

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

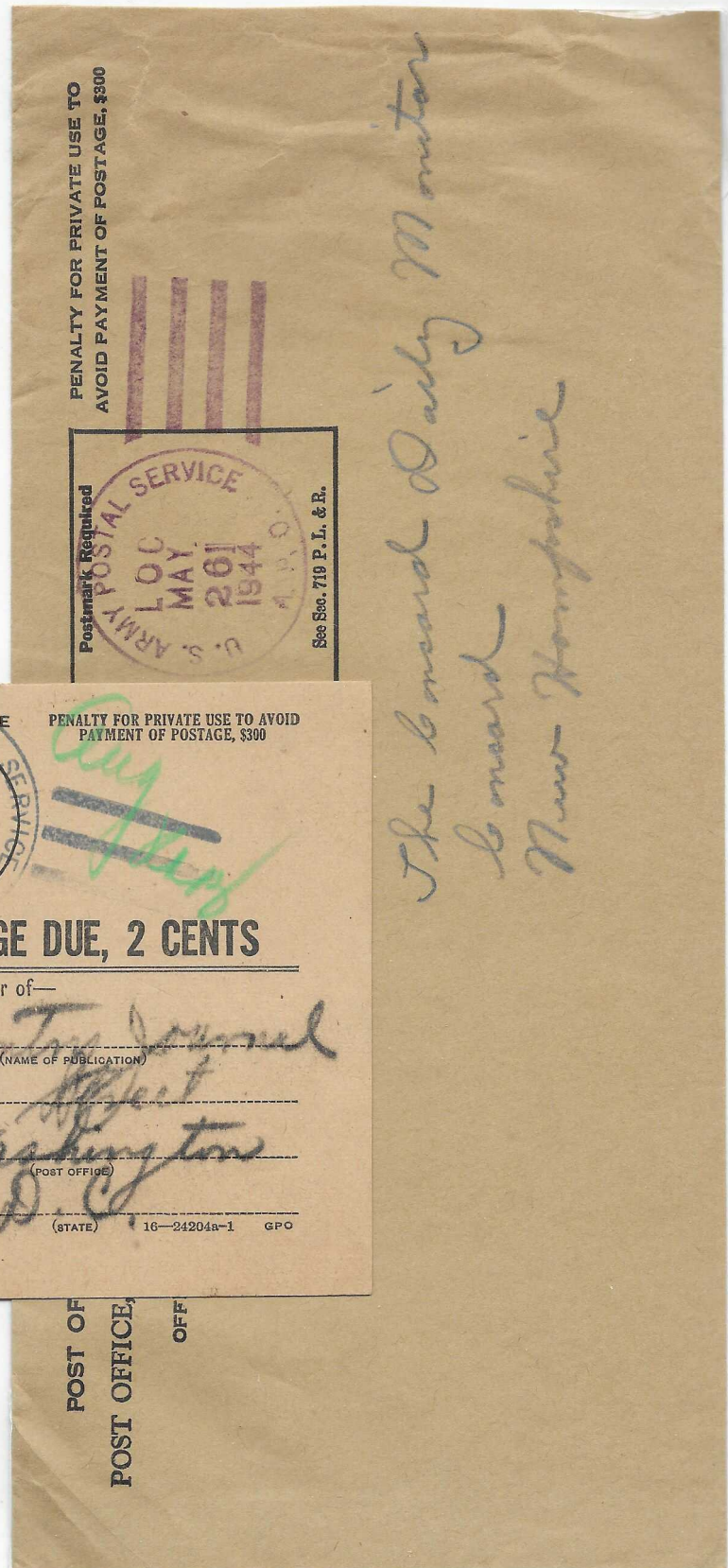
This exhibit was created by, and is the property of the late Al Kugel, and is being supplied by his heirs as a courtesy to the Military Postal History Society. (See <http://militaryphs.org>) The Military Postal History Society (MPHS) is a non-profit organization for philatelists and stamp collectors 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.

Rates  
Official Mail

Post Office Department Mail

Certain official mail, especially relating to financial aspects of APO operations, was carried under the free frank of the Post Office Department rather than that of the War Department.

APO 825, Albrook Field, Canal Zone.  
(Unusual cancel; LOC is typically the abbreviation for Line of Communication. This marking may in fact have been applied in New Orleans. APO 877, Ascension Island.



Form 3578-P

R&B AUG  
CAPT RAYMOND B. LONG  
Post Office Department G A W  
APO 877  
NEW YORK N.Y.

Post Office at APO-877 NEW YORK N.Y.  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Your publication, addressed as follows, is undeliverable at the address thereon for reason checked below:  
(39 U. S. C. 277, Sec. 808, P. L. & R.)

POSTMASTER  
Capt Raymond B. Long  
AW Unit Training  
Drew Field Fla

POSTMARK HERE  
A.M.  
APR  
29

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

POSTAGE DUE, 2 CENTS

To the publisher of—  
Industry Journal  
17th Street  
Washington  
D.C.

Key Number  
 Removed—Left no address.  No such number.  
 Not found.  Refused.  Unclaimed.

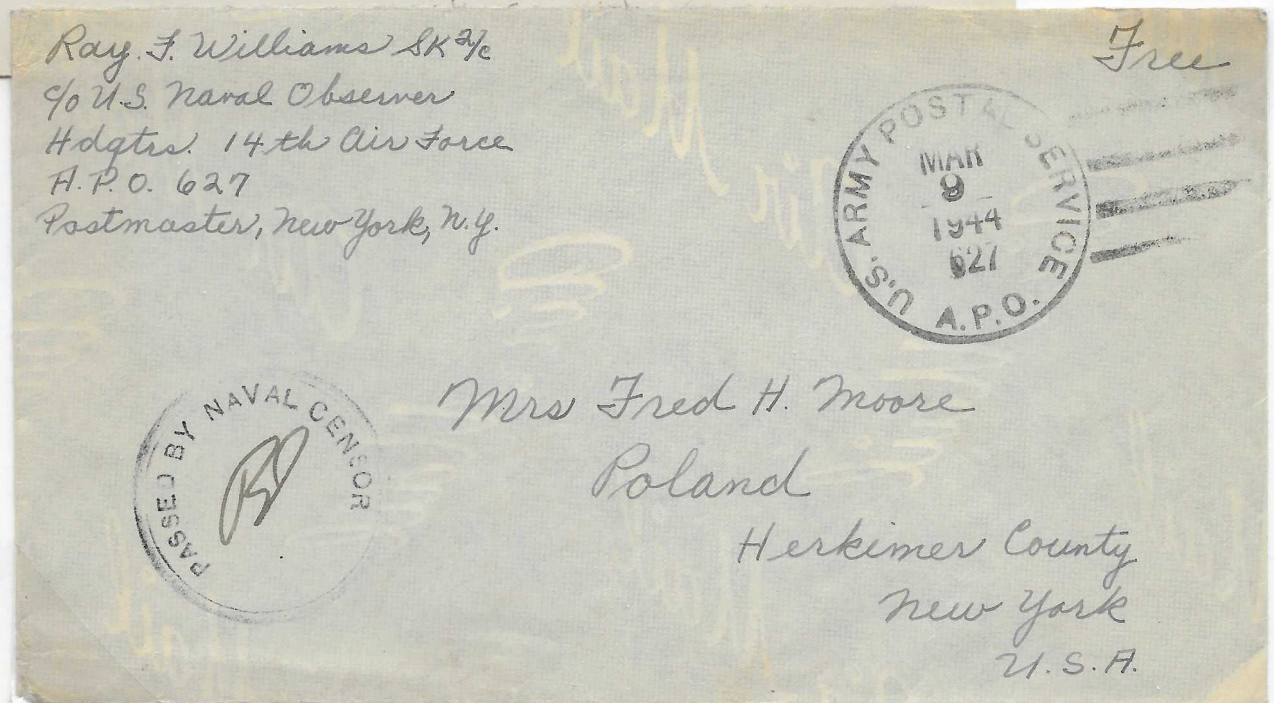
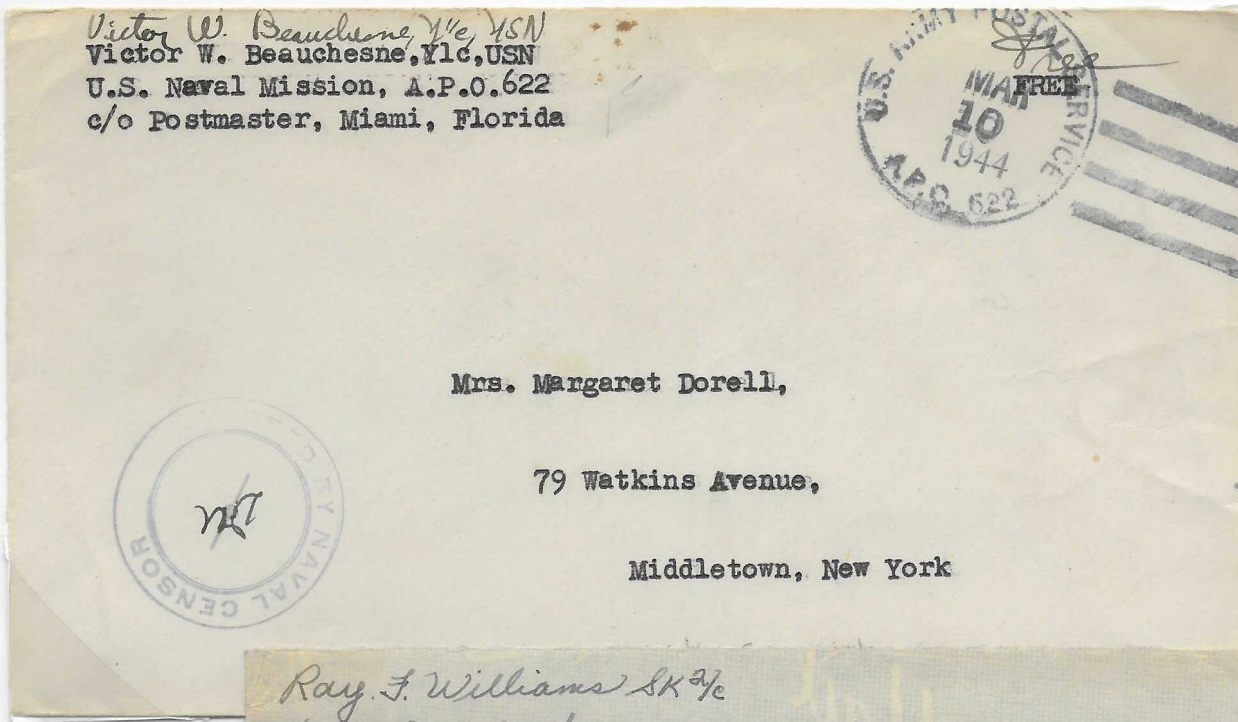
Removed to AW Unit Training  
Drew Field Fla

