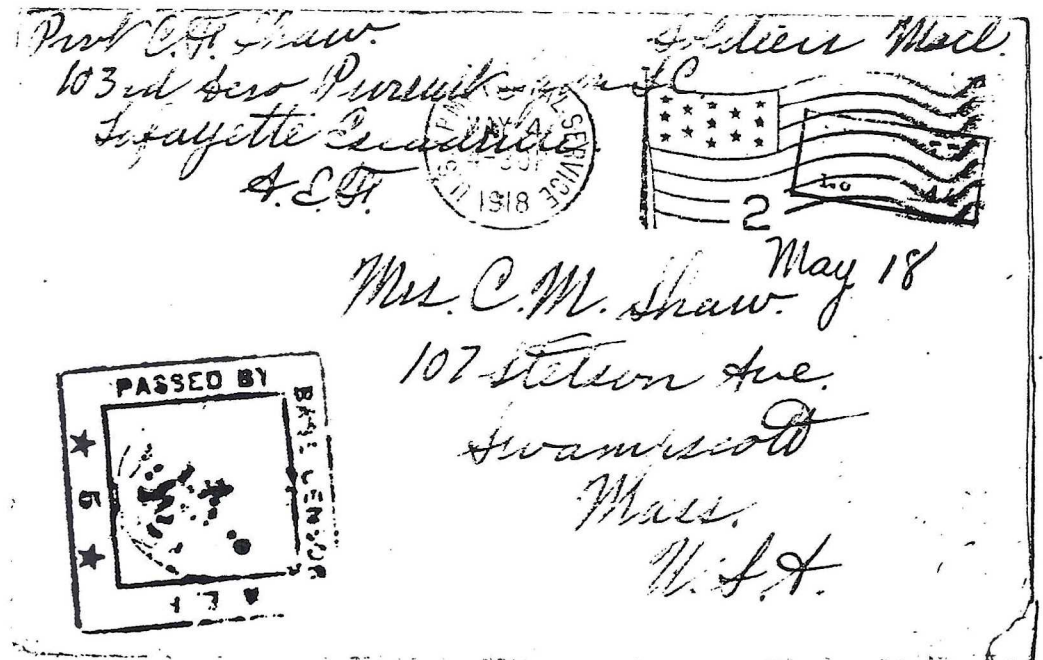


Lafayette Flying Corps

Though not an American unit, collected as an AEF fore-runner. Composed of 260 American aviators who wanted to see aerial combat earlier than the U.S. Army could move, and who therefore joined the French air force. The LFC included the much smaller Lafayette Escadrille.

103rd Aero Pursuit Squadron

Formed from members of the Lafayette Flying Corps, and posted to the front in July 1918. Pvt. Shaw's claim to fame is a bit inflated, as he appears not to have been a member of the LFC, much less the Escadrille.



**Wartime
History and Organization**

**Forces in France
Specialized Units**

MAJOR A. A. CUNNINGHAM, U. S. M. C.
U. S. N. A. F., F. S.

Officers Mail

X

ARMY POST OFFICE
9

6408

Mrs. Alfred A. Cunningham
~~467 Mrs. J. J. Hines~~
John L. E. Jeffers
~~1765 Euclid Street~~
~~Washington~~
Hotel Terrell D. C.
29th & Madison Ave.
New York, N. Y.

O.K.
arrived from
2nd U.S. A.F.

1st Marine Aviation Force

Organized 15 April 1918 in the U.S.; sent to France July-Sept. 1918. Operated over N. France and Belgium in support of British forces. Maj. A. A. Cunningham (USN Aviator No. 5, and the first USMC pilot), commanding.

Post letter L. Lynch
1st Aero Squadron
American P. O.
France.

