

THE US ARMY AND ITS POSTAL SERVICE ABROAD DURING WORLD WAR II

This exhibit was created by, and is the property of the late Al Kugel, and is being supplied by his heirs as a courtesy to the Military Postal History Society. (See <http://militaryphs.org>) The Military Postal History Society (MPHS) is a non-profit organization for philatelists and stamp collectors interested in the collecting and studying of the postal aspects of all wars and military actions of all countries, including soldiers' campaign covers, naval mail, occupation and internment covers, patriotics, propaganda, V-mail, censorship and similar related material.

Postmarks
U.S. Army Postal Service

Machine Postmarks

Agent Menno B. Rohrer
14th MP CI Det, APO 228
% P.M., New York, N. Y.



The Infantry Journal

U. S. ...
1115 Se
Washing

*Sgt. F. Buckwald 1305471
13th A.A.C.S.
APO 606
c/o P.M. ...*



Air Mail

*Mr. Mrs. E. Wiggo
Maple St.*

Brig. Gen E.S. Wetzel
HQ USASTAF
APO 234 c/o PM
San Francisco, Calif



Rec'd 9/7/45 PM

censored
GENERAL OFFICERS MAIL

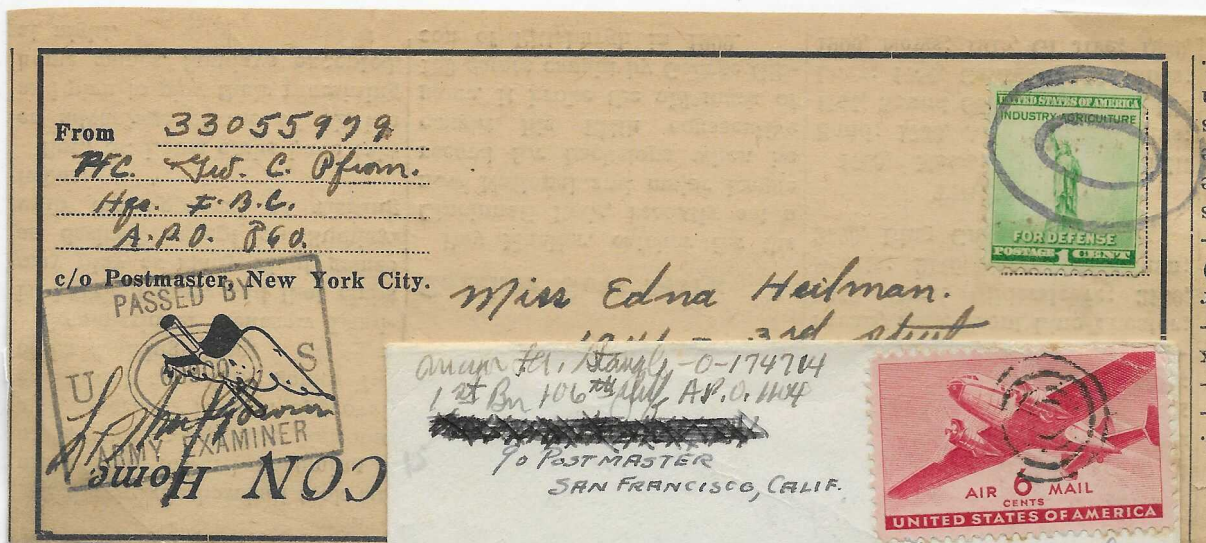
Mrs. E.S. Wetzel
4125 Military Rd.
Washington, D.C.

APOs that processed large amounts of mail were eventually equipped with canceling machines. US Army Postal Service was the prevalent text, but size of dial and layout of this text provide several types of cancel.

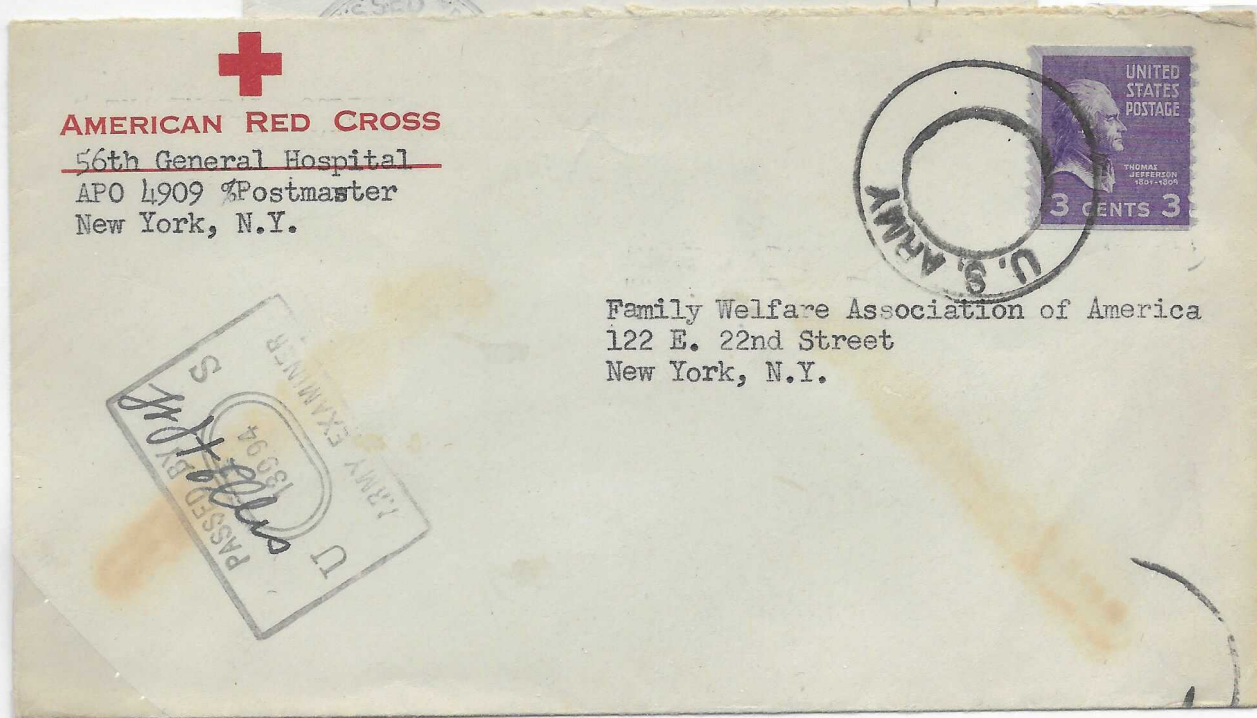
APO 112, Liege, Belgium. APO 606, Accra, Gold Coast. APO 234, Guam (note General Officer mail).