(STATE) 16-24204a-1 GPO



**APO USE BY NON-US ARMY PERSONNEL**

Other US Military



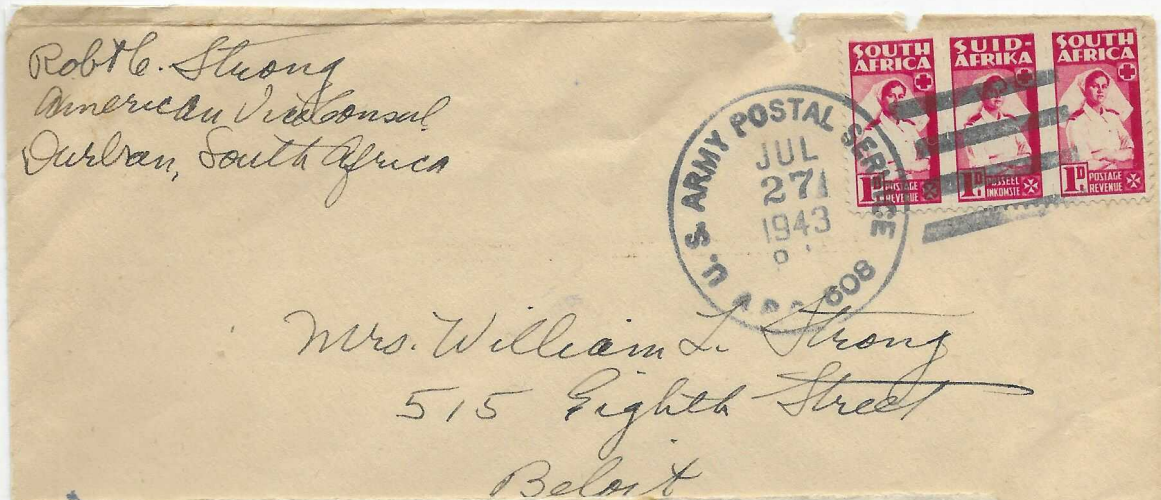
Use of APOs by Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel is unusual because the Navy (which had operational control of the Coast Guard during World War II) and Marines had their own postal systems. However, when elements of these branches were placed under Army control for specific operations, or where small numbers of Navy or Marine Corps personnel were attached to what was essentially an Army base or mission, they used the APOs connected with their parent unit or organization.

APO 622, Dakar, Senegal. APO 627, Chungking, China.



APO Use by Non-US Army Personnel

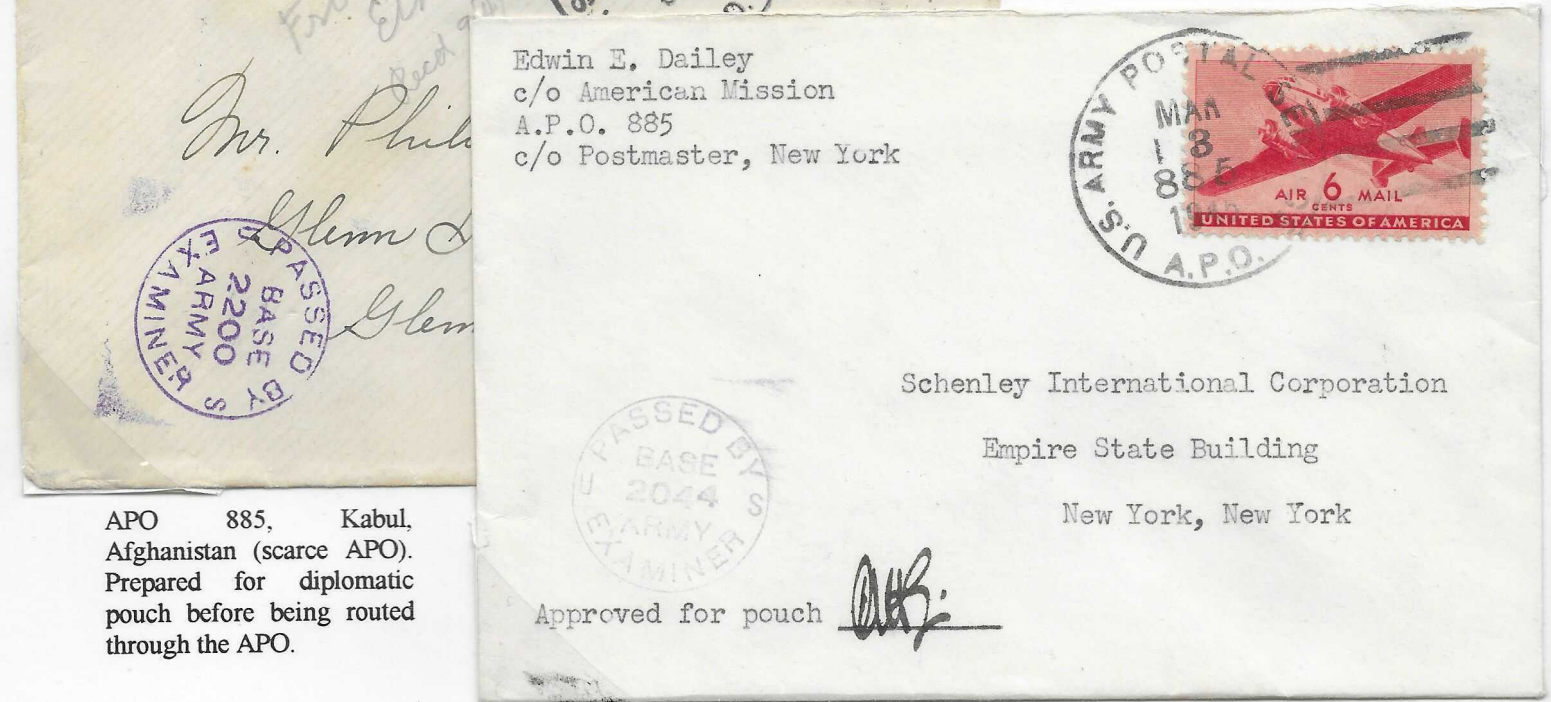
Civil Servants



Prepared for local posting but carried out of the mails to APO 608, Khartoum, Sudan.