RECEIVED FROM ARMY
10 AM
SEP 11
1918
EUROPEAN

*Soldiers
letter*

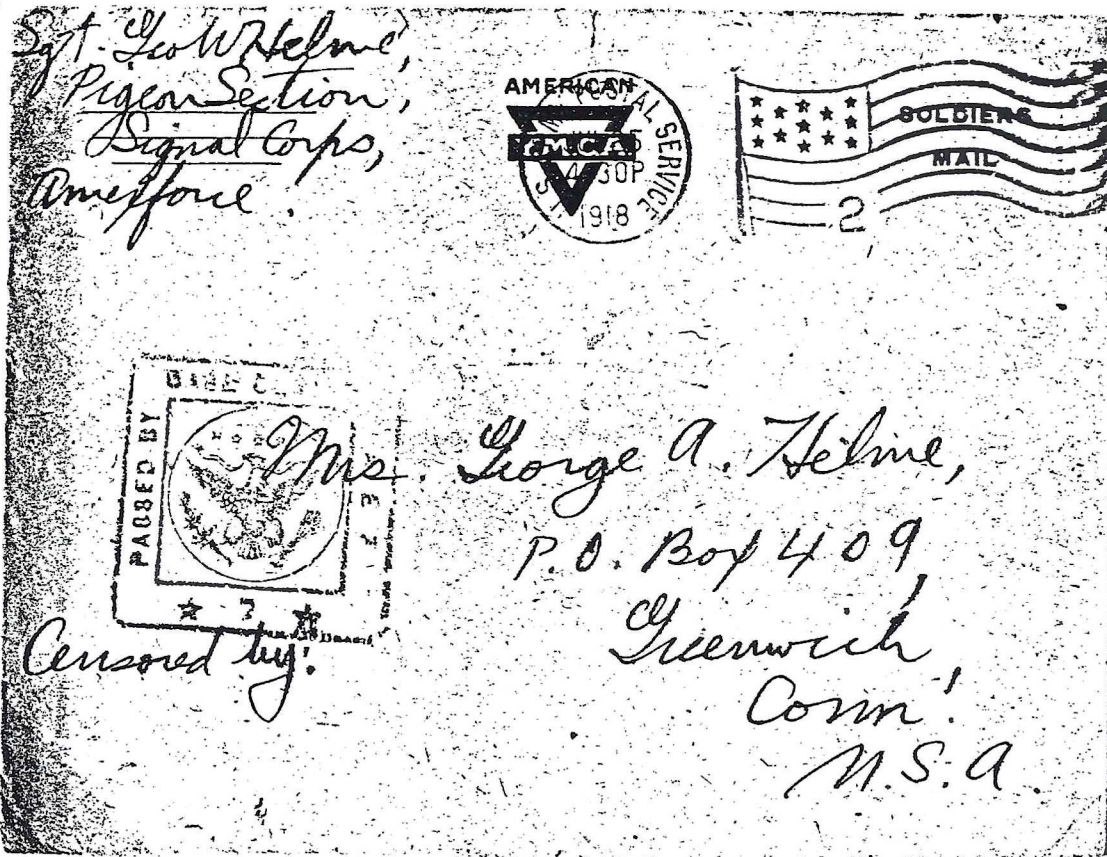
Rev. L. Boyd
Bethlehem
New York
U. S. A.

AS CENSORED
U. S. A.

C. K. Hornum W. Dahungin
1st Lt. A. S. U. S. A.

1st Aero Squadron

First U.S. Army air unit to arrive in France (September 1917). Several hundred Army air squadrons were sent to Europe, but fewer than 40 saw combat.