Postmarks
Miscellaneous Text/Design

Handstamps



Piece of front page of *The White Falcon*, newspaper of the Iceland Base Command

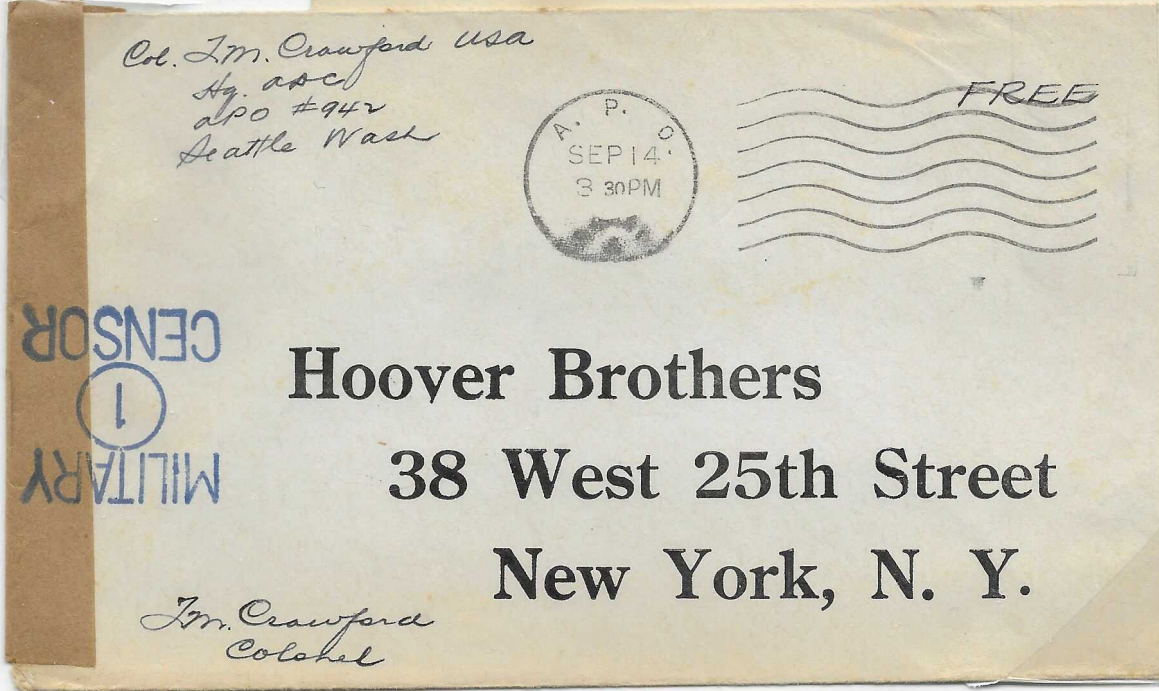
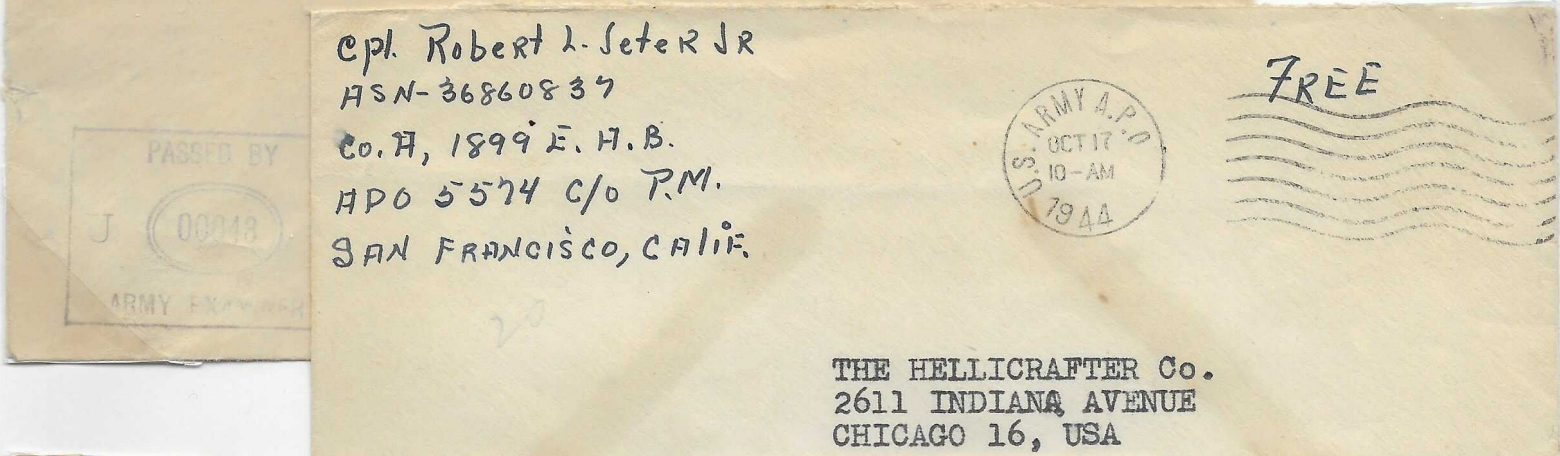
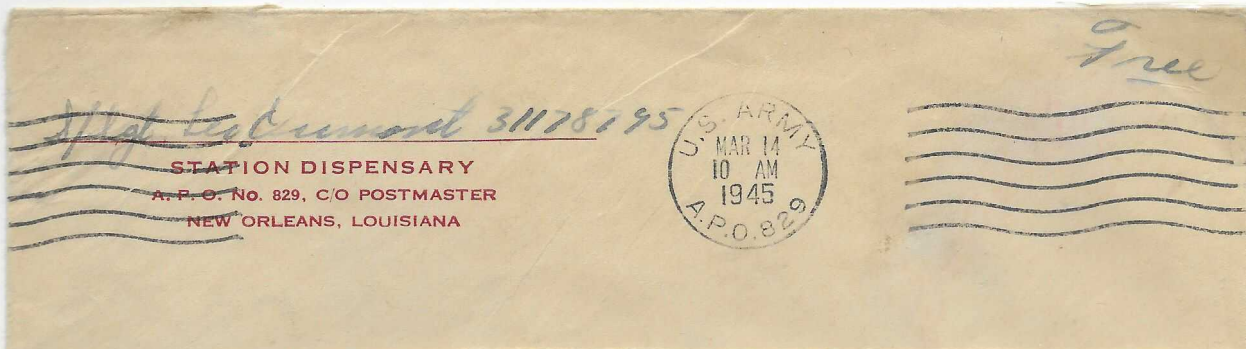


Stamps on non-first class mail were supposed to be cancelled by undated killers. The standard Post Office double oval cancel, without text, was frequently (but not consistently) used for this purpose.

Mail from personnel in transit (identified by high "transit APO" numbers) was postmarked with a variety of devices designed to disclose as little as possible.

Postmarks
Miscellaneous Text/Design

Machine Cancels

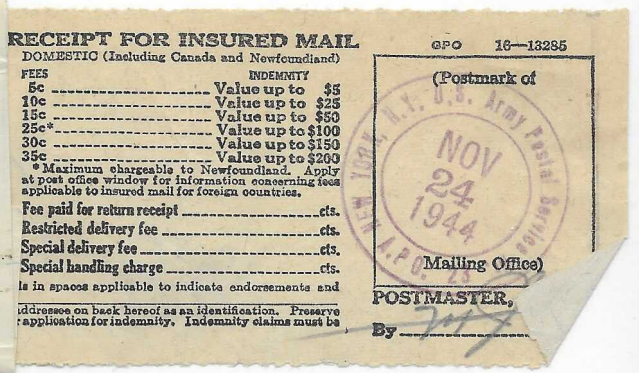
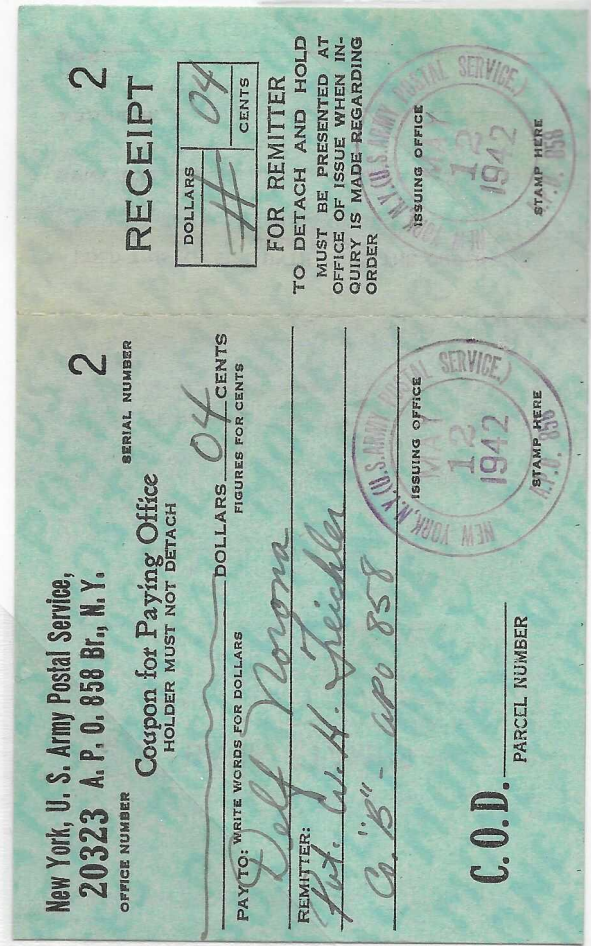
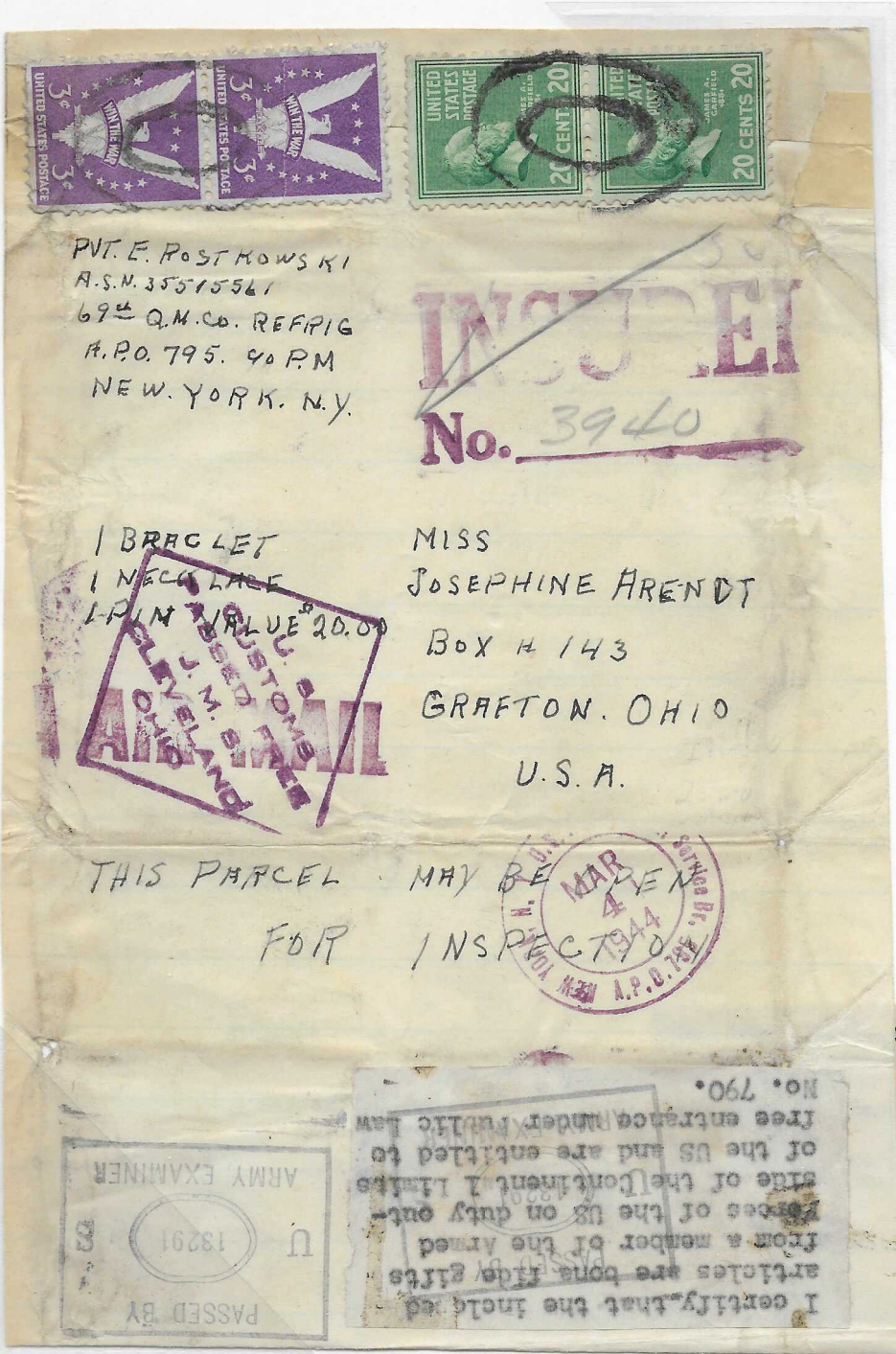


While most machine postmarks used the standard "US Army Postal Service" text, many did not. The reason for this variation in design is not known.