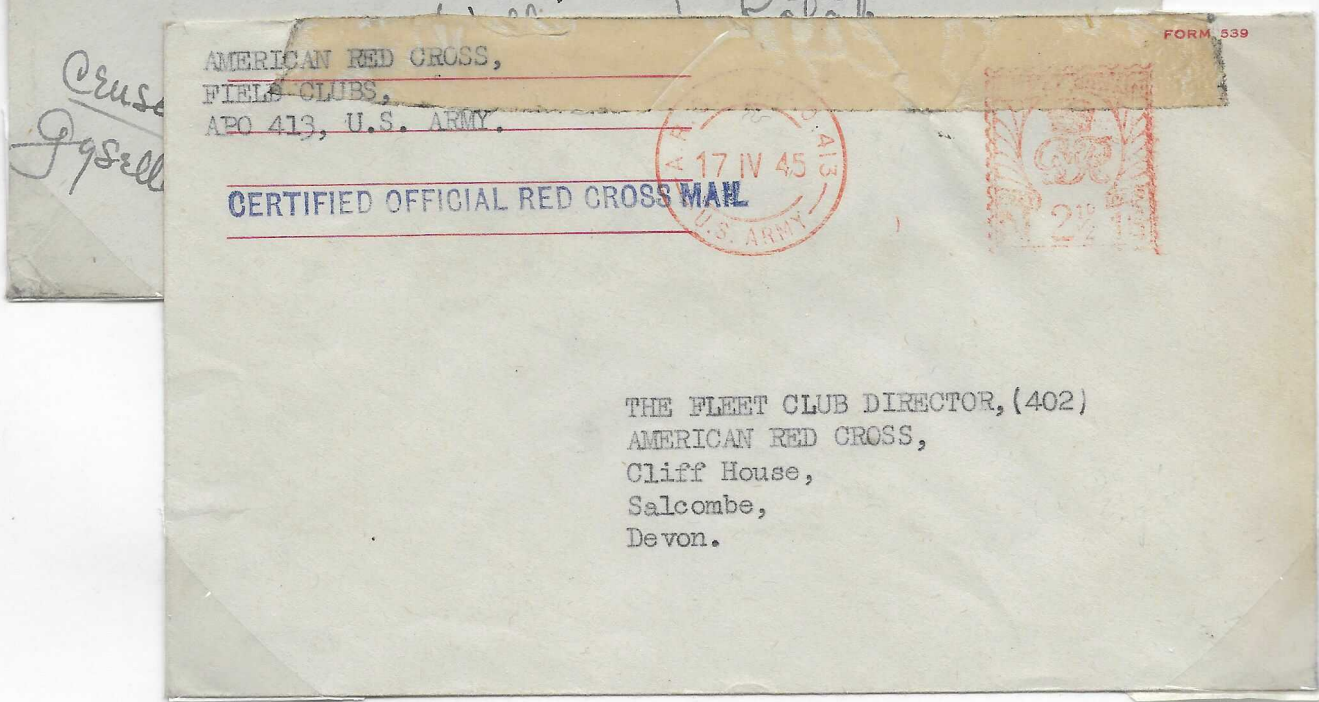
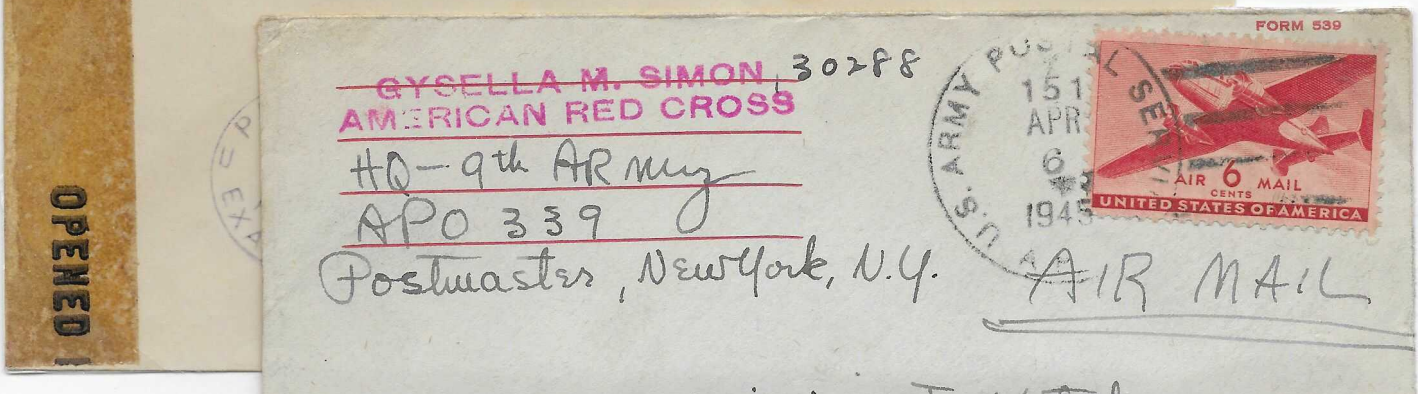
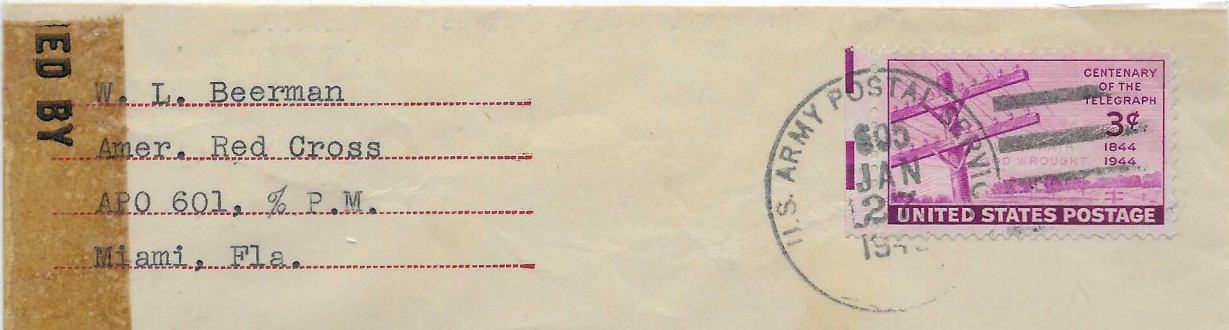
APO 617, Asmara, Eritrea. APO 617-A appears to have been the designation for the US Legation there.



APO 885, Kabul, Afghanistan (scarce APO). Prepared for diplomatic pouch before being routed through the APO.

Non-military employees of the US Government were allowed to send non-sensitive personal mail through the local post office in friendly countries. In countries where the mail service was considered unreliable or the local government less than friendly, they were allowed to use the diplomatic pouch. However, when an APO was located nearby, they were allowed to use it, at domestic rates.





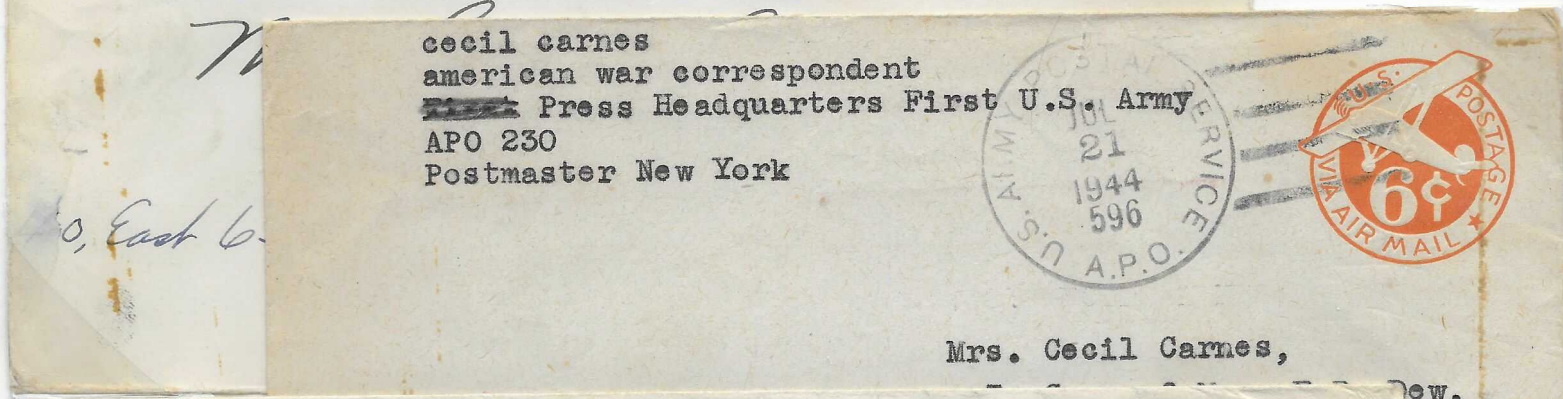
While chartered by the US Congress, the American Red Cross is a private organization. In recognition of its importance to the US war effort, however, its members were given the right to use APOs. While American Red Cross first class mail was consistently paid at domestic rates (as opposed to enjoying the military free franking privilege), air mail is consistently paid at 6¢ per half ounce, even after the domestic, non-military, rate increase to 8¢ on 26 March 1944. American Red Cross mail within the British Empire was treated as APO mail by the British, giving rise to the only APO meter from World War II.

APO 605, Roberts Field, Liberia. APO 151, Maastricht, Netherlands. APO 413, London, England.