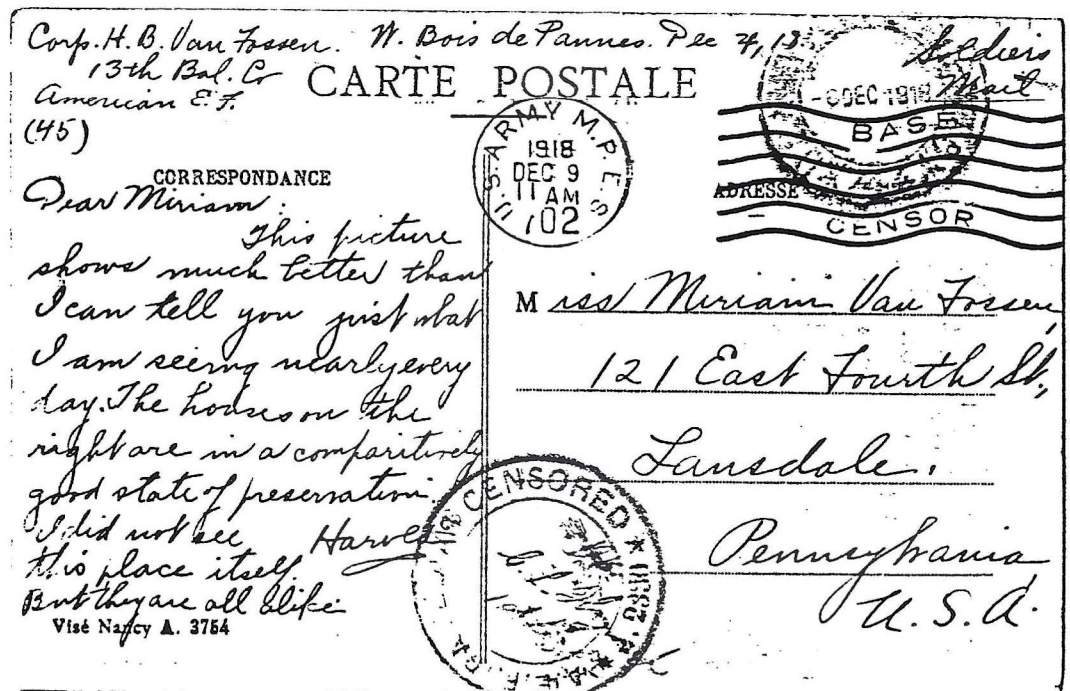


Pigeon Service

The official *Order of Battle* of the AEF mentions that the 12 August 1917 definition of the Signal Corps' duties GHQ included a pigeon company, and that 30 mobile and stationary lofts were attached to the 1st and 2nd Army HQs.

Balloon Service

The balloon service accounted for only 6,800 of the 78,500 men in the Air Service. 35 balloon companies were formed to provide artillery spotting platforms and anti-aircraft defense. The Germans shot down 35 U.S. balloons.



Wartime
History and Organization

Forces in France
Specialized Units



Chemical Warfare
Service

Established as "Gas Service" 3 September 1917; name changed 28 June 1918. 1st Gas Regt. established 13 July 1918.

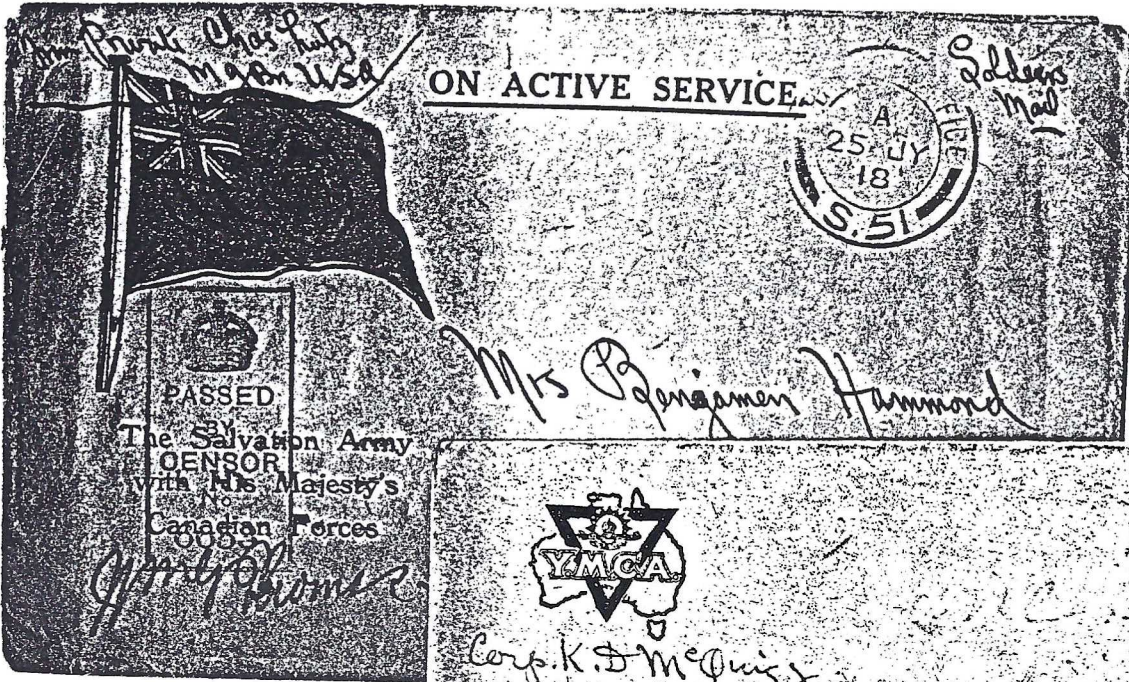
Tank Corps

While a Chief of Tank Corps was added to the AEF staff on 23 December 1917, the Tank Corps was not established until March 1918. Personnel were drawn from throughout the AEF. Equipment was obtained from Britain and France.

Mail from the specialized units of the AEF ranges from uncommon to rare. Mail from the Air Service is easiest to find, though within this group balloon company mail is very scarce. Marines' mail is much harder to find than Army; and USMC Aviation mail is rare. Mail from the smaller services such as Gas/Chemical, Tank Corps, and Pigeon Service is extremely elusive.