APO 829, Ft. William D. Davis, Canal Zone. APO 5574, transit APO (location unknown). APO 942, Ft. Richardson, Alaska

Military Postal Markings
U.S. Army Postal Service

Special Services Datestamps

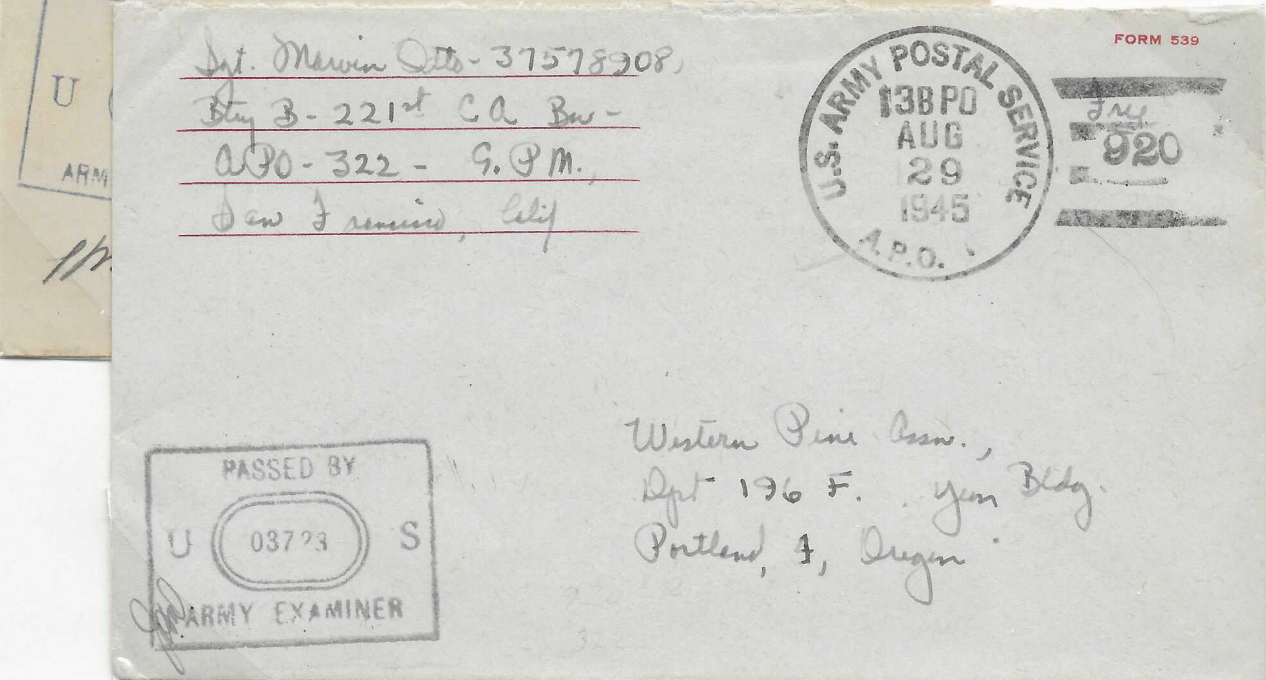
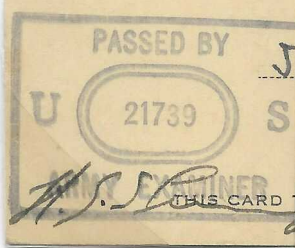
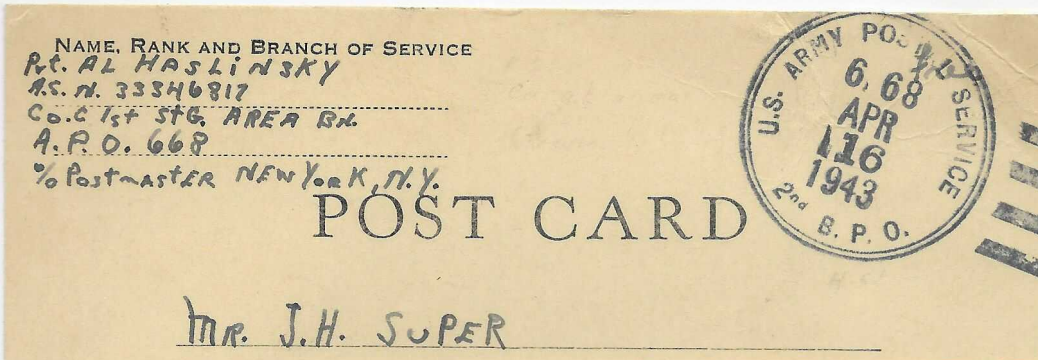


Army Post Offices operated pursuant to USPO regulations, which meant that registered mail, parcel post and other non-first class mater was required to be stamped with a different kind of datestamp. These were provided in the regular Post Office pattern of a double circle datestamp without killer bars.

APO 795, Khorramashahr, Iran. APO 23, Vittel, France. APO 858, Narsarssuak, Greenland

Military Postal Markings
BPO Postmarks

Handstamps



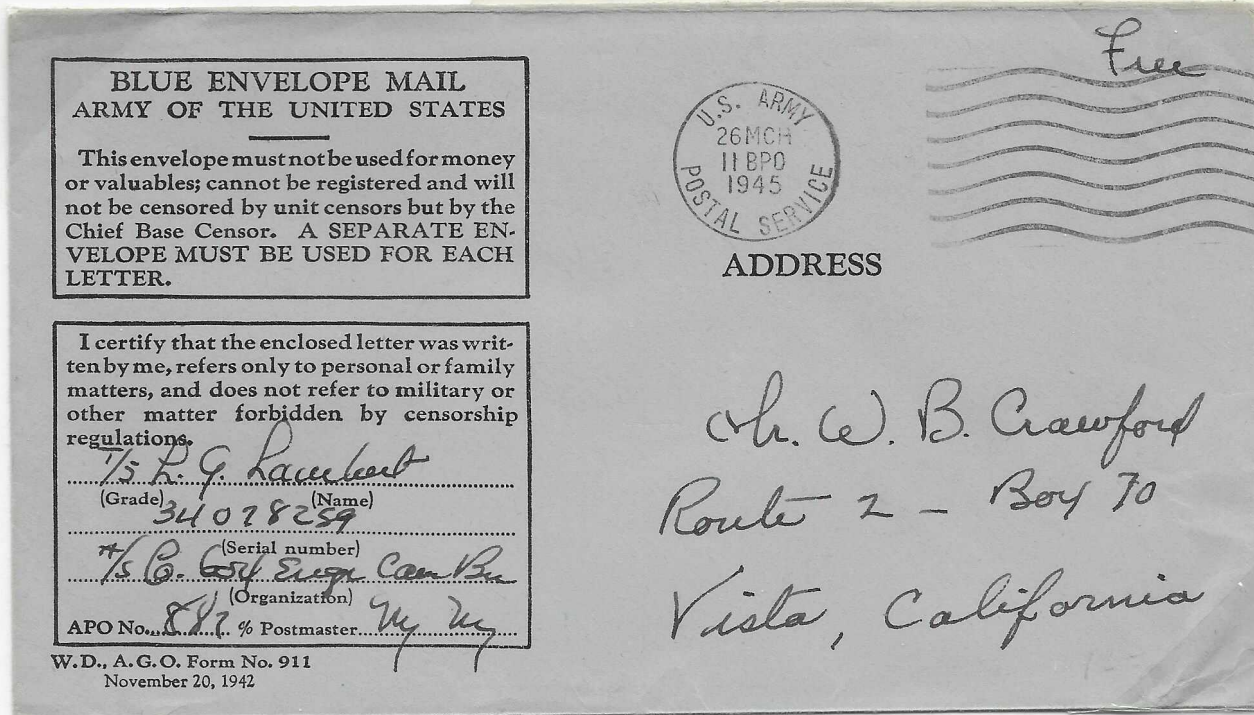
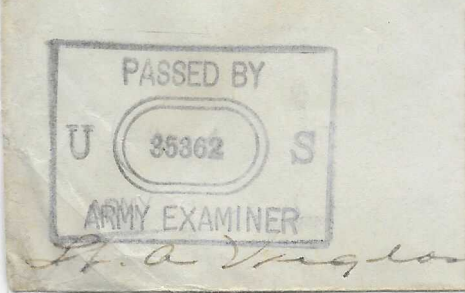
Base Post Offices were located so as to be able to handle mail from a number of APOs in their area. BPOs 1 through 25 operated during World War II, BPO 1 opening on 1 August 1942 and BPO 25 on 30 June 1945.

Most of the BPO handstamp postmarks were taken from existing APO supplies, so that design and color variations present in APO handstamps can be found, to a lesser extent, in BPO postmarks.

BPO 2, Casablanca, Morocco. BPO 7, Port Moresby, New Guinea. BPO 13, Biak, New Guinea (very unusual placement of APO number in bars).