APO Use by Non-US Army Personnel

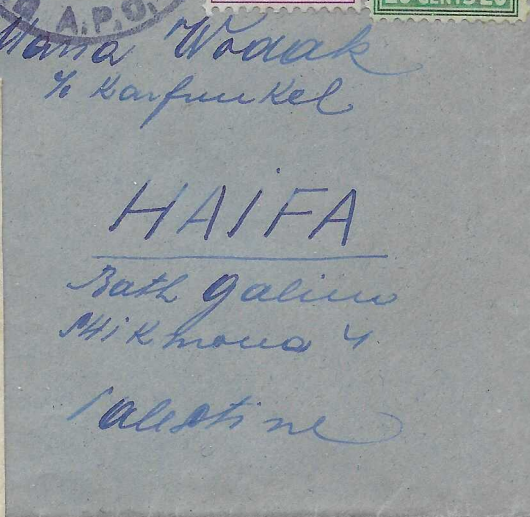
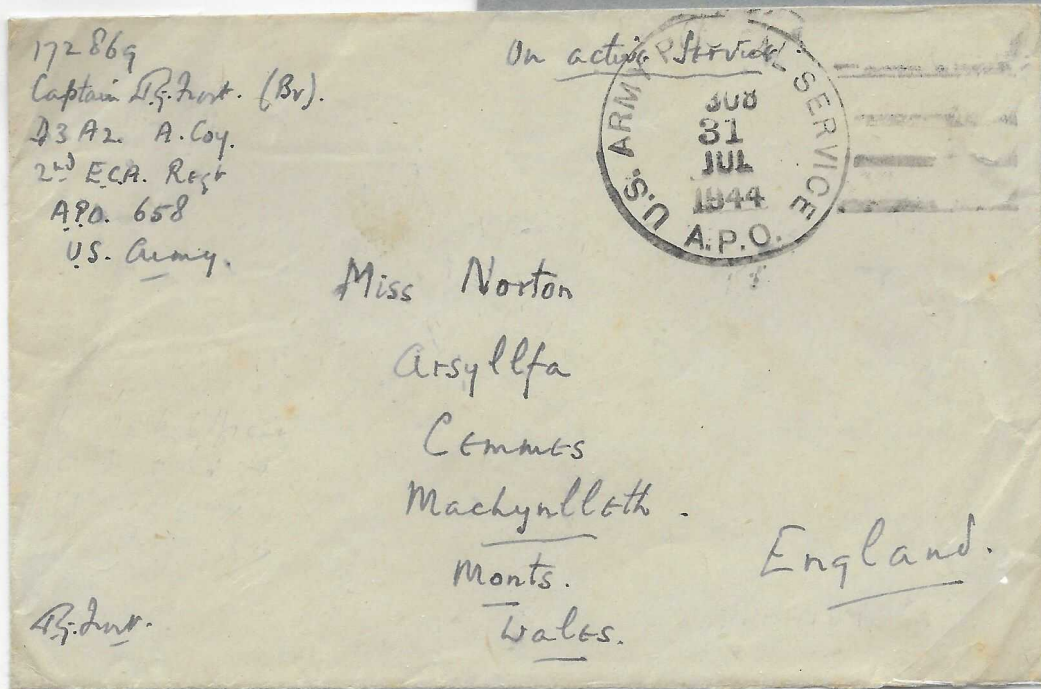
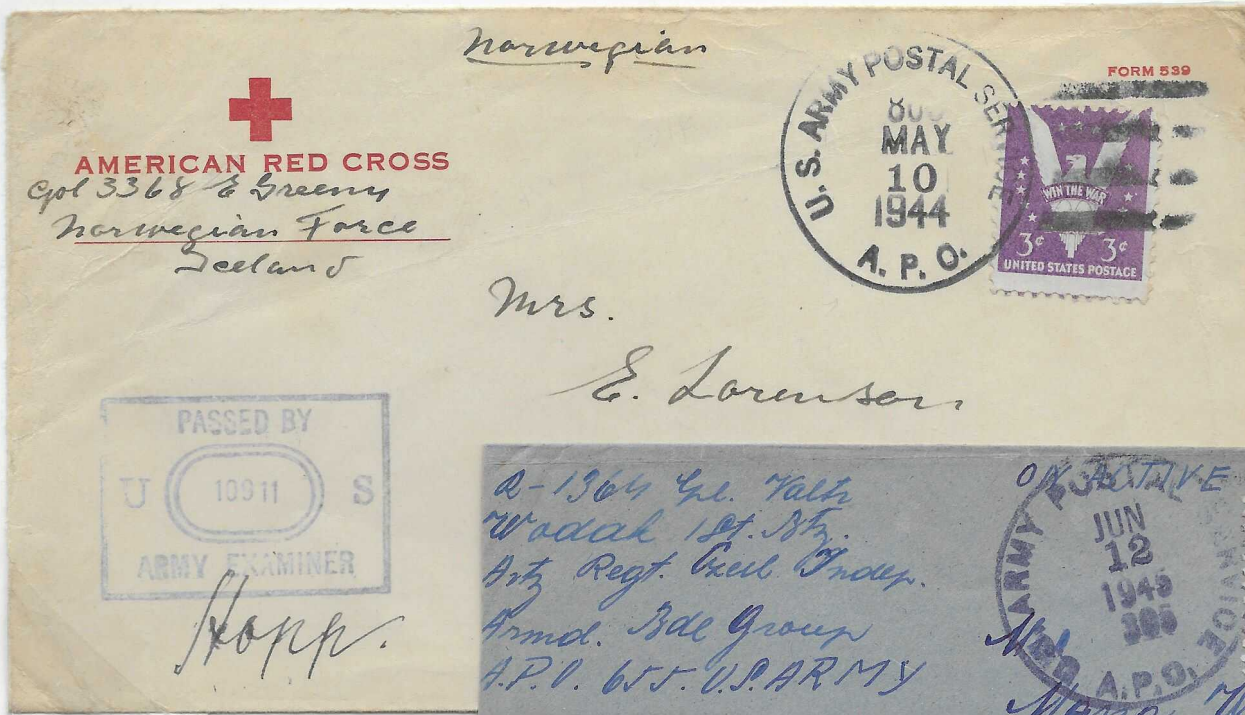
Other American Civilians



Certain other civilians deemed essential to the war effort -- such as members of other service organizations (e.g., American Field Service), merchant mariners (from 1 January 1943), aircraft company technical representatives, and oil field workers in the Persian Gulf) were allowed to use US APOs. They were required to pay domestic civilian rates, but from 22 October 1942 they were accorded the 6¢ per half ounce military airmail rate.

APO 997, Prince Rupert, BC, Canada. APO 596, France. APO 813, Belfast, Northern Ireland.





Beginning in mid-1944, a series of regulations extended US APO privileges to increasingly large numbers of Allied military personnel. Generally, foreign troops were to pay UPU (or other US treaty -- e.g., Canada) rates on mail to addresses outside the US. However, British personnel serving with US units enjoyed the privilege accorded US troops on the Continent to send letter mail to civilian addresses in GB for free (order issued 4 May 1944 in anticipation of D-Day).

APO 860, Reykjavik, Iceland. (The Norwegian force in Iceland consisted of 2 companies of Infantry. Cover is addressed to Canada, and the 3¢ properly pays the US-Canada treaty rate). APO 305, Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. APO 308, France.



Major E. Sandoval. 206043.  
h.q. Mex. Exp. Air Force. A.P.O. 710.  
C/o. Postmaster Sn. Francisco California.

*Dep-700*



FIRST NATIONAL BANK IN DALLAS.  
Dallas, Texas. U.S.A.



*[Handwritten signature]*



Major-General B. J. Valdes  
Headquarters Philippine Army  
APO 501, c/o Postmaster  
San Francisco, California



The Editor  
Military Review  
Command and General Staff School  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, U.S.A.

*CENSORED by  
B. J. VALDES  
MAJOR GENERAL PA.*

APO 74 (5 July 1945 registry backstamp), Clark Field, Philippines. The Mexican Expeditionary Air Force consisted of Squadron 201 of the Mexican Air Force. It was equipped with P-47 Tunderbolts.

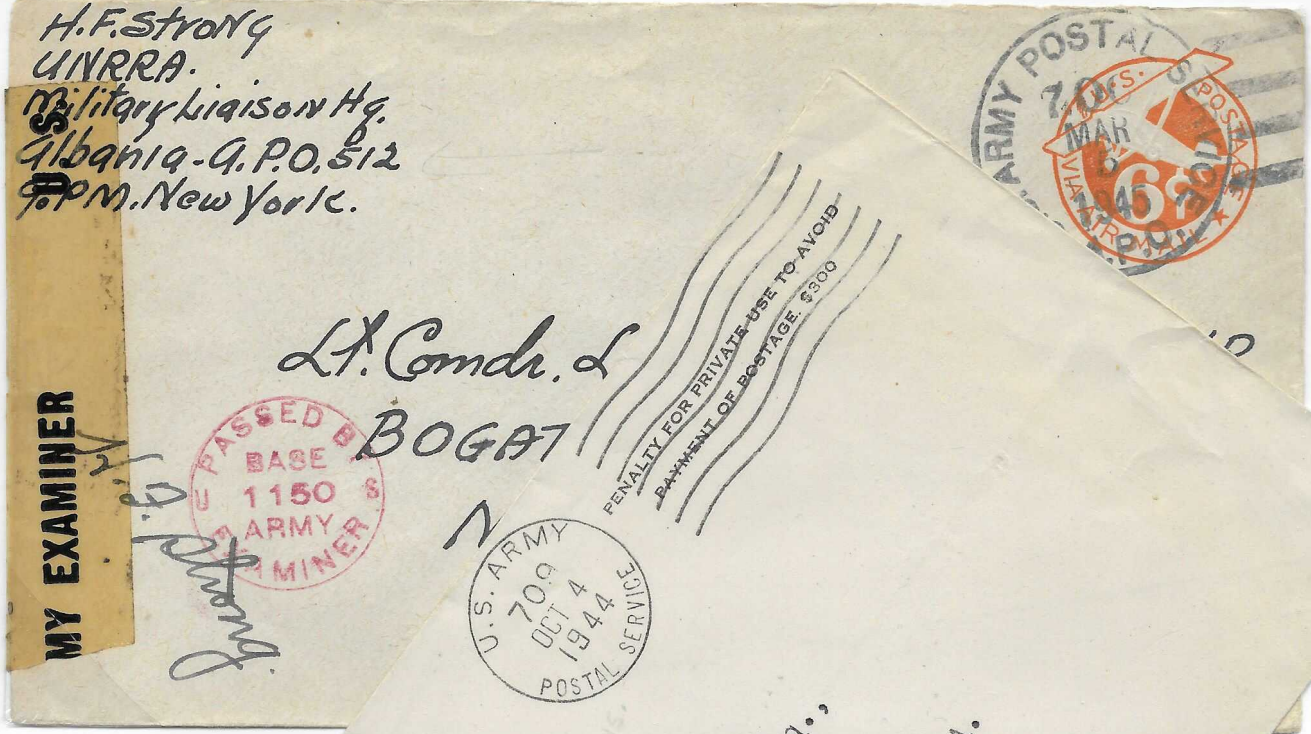
APO 500 (12 June 1945 registry backstamp), Manila, Philippines. From 1937 until July 1941, Douglas MacArthur was not a serving officer in the US Army. Instead, he was the Field Marshall of the Army of the Commonwealth of the Philippines. At the outbreak of the war, though technically not a part of the US Army, the Philippines Army (consisting of 7 Divisions plus the Philippines Scouts) was placed under command of the US Army Forces, Far East.

