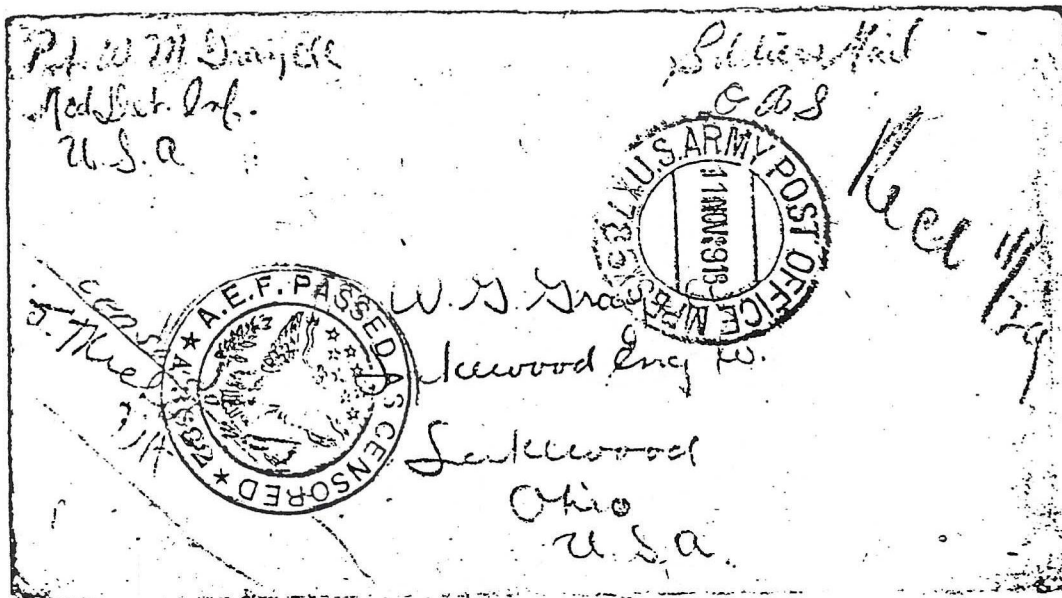


THE ALLIED OCCUPATION OF GERMANY 1918 - 1935

On 11 November 1918, there was a great celebration as the First World War ended with the signing of the Armistice between Germany and the Allied Powers. The fighting had lasted for more than four years, involving dozens of countries and resulting in millions of casualties. In its aftermath, the old European imperial system of geopolitics collapsed, with the overthrow of the Austro-Hungarian, German, Russian and Turkish Empires and their replacement by a large contingent of smaller, weaker and more nationalistic entities. Partly as a result of the harsh terms imposed by the victors, the economies of the defeated powers (and some of the victors) proved fragile, inflation ran rampant and political power in a number of significant countries was subsequently seized by totalitarian regimes -- including the National Socialists in Germany. In the end, the "war to end all wars" proved to be a dream, and a new and even bloodier conflict was to follow just 20 years later.

This exhibit tells the story of the occupation through contemporary postal material, starting with the signing of the Armistice, including mail sent by Armistice Commissioners and Peace Delegations. The largest portion of the exhibit details the use of the military postal systems set up by the Allied powers (American, Belgian, British, French and Italian) during the occupation period from December 1918 through mid-1930, including the showing of administrative markings used by a large number of regulatory and supervisory bodies, which entitled their mail to preferential treatment -- free at first and at domestic rates later in the occupation period. The last section of the exhibit shows mail from all of the former German territories that were annexed to other countries or whose ownership became subject to plebiscite. The final chapter in the story relates to the mail of the supervisory forces sent to carry out the plebiscite in the Saar Territory in January 1935.



An American soldier mailed this cover to the U.S.A. on Armistice Day 1918 via APO #785, then located at Allerey, France. Examples of such mail are sought after by specialists but difficult to find as the staffs at the military post offices were apparently more active in celebrating than in processing letters and cards on that particular day.