Military Postal Markings
BPO Postmarks

Machine Cancels

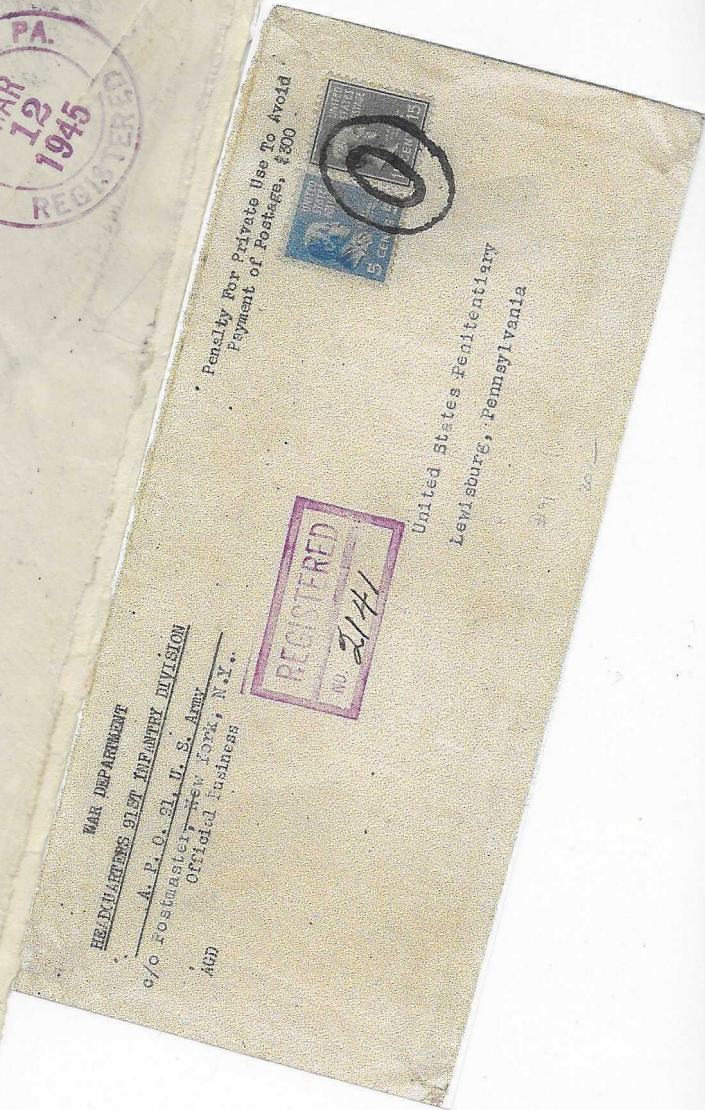


Machine cancels used by the Base Post Offices mirror the variety of those used by the APOs. As will be seen from this and the previous page, some BPOs used both machine and handstamp cancels.

BPO 7, Port Moresby, New Guinea (unusual use to Scotland.). BPO 9, Leghorn, Italy. BPO 11, Paris, France.

BPO Postmarks

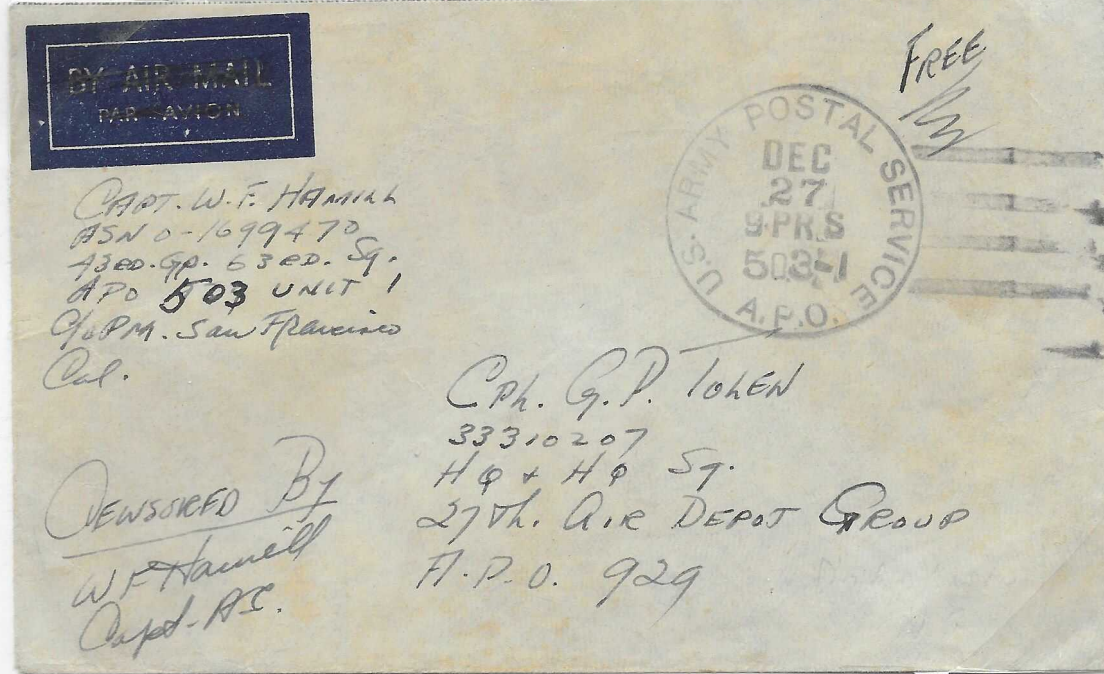
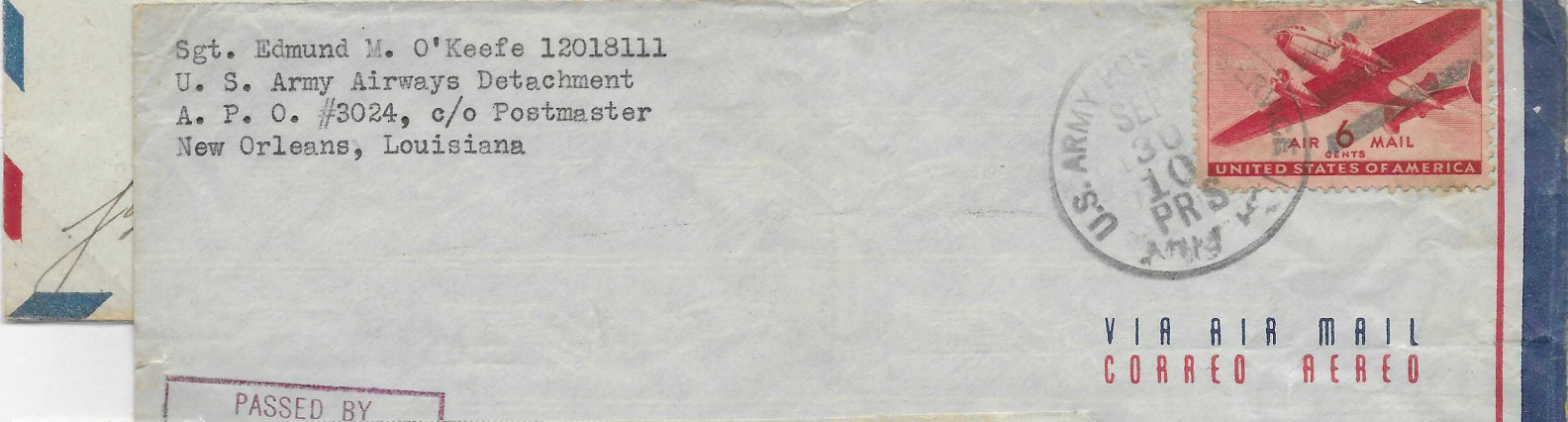
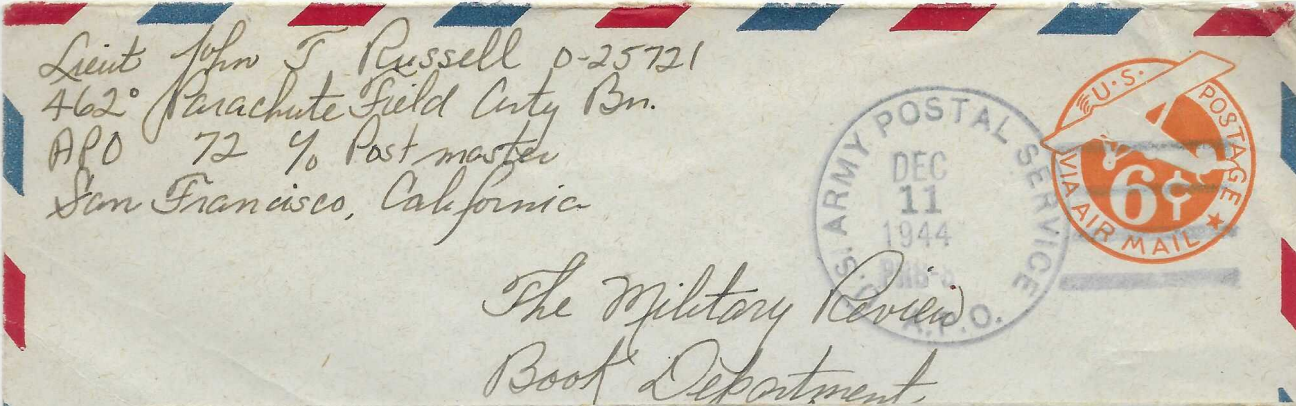
Special Services Datestamps



While BPOs processed large amounts of mail, the near-total lack of BPO postmarks designed for registered and non-first-class mail suggests that the only overflow that BPOs handled from APOs was first class mail, and that most registered mail from APOs passed through the BPOs in sealed bags. Registered mail with BPO postmarks is quite unusual.