US APO mail from Allied forces to US addresses was carried at US military rates.



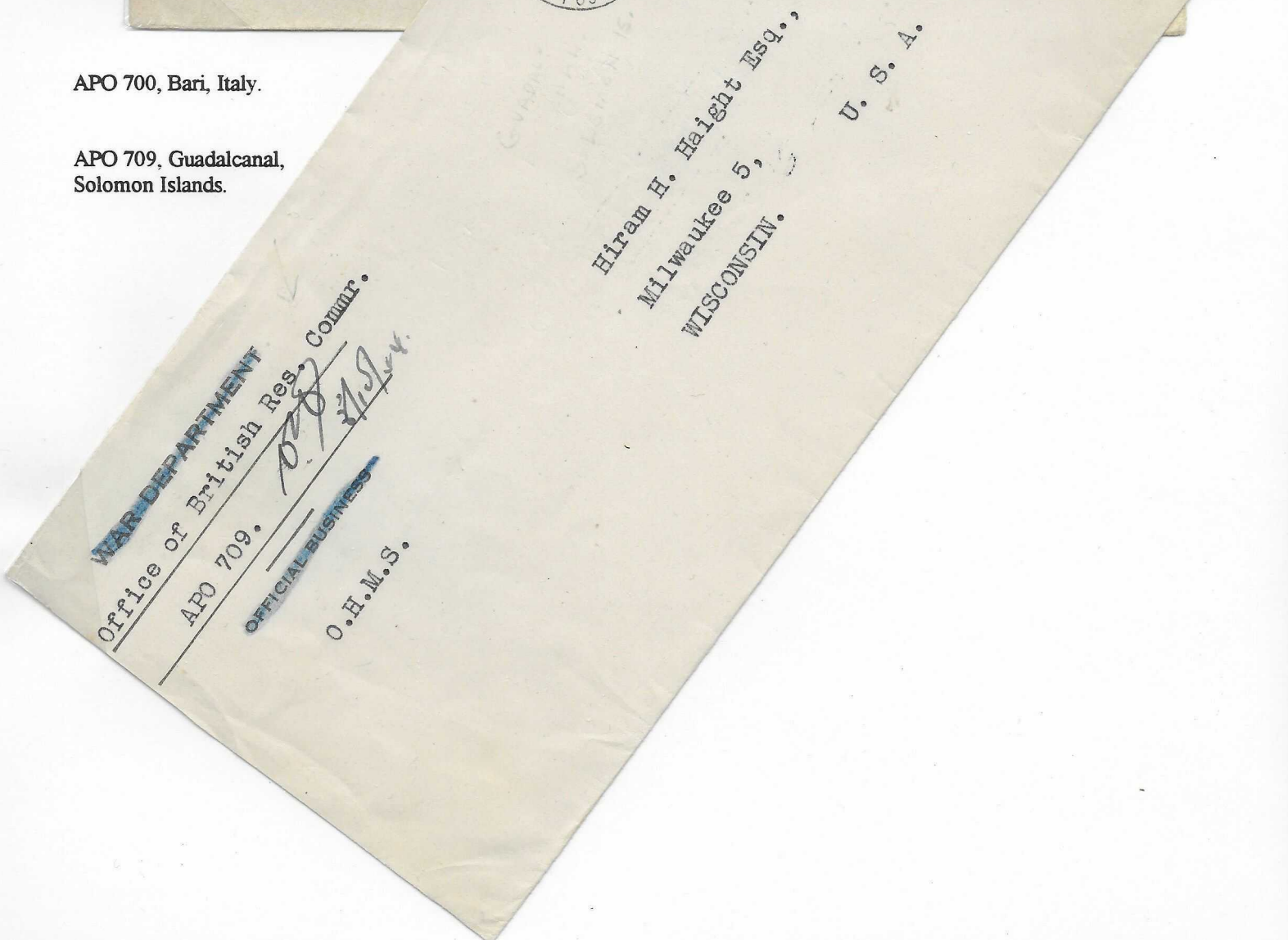
APO Use by Non-US Army Personnel

Foreign Governmental & UN Officials



APO 700, Bari, Italy.

APO 709, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.







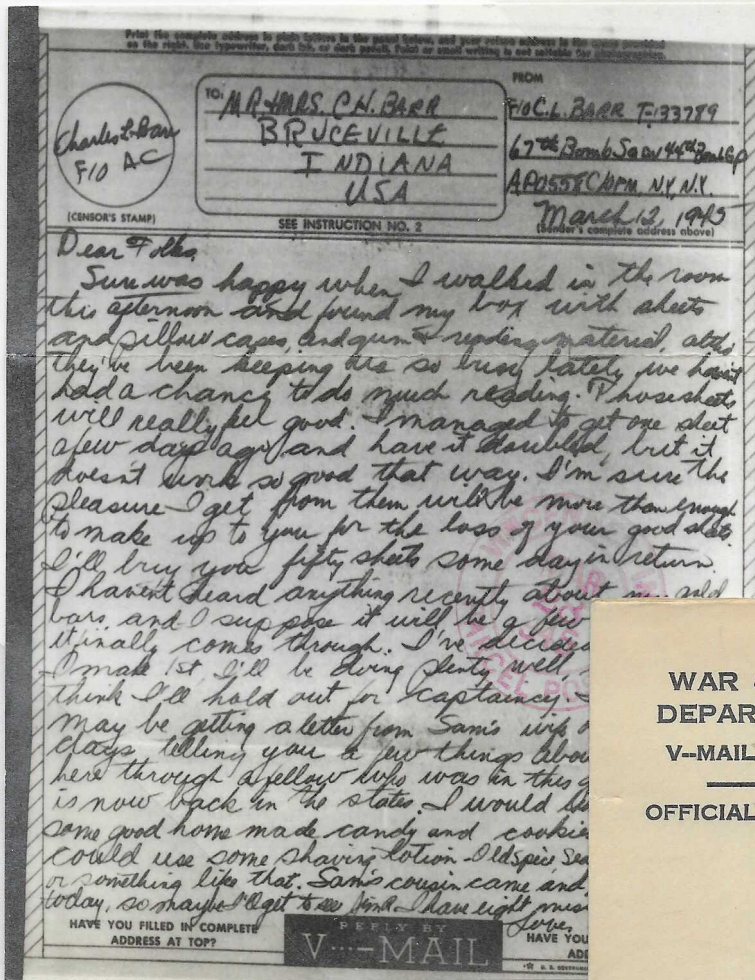
During the early days of the war, philatelists were not above sending covers to fictitious addresses in order to receive them back with interesting markings. This cover, however, was probably only mistakenly addressed. The 81<sup>st</sup> Inf. Brigade was at Ft. Lewis, Washington until it was disbanded on 14 February 1942 and made part of the 41<sup>st</sup> Division. However, the "APO 41" caused the postal clerk to incorrectly assume that the unit was en route to Hawaii at this time.

Cover to a nearly unbelievable but legitimate address. The cover from Sgt. Grayson in Java, shown later in this exhibit, is probably the most historically spectacular cover in this presentation.