Wartime
History and Organization

Forces in France
Service with British Army



< APO S.51 (for Army post office, stationary, no. 51), Corbie.

APO SW1 (1st Australian Stationary Office), Poulainville.



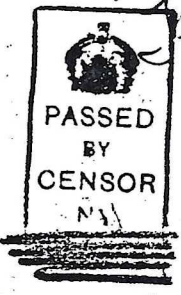
APO S95, St. Pol. The 148th Aero Sqdn. was 1 of only 2 U.S. Army air squadrons to see combat only with the RAF.

Unusual destination.

A wide range of support troops was assigned to the British area of the front, in Picardy and Flanders. Such forces did not have their own postal facilities, but used the British military post office for the units or areas in which they served. The U.S. troops usually followed the British practice of not including their unit specific unit designations in the return address.

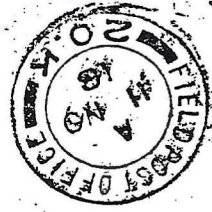
OPENED BY
CENSOR

85 Soldiers Mail
208 8th Train Exp Bldg
(Amherst Mebr)
85 Mr. Dave Dodge,
~~708 Victor Bldg.~~
~~Kansas City Mo.~~
85 United States
America.



FPO TG (Field Post Office, GHQ, Train), Hesdin. Letter from a U.S. officer in hospital: "Things have been happening fast since we returned to this front. I will be out in a week or two so you can see I am one of the lucky ones."

*Yew Goodwin
Stony Brook
New York*



SOLDIERS MAIL

FPO 20K, U.S. 27th Div.
Mailed Armistice Day.

The U.S. 27th and 30th Divs. served exclusively with the BEF. From 17-21 October 1918 the 27th Div. was in combat in the Somme offensive. When this letter was mailed, it had returned to training at Corbie.



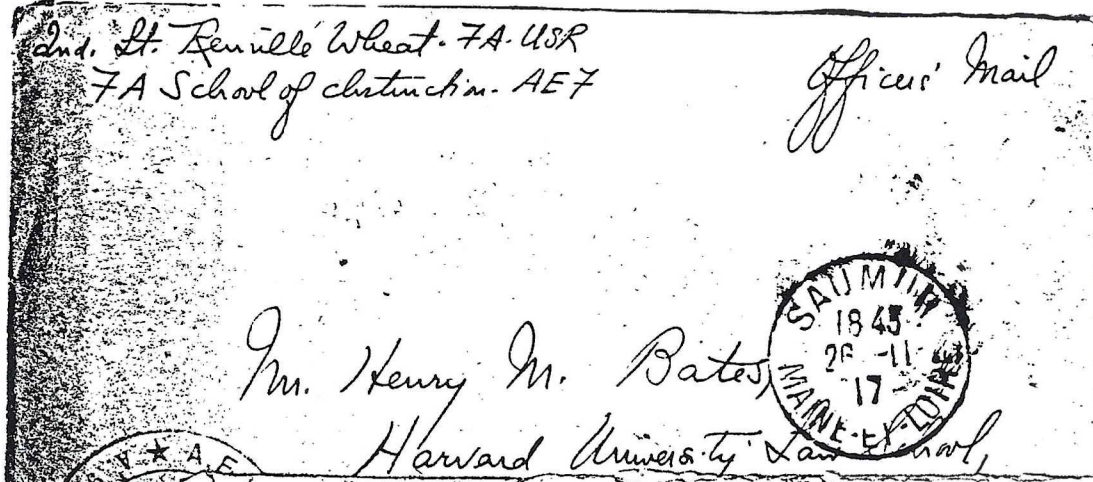
*Mrs Oscar Goodwin
Stony Brook
New York*

AB Swathum

Altogether 10 U.S. Divisions were rotated through the British sector of the front for training, beginning with the 77th Div. on 15 April 1918. The training program was set back by the German offensive in April, and some troops from the U.S. 77th Div. saw combat at that time. During parts of August-November 1918 the U.S. 26th, 27th, 30th, and 33rd Divs. fought alongside the British.