THE ALLIED OCCUPATION OF GERMANY 1918 - 1935

I. Armistice & Peace Delegations

- A. German
- B. American
- C. Belgian
- D. British
- E. French
- F. Italian

II. Occupation of Germany

- A. American Forces
- B. Belgian Forces
- C. British Forces
- D. French Forces
- E. Italian Forces

III. Annexed & Plebiscite Territories

A. Annexed Lands:

- 1. Belgium - Eupen-Malmedy
- 2. Czechoslovakia - Hultschin
- 3. France - Alsace-Lorraine
- 4. Poland - Posen

B. Plebiscite Lands

- 1. Allenstein
- 2. Danzig
- 3. Marienwerder
- 4. Memel
- 5. Saar
- 6. Upper Silesia

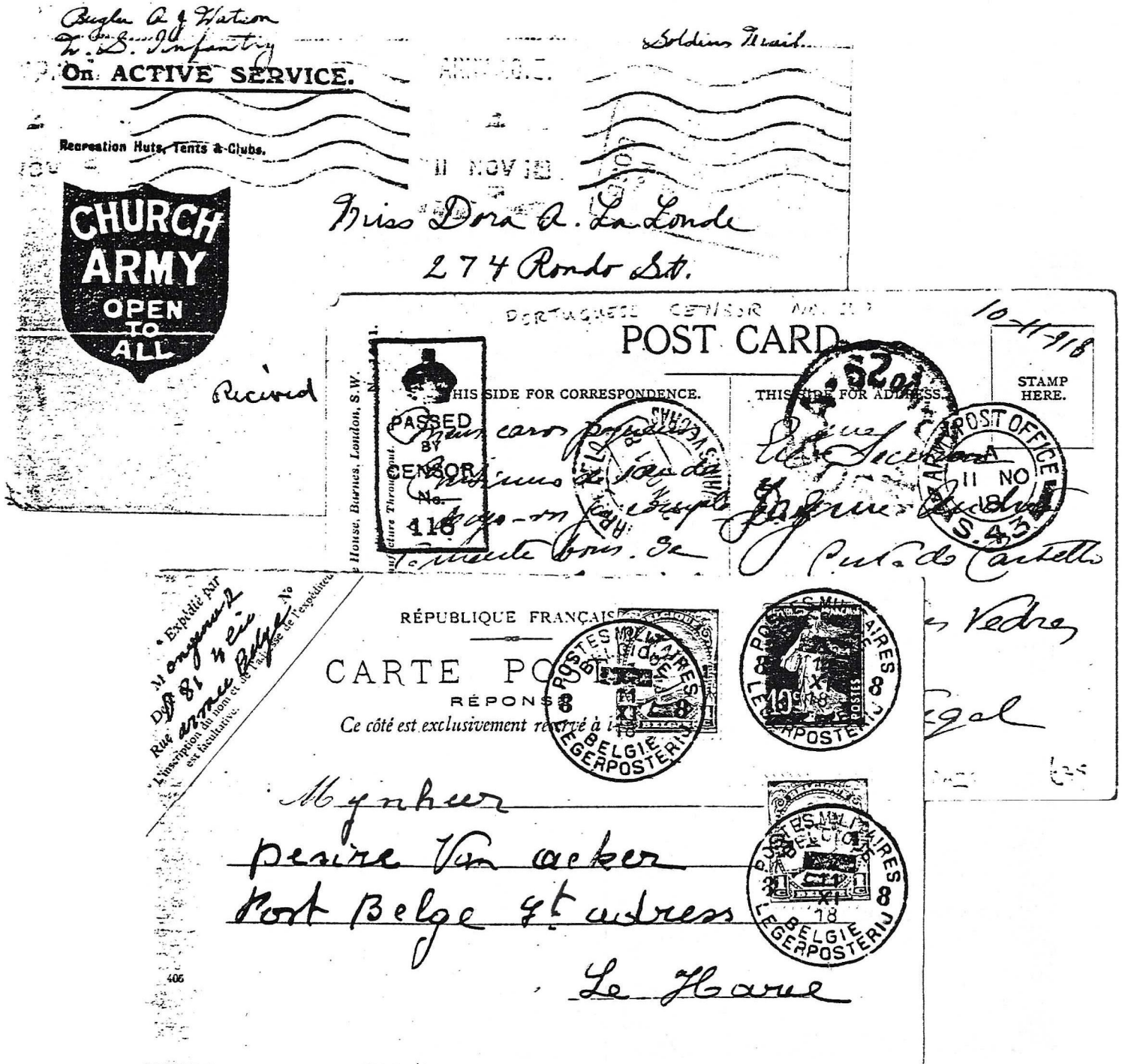


Cover with cachet of the German Peace Delegation postmarked at Versailles 28 June 1919, the day that the Peace Treaty was signed.

ARMISTICE & PEACE

ARMISTICE DAY

11 November 1918



At the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918, the German representatives signed the Armistice Agreement in a railway car in the Forest of Compiegne. This brought an end to what was known then as "The Great War," which had involved tens of millions of soldiers and sailors on three continents. Military mail posted on this date has long been considered scarce, perhaps because the postal staffs were more interested in celebrating than processing the mail, as noted by Sanford in his book on *The Mail of the A.E.F.* published in 1940.

ARMISTICE COMMISSION
Spa

Deutsche Feldpost C
31 January 1919