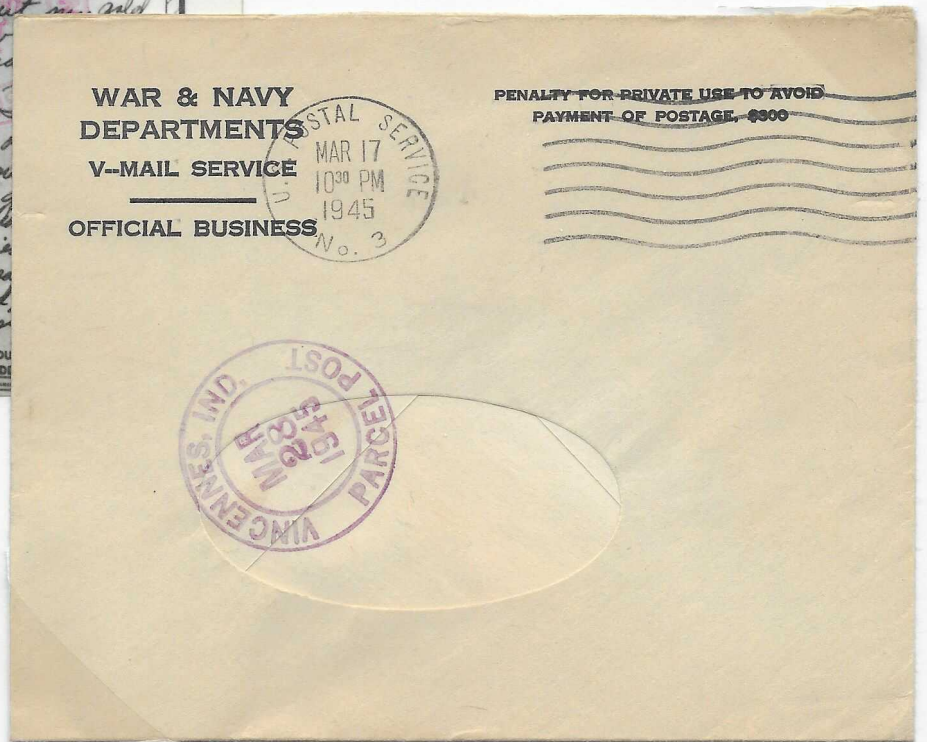


Preferential military rates worked in both directions, for mail to the soldier abroad as well as from him. Thus, the airmail rate reduction went into effect on 23 December 1941, but free surface letter mail could not be sent until 1 April 1942.





Sender requests cookies, candy and shaving lotion near bottom of message.



All domestic services except 3<sup>rd</sup> Class advertising material were available for mail to US APOs, though covers from second class, special delivery and parcel post mail to servicemen are virtually unheard of.

However, to reduce the amount of cargo space being used for papers and parcels, restrictions were imposed by a series of orders were issued from 20 April 1942 through 12 March 1943. Eventually newspapers and magazines could only be sent in response to a subscription requested by the recipient (except for subscriptions pre-dating the restrictive order) and parcels could be sent only in response to a request made by the serviceman abroad. This request had to be documented at the post office by production of the cover and letter in which the request was made. These were then postmarked on acceptance of the parcel by the post office, to make sure that they were not used again.



Civilian mail from Dutch New Guinea to US APO at Townsville, Australia, backstamped by Brisbane civil post office.



Registry backstamps of APOs 927(Sydney, entry point from Australian PO), 24 (Leyte, Philippines) and 321 (Mindoro, forwarded from APO 24). Registry backstamps of APOs 927(Sydney, entry point from Australian PO), 24 (Leyte, Philippines) and 321 (Mindoro, forwarded from APO 24).

Foreign mail to US APOs was sent pursuant to whatever rates and regulations were in effect in the sending post office. World War II assessment of postage due by US APO and US Army censorship of incoming mail have not been recorded. APO backstamps are routine on forwarded and registered mail, but not on regular first class and airmail covers.

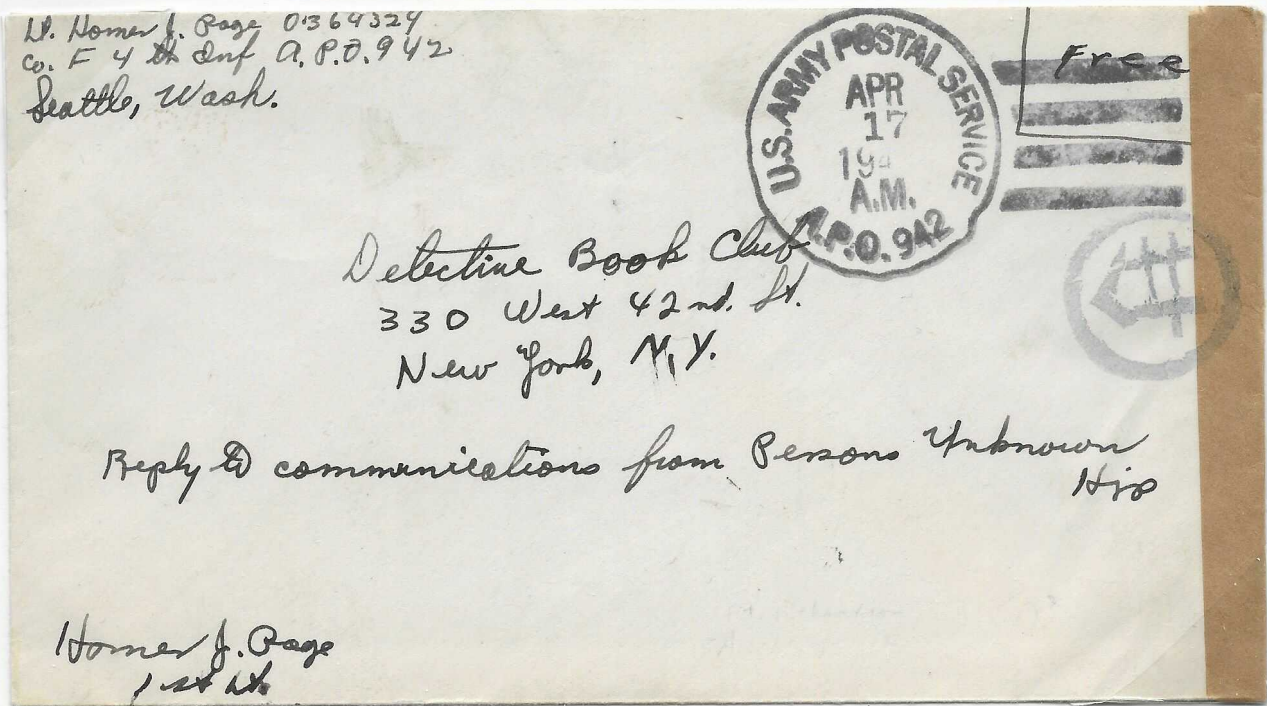
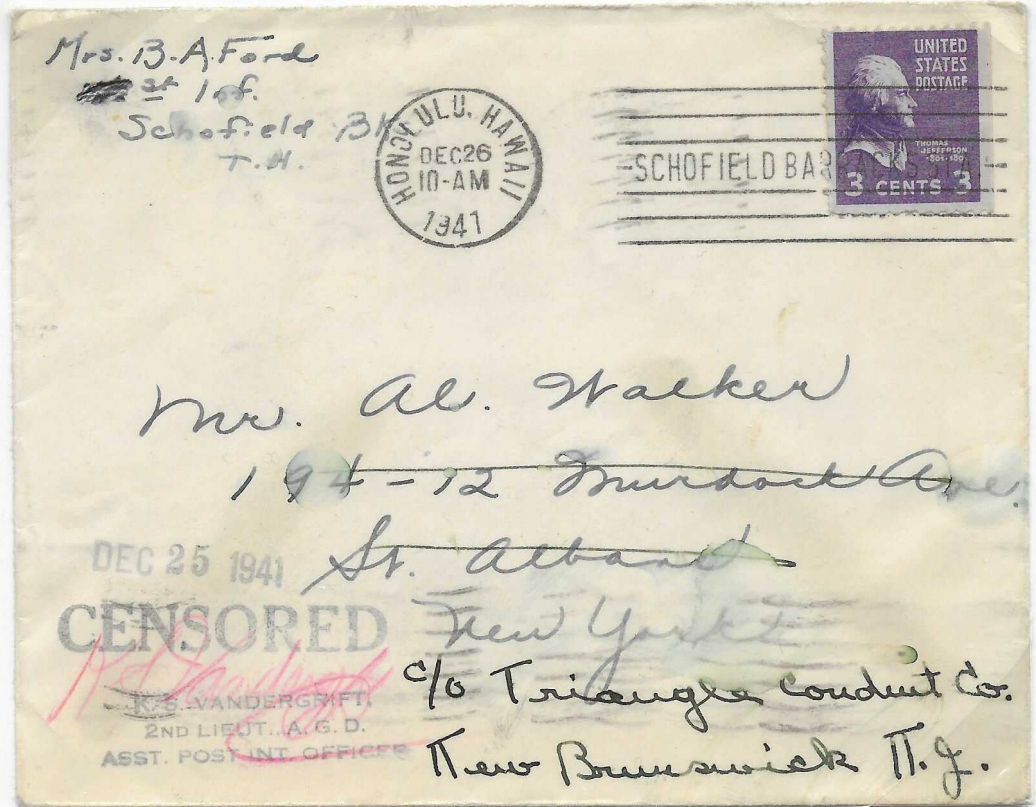