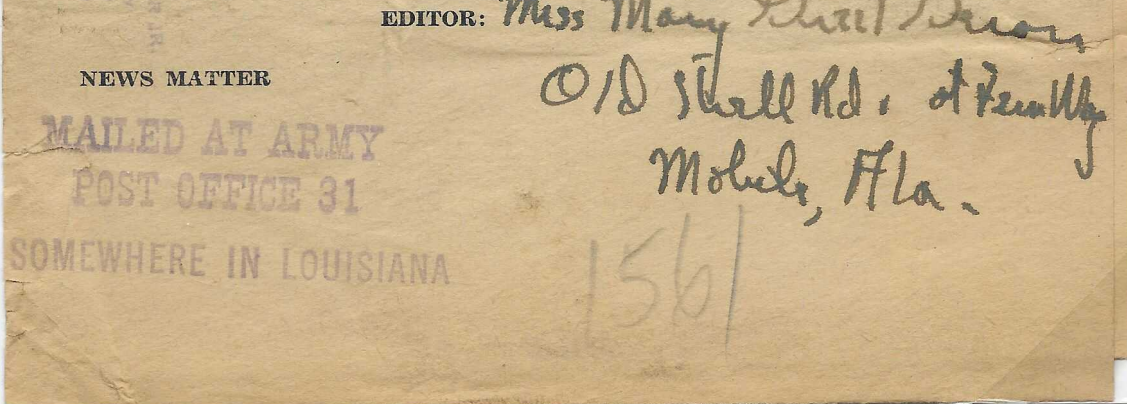
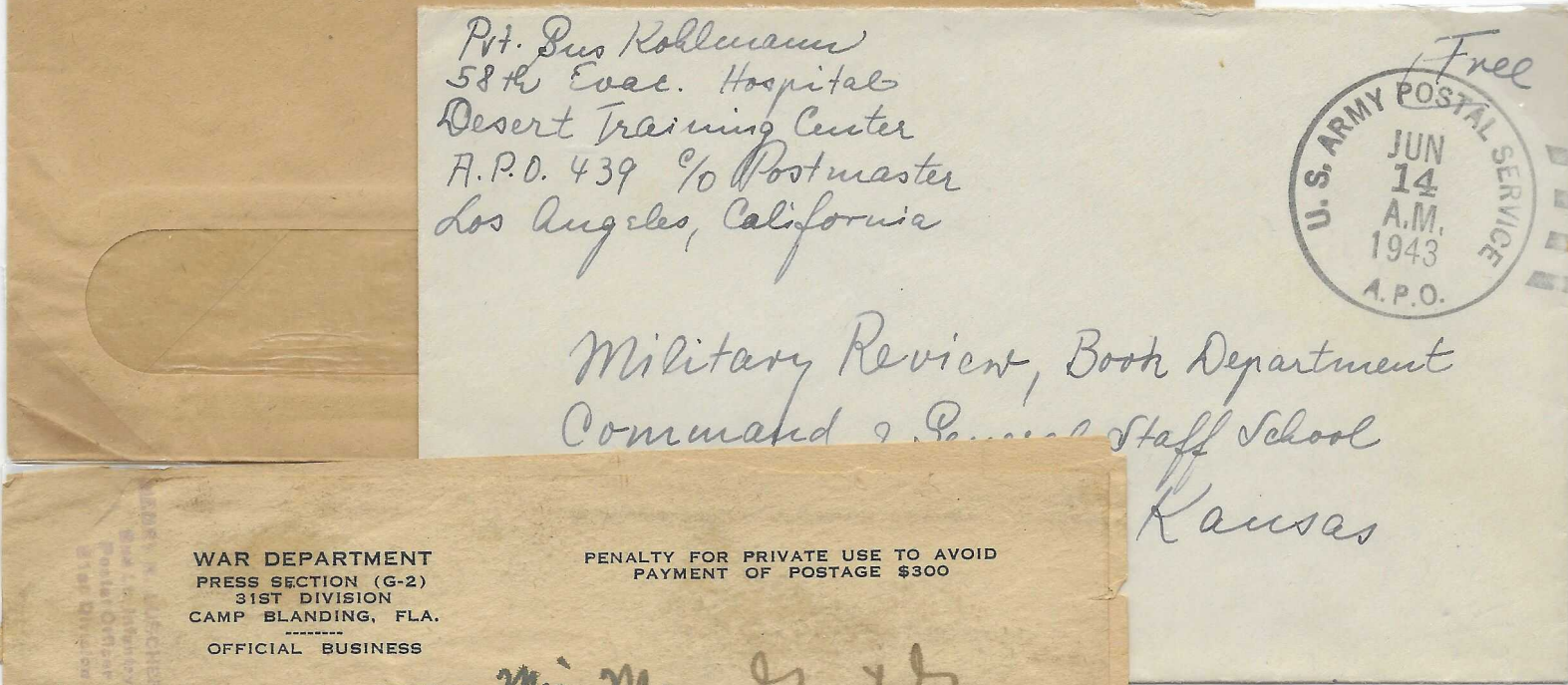
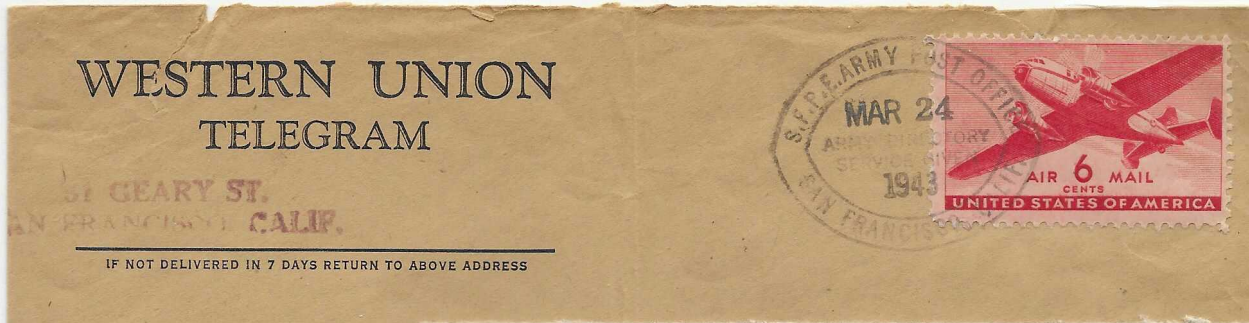
PRS Postmarks

Handstamps



Postal Regulating Stations operated overseas to control and route mail between the US and the Base Post Offices. About 30 PRSs operated during World War II, but many of these were in service for under 6 months. Mail bearing PRS postmarks is much scarcer than mail bearing BPO postmarks. Thus far only handstamps designed for first class mail have been observed.

PRS 8, Tacloban, Philippines. PRS 10, Albrook Field, Canal Zone. PRS 9, New Guinea (Oro Bay or Biak).

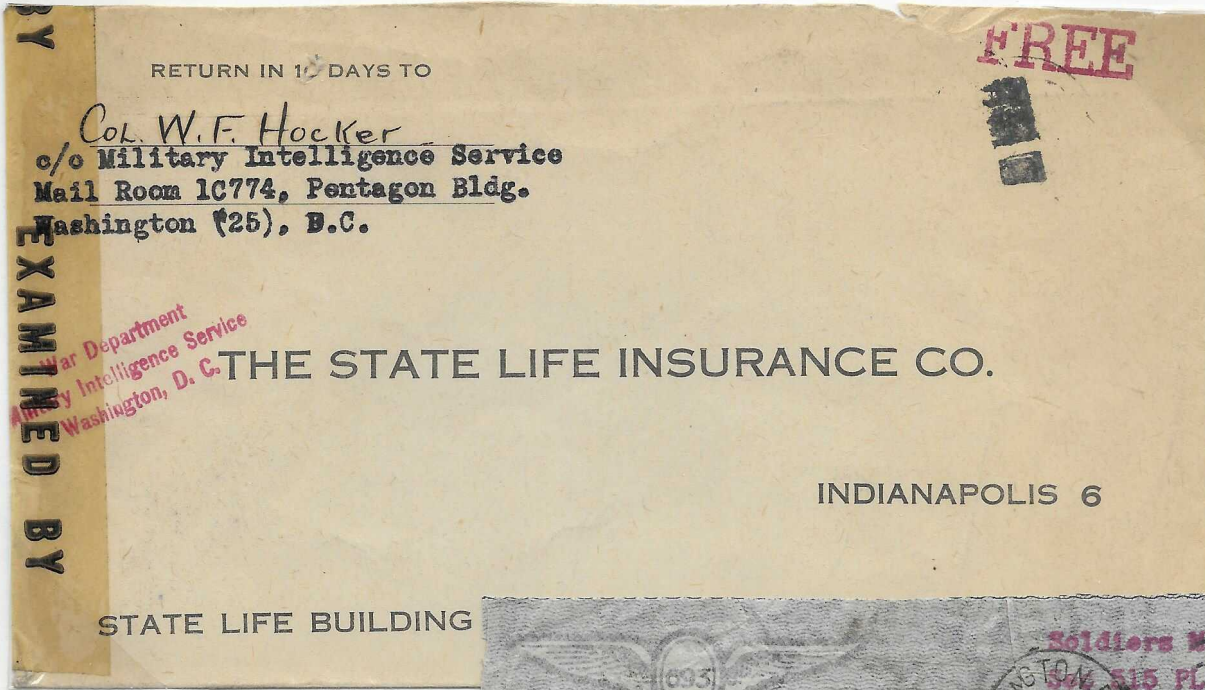


Most military mail originating in the Continental United States was sent through civilian post offices and bears a postmark either from a town nearby or from a branch post office maintained a military facility. This mail is very common and outside the scope of this exhibit, so no examples are shown here.

The Army Postal Service did operate a few post offices in the United States. Each of the Ports of Embarkation had an Army Post Office to regulate the flow of mail to and from APOs overseas. The San Francisco office is the only one for which a postmark is recorded. Additionally, APOs were used for mail originating from maneuvers in California, Georgia, Louisiana and Tennessee.