Deutsches Postamt Spa
20 February 1919

Feldpost

Frau

Herrn Dr. Hjalmar Schacht

in

E.

*Abt.
Hilfs-
Reg.-
Haupt-
Stab*



Feldpost A



Herrn Dr. Hjalmar Schacht,
Direktor der Nationalbank für Deutschland

B e r l i n W

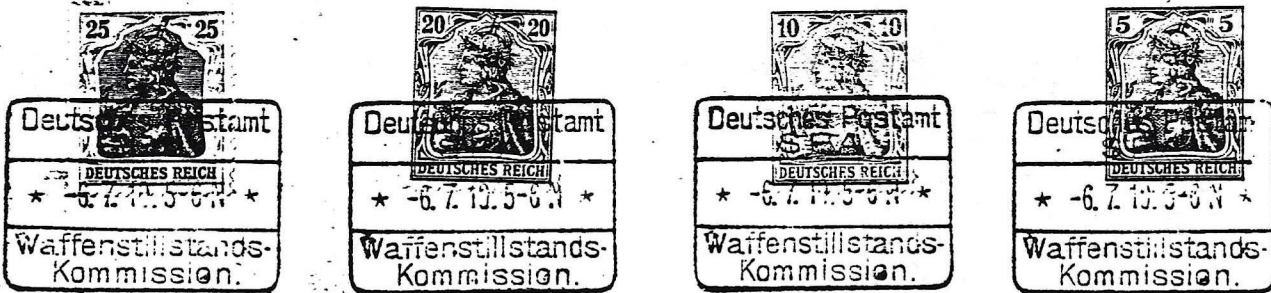
Einschreiben!

Behrenstrasse

The German Delegation signed the Armistice agreement drawn up by the Allied powers on 11 November 1918, bringing the First World War to an end. One of its terms specified that Germany would withdraw all of its forces to the east of the Rhine River within a month. The territory between the existing front lines and the Rhine would be taken over by American, Belgian, British and French troops, thus initiating the Allied occupation of Germany. Headquarters for the German Commission overseeing the terms of the Armistice was established at Spa, Belgium, where a special post office was provided.

ARMISTICE COMMISSION
Spa

Deutsches Postamt Spa
6 July 1919



Deutsches Postamt
DEUTSCHES REICH
* 6.7.1919 *
Waffenstillstands-Kommission.

Deutsches Postamt
DEUTSCHES REICH
* 6.7.1919 *
Waffenstillstands-Kommission.

Deutsches Postamt
DEUTSCHES REICH
* 6.7.1919 *
Waffenstillstands-Kommission.

Deutsches Postamt
DEUTSCHES REICH
* 6.7.1919 *
Waffenstillstands-Kommission.



Registered cover showing the use of the elusive specially imprinted registry label for mail from the Armistice Commission in Spa,