ARMY CENSORSHIP

Provisional Censor Devices  
Hawaii, Alaska

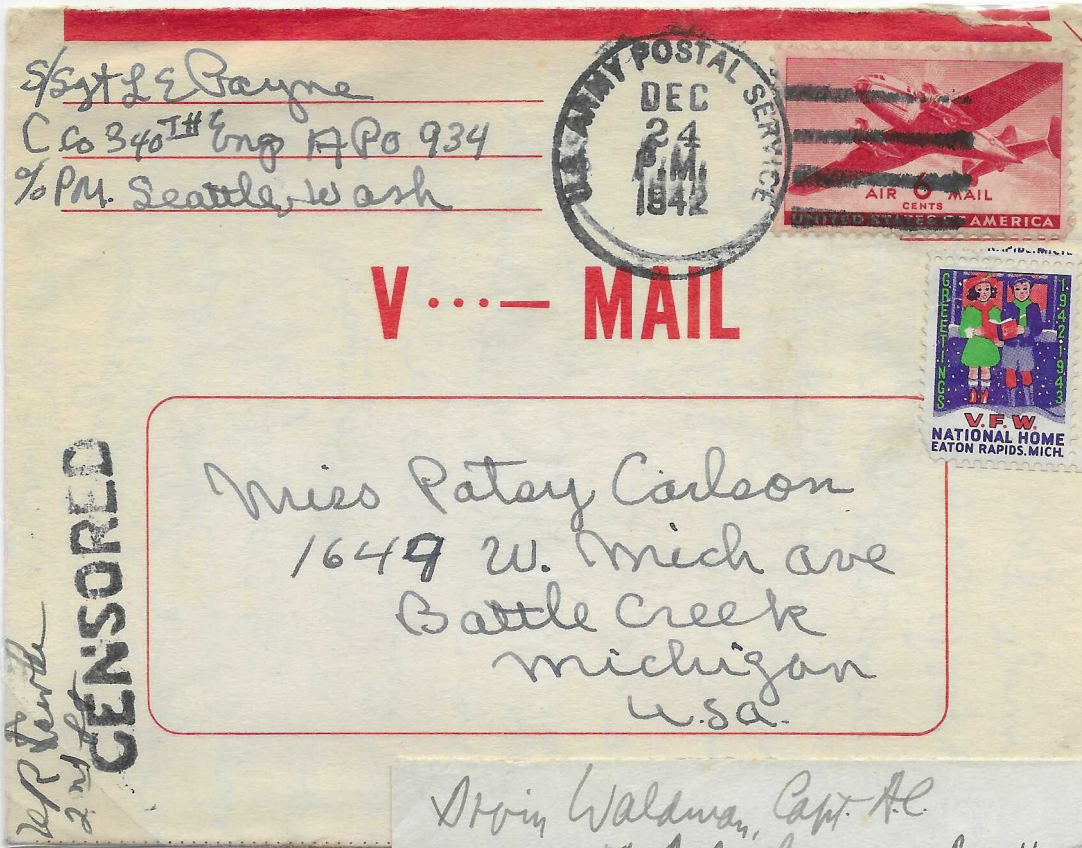
"Provisional" censor devices are distinguished from standard devices in that they tended to be used more locally, and for shorter periods of time. They appear to be a response to the need for a censor device -- any censor device -- and not a response to some uniform order indicating how the censor device should appear.

In the first weeks of the war Hawaii saw the use of many provisional censor handstamps, several created by Lt. Vandergrift.



Several dozen provisional censors are recorded for Alaska, ranging from wood-block carvings to handstamps made from movable type. The most famous is a series made at Ft. Richardson from liquor bottle corks. The Pagoda design from this series (above) is among the more common, but is also quite popular. Alaskan provisionals were used from December 1941 through the first half of 1942. APO 942, Fort Richardson.

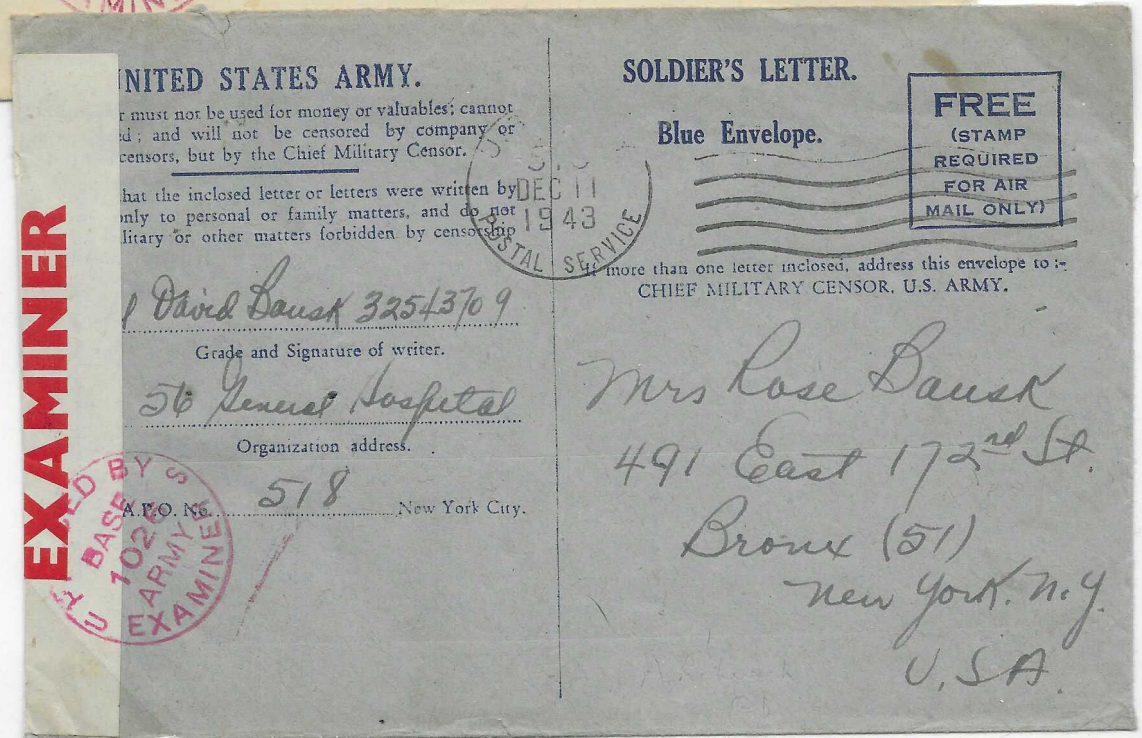
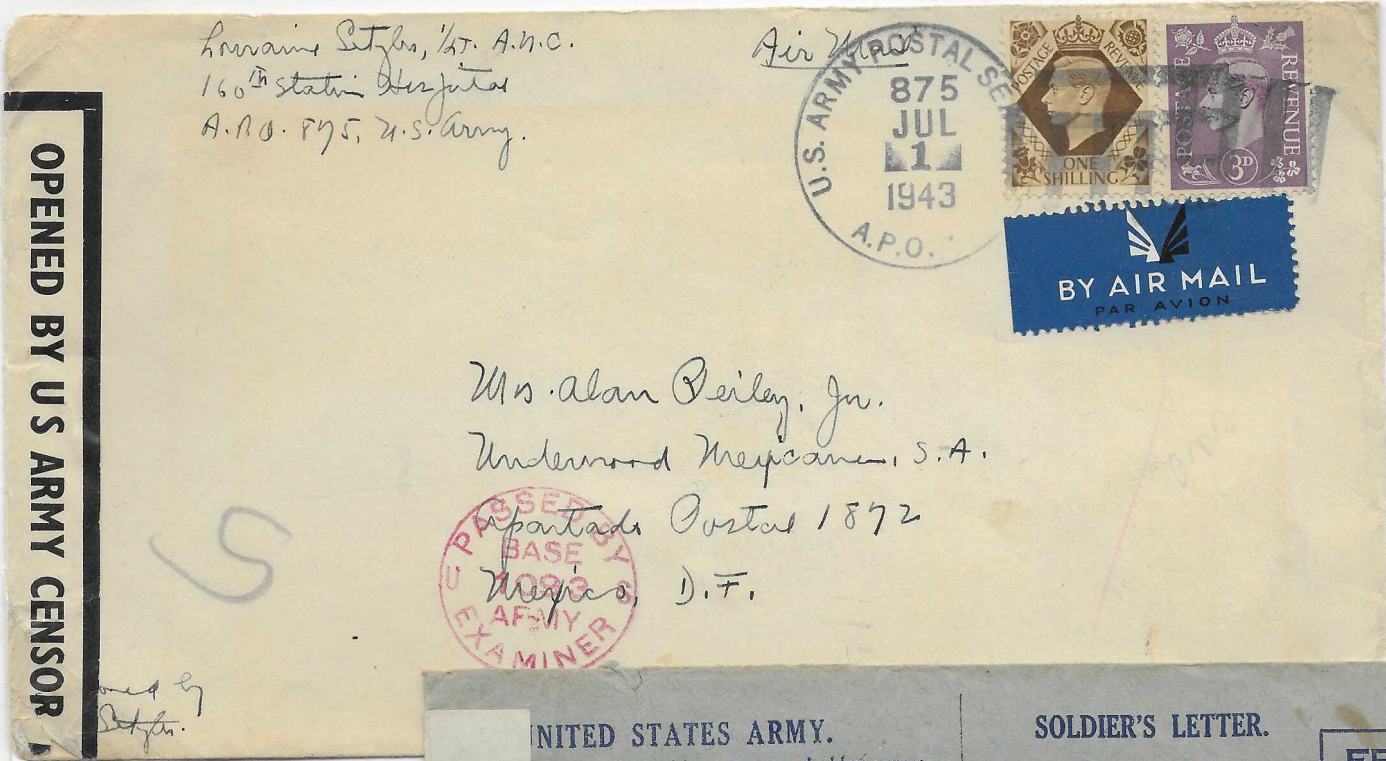




Provisionals used in Canada range from the very crude to the (more usual) professionally made. They are very closely associated with Army Air Force units, and their usage runs well into 1943.