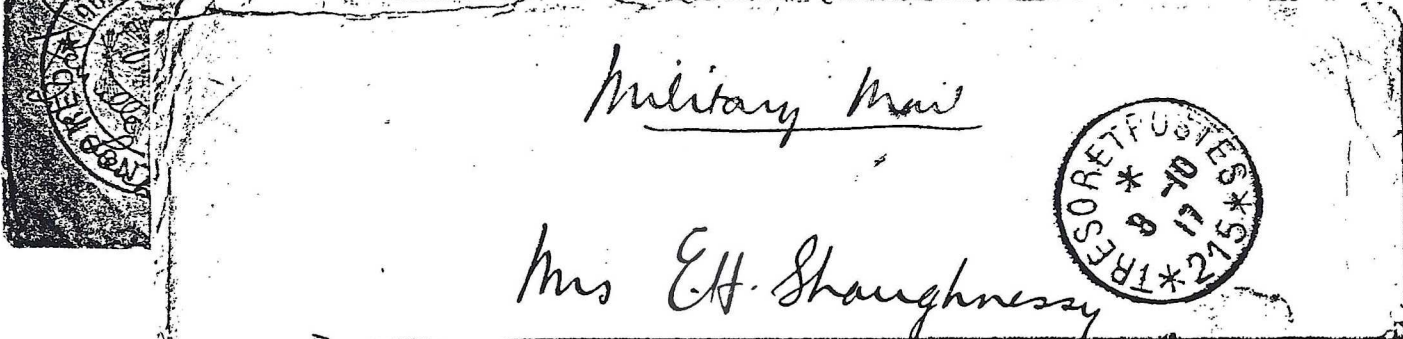
Wartime
History and Organization

Forces in France
Service with French Army



< Mailed prior to opening of U.S. APO 718 at Field Artillery school, Saumur.

Tresor et Postes 215 served French 2nd Army HQ at Verdun. Sender's unit not identified.



THIS SPACE FOR ADDRESS ONLY
POST-CARD

Soldiers' Post
Edgar B. Fross,
M. S. S. Georgia,
To Postmaster,
New York,
N. S. A.

REPLY TO (WRITE RETURN ADDRESS ONLY IN THIS SPACE)

NAME: Charles J. Cole
RANK: Capt
CO: Supply Co
REGT: 103rd F.A. Rgt

EXAMINED BY

AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, FRANCE
VIA NEW YORK

THIS POST-CARD FOR U.S. MAIL ONLY
NO TO BE MAILED IN FRENCH POST OFFICE

RECEIVED
NOV 1918
U.S. ARMY
A.E.F.

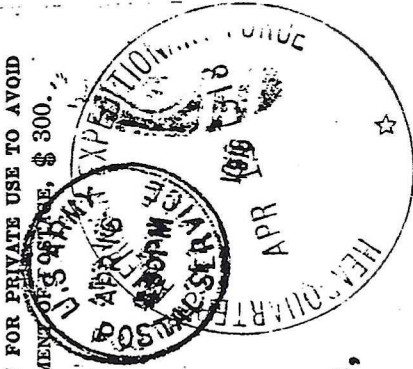
103rd F.A. Rgt. served with French 6th Army in February 1918.

The vast majority of the U.S. troops in France served with the French Army until early August 1918, when the U.S. First Army began to take command of U.S. Divisions in preparation for the St. Mihiel offensive. Even after the creation of U.S. combat commands, hundreds of thousands of U.S. soldiers were spread over France, in training, serving in the line with French units, or performing logistics and communications duties. By Gen. Order 72, these troops were directed to use French postal facilities when no U.S. APO was present.

**Wartime
History and Organization**

American Red Cross

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID
PAYMENT OF POSTAGE, \$ 300.00



Commanding Officer,
American Red Cross Military Hospital #3,
Paris, France.

The American Red Cross, while not a unit of the AEF, equipped and established 13 ARC Military hospitals which were run by the Army Medical Department, in addition to the hospitals which it ran itself.



Official Business

AMERICAN RED CROSS
(CROIX-ROUGE AMERICAINE)

2, Place de Ri...
PARIS

UNIT RETURNED TO U.S.

of Gordon

to Be...

EXAMINED BY No. 3

Lt Melvin C. Erickson
C°L 167th Inf

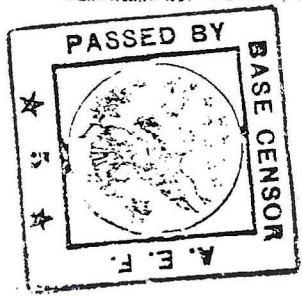
RECEIVED
CAMP GORDON
MAY 23 1919
From A. E. F.

EXAMINATED BY A. R. C. CENSOR

WAR DEPARTMENT.

STAT. DIV. ...

OFFICIAL BUSINESS



Unlike other service organizations, the ARC had its own post office (recorded from January 1919), and the right to perform unit censorship. (From the few examples seen, it appears that AEF unit censor handstamp 1848 was assigned to the ARC Paris office.)