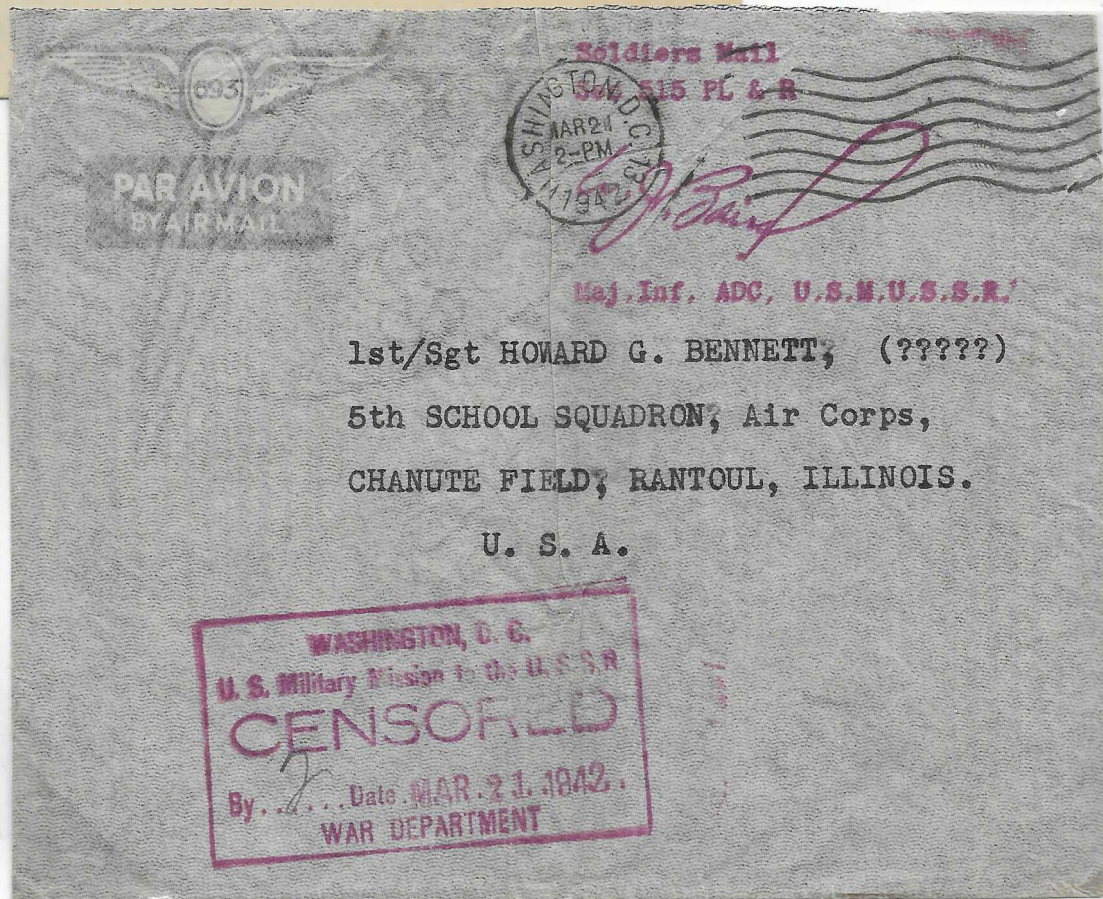
Stateside Mail

Undercover Addresses
Overseas



T/Sgt Charles M. Smith
Room 2608
Munitions Building
Washington, D. C.

Return address
on back.

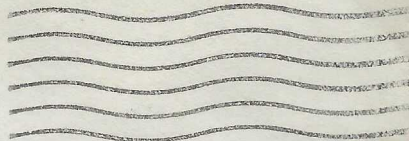


Mail to and from intelligence sensitive operations overseas was routed through appropriate offices in Washington, D.C. The origin of the top cover remains effectively obscured, but it clearly came from abroad evidenced the presence of an Office of Censorship cellophane censor tape. The second cover is identified to the US Mission to the USSR by its (very unusual) free frank and censor handstamps.

Stateside Mail

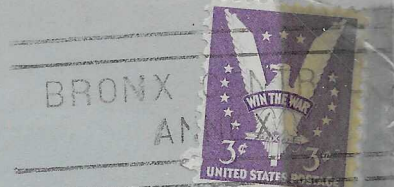
Undercover Addresses
Manhattan Project

1/5 Curt Jewell 18196778
PO Box 1663
Santa Fe, NM



Free

*Mrs. C
Iowa
Te*



OPENED BY

S/Sgt. A.W. Van Vessum

P.E. 11099693

S.E.N. - Box 180



Cover dated 9 August 1945, the date on which the second A-bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

*Mr. Carson Smith
70 Petty Goo. Eng. Co.
Casilla No. 260
Ambato, Ecuador*



New Mexico

CORREO AEREO

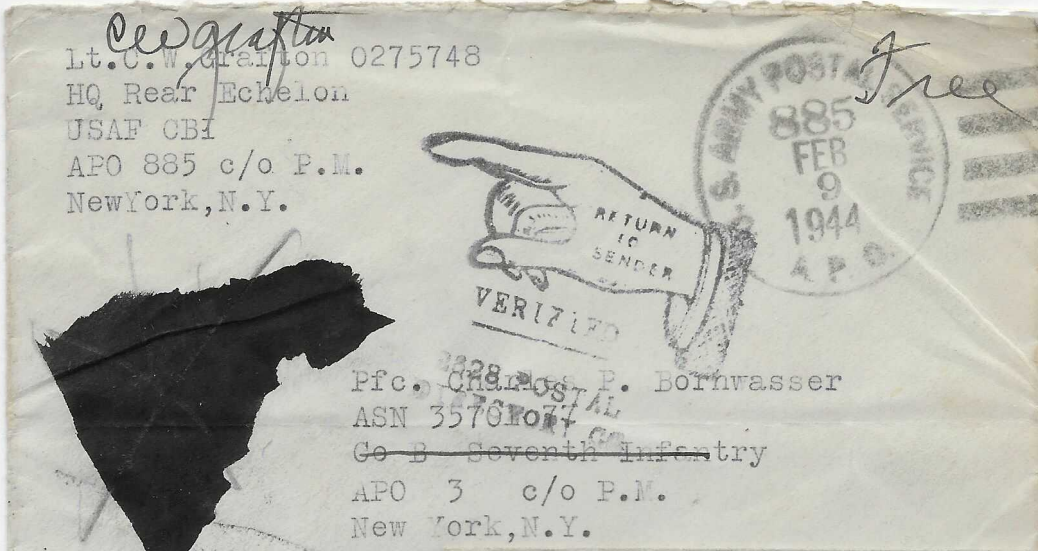
*Pvt. Neil Davis 38701615 CE
Box 1663
Santa Fe, New Mexico
U.S.A.*

U. S. ARMY EXAMINER

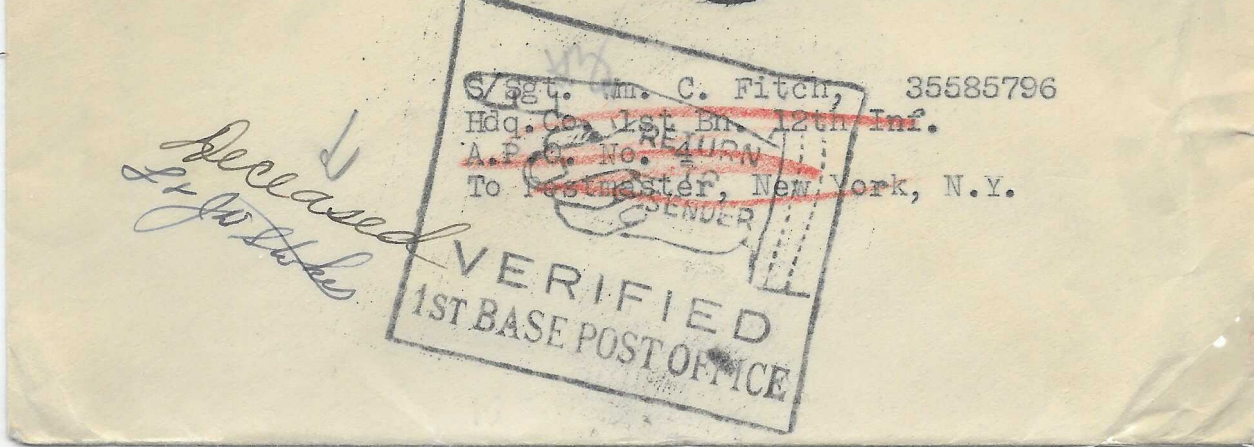
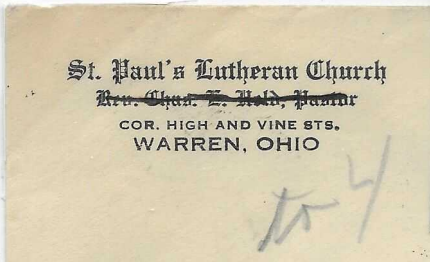
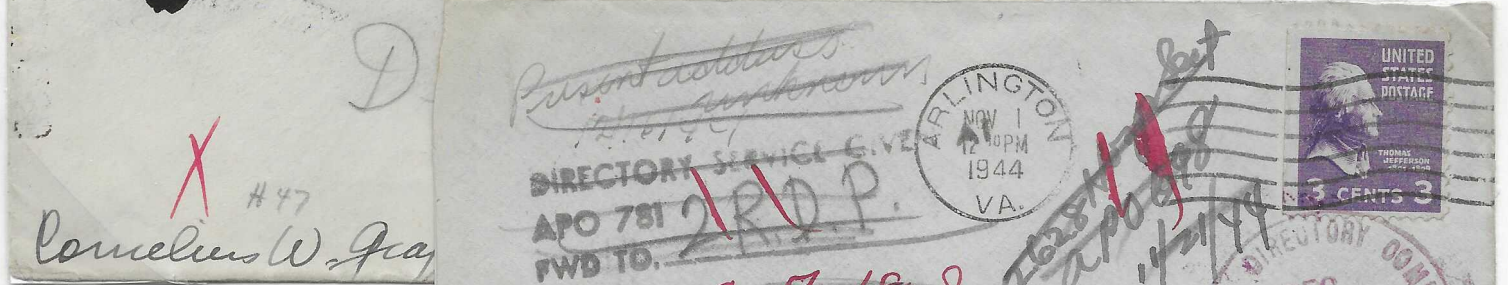
The Army used three post-office boxes (180, 1539 and 1663) in Santa Fe, NM for mail to and from in its atomic bomb development facility in Los Alamos, NM. Unlike other mail sent within the United States, all of this mail was subject to military censorship (though not all of it was censored). Los Alamos mail to or from foreign countries is quite rare.