APO 934, Morris Lake, BC, Canada. APO 722, Edmonton, Alta., Canada.





Unlike provisional censor handstamps, printed provisional censor tapes are not numerous. The timing of the two examples shown above, both from England, suggest a local remedy to shortages likely caused by the exhaustion of supplies of the standard paper tapes prior to delivery of sufficient supplies of the new cellophane tapes. (The U-boat war in the Atlantic was still hot and heavy at this time, and one well-placed torpedo could have sunk a very great deal of cellophane tape.)

APO 875, Kettering, England. (Cover from Army nurse, probably placed in a British letterbox to avoid US censorship, and returned to US authorities in accordance with standard procedure.) APO 518, Ashchurch, England.



Army Censorship

Censor Devices Standard for Certain Areas  
Alaska

A. D. C. CENSOR

EXAMINED BY A. D. C.



7+  
B+

*La Lally  
1455 9th St  
S.F. CA, U.S.A.*

Lt. L.A. Tegland  
215 L.A. (AA) A.P.O. 937  
Seattle, Wash.



AIR MAIL

PASSED  
ASST. ADC CENSOR

Put Johnnie L. Knecht  
Co. E 37th Inf.  
A.P.O. # 937  
A.S.N. # 17017219  
Seattle Washington.  
% Postmaster



*Approved by  
Maryland*

Mrs. Cy Clark  
Grand Island, Nebraska  
1115 West 9th St

MILITARY  
30  
CENSOR

St. Rathlum



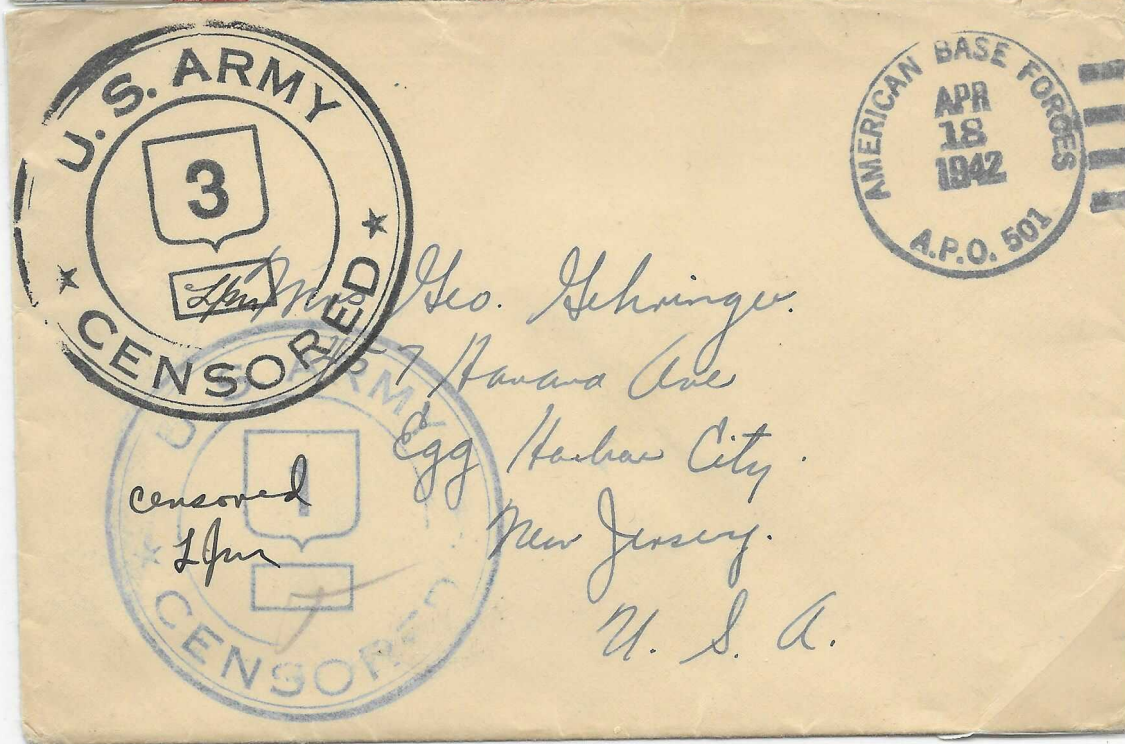
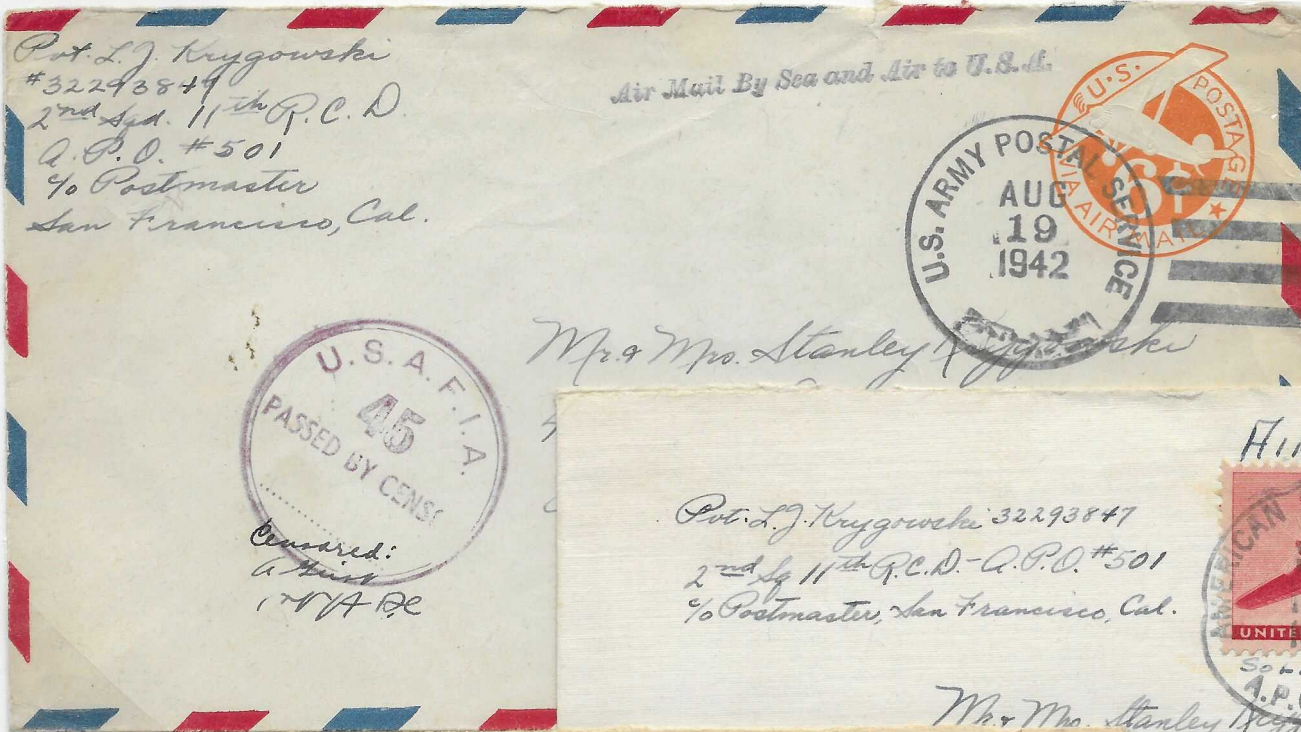
During 1942 the Alaska Defense Command used both a handstamp and a resealing tape incorporating "A.D.C." Additionally, 4 varieties (distinguished by the shape of the border around the censor number) of "Military Censor" handstamps were used. These eventually gave way to the standard racetrack and base examiner handstamps.

APO 937, Ft. Greeley, Kodiak Island. Fort Richardson (military branch post office).



Army Censorship

Censor Devices Standard for Certain Areas  
Australia



The large circular handstamp soon gave way to the USAFIA (US Army Forces in Australia) handstamp. SWPA (Southwest Pacific Area) designated the area of MacArthur's command from 30 March 1942, which included Australia, the Philippines and all that lies between them. The shown on this and the following page do not exhaust the subject.

APO 501, Melbourne (for all covers shown here).