Military Postmarks

Auxiliary Markings

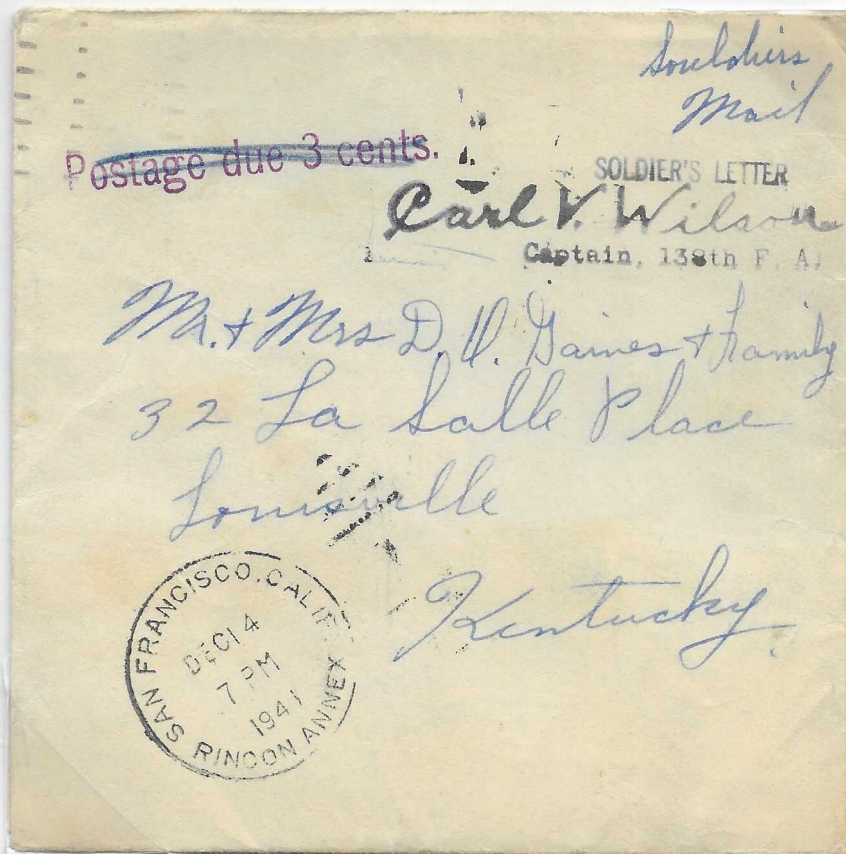


A wide variety of directional and informational markings occurs on APO covers. However, most of these cannot be identified to any particular APO or BPO, and in fact many of them appear to have been applied by non-postal units. Of those that are definitely postal auxiliary markings, most can be tied to Base Post Office 1.

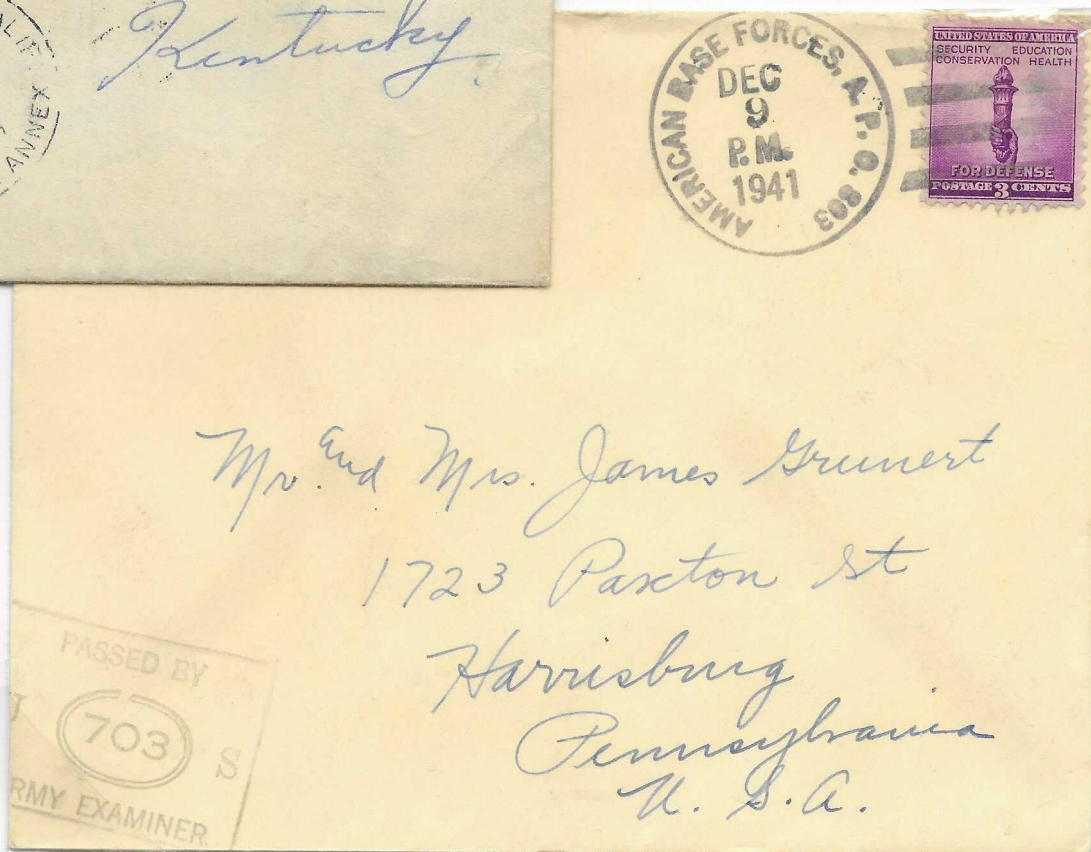


RATES

Mail to US
First Class Surface Mail



Return addressed on back "138th FA Bn., Plum," indicating that the unit was en route for the Philippines when this cover was mailed. (most likely from San Diego) However the unit remained in Hawaii after its arrival there on 21 December 1941.

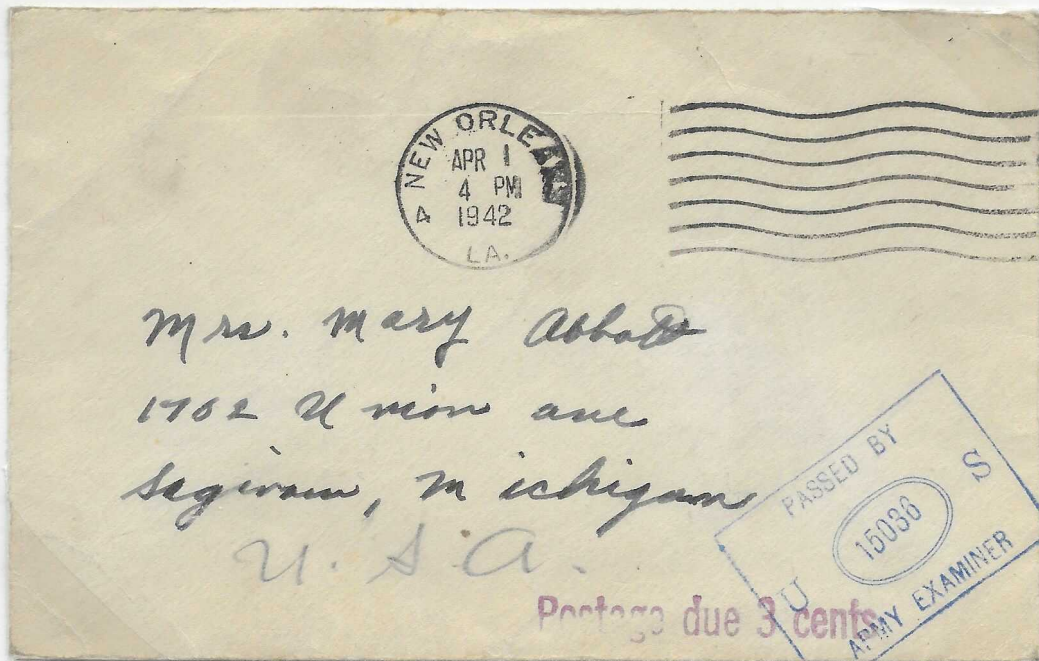


APO 803, Port of
Spain, Trinidad

From the beginning of the war until 1 April 1942 soldier's mail, regardless of mail class or point of origin had to be paid at domestic rates (3¢ per ounce for first class). The "Soldier's Mail" endorsement on the top cover was a hold-over from World War I (where it was required for free franking), and is not often encountered in WWII. Actual payment of postage due on unfranked servicemen's mail was a hit-and-miss affair, no doubt due to the sympathies of many of the postal clerks whose job it was to collect it.

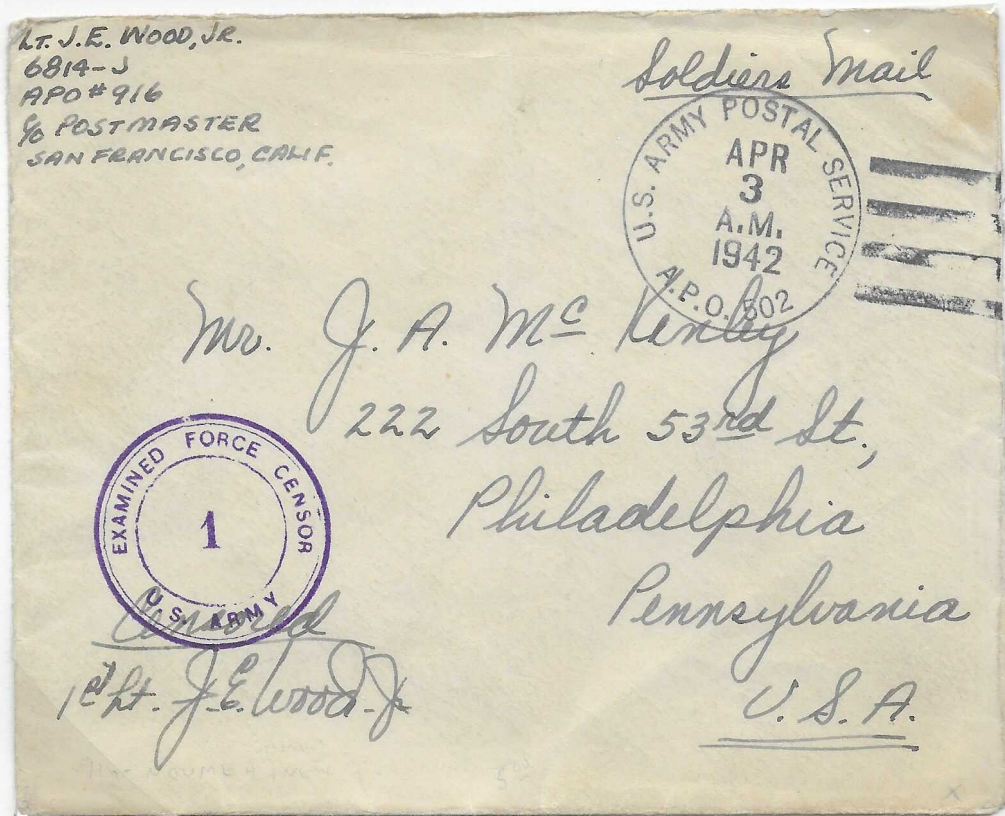
Rates
US Troops

Mail to US
First Class Surface Mail



Cover return-addressed 94 Rgt. C.A. (AA), APO 1111 on back. This unit left New York on 18 February and arrived in Australia on 28 March 1942. The cover was short-paid when mailed, but not when delivered.

APO 916 (listed as a mailing address only, but in fact almost certainly an early transit APO number) and APO 502 both Noumea, New Caledonia. "6814" return address refers to Task Force 6814, which departed New York 23 January and arrived Noumea 12 March 1942, becoming the Americal Division on 24 May 1942.



Public Law 507, passed on 27 March 1942 but first announced to postal officials on 1 April 1942, permitted free first class letter (and postcard) mail to be sent to and from military personnel anywhere from and to the US and its territories. It was required that such mail from servicemen be endorsed "Free" in the upper right corner and bear the sender's name, rank, service number and branch of service.

Rates
US Troops

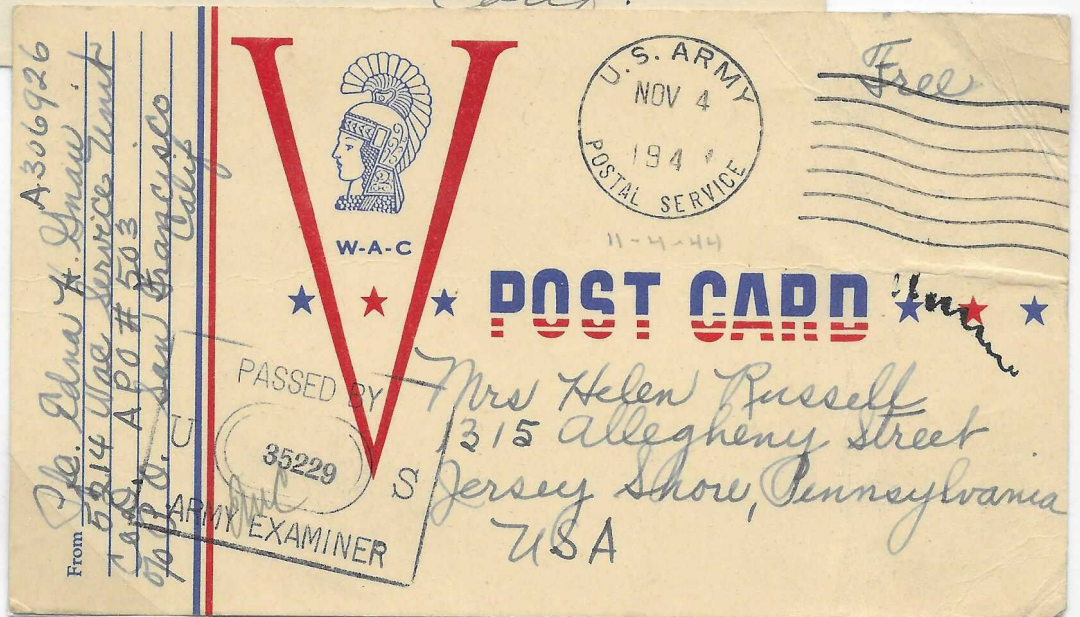
First Class Surface Mail



H. O'neil
6 Company 3rd Reg.
Army Post Branch
Des Moines, Iowa.



Mr. Thomas Ryan
Sacramento Co. Hospital
Sacramento
Calif.



The Women's Auxiliary Army Corps was established on 16 May 1942. However, its members were not accorded the military free frank until 1 July 1943, when the WAAC was incorporated into the Army as the Women's Army Corps.

APO 503, Oro Bay, New Guinea.

Rates
US Troops

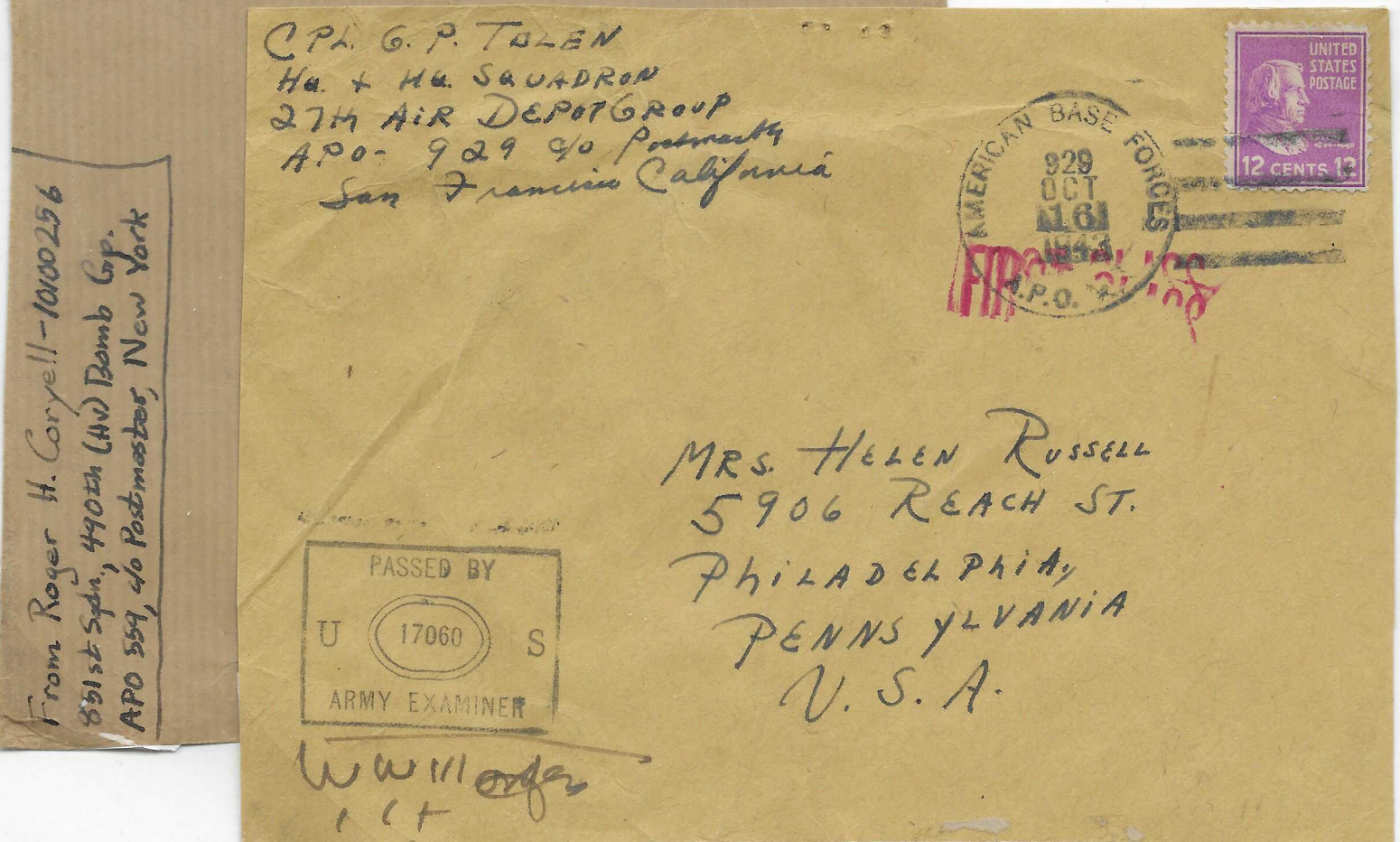
First Class Surface Mail



The military free frank during WWII did not extend to non-letter first class mail. Troops desiring to send parcels via first class mail had to pay for it at the rate of 3¢ per ounce.

APO 559, Elveden, England.

APO 929, Port Moresby, New Guinea.



From Roger H. Coryell - 10100256
851st Sqn., 490th (AV) Bomb Gp.
APO 559, 40 Postmaster, New York

Cpl. G. P. Tolben
Hq. + Hq. Squadron
27th Air Depot Group
APO-929 40 Port Moresby
San Francisco California



PASSED BY
U (17060) S
ARMY EXAMINER

Mrs. Helen Russell
5906 REACH ST.
PHILADELPHIA,
PENNSYLVANIA
U. S. A.

William
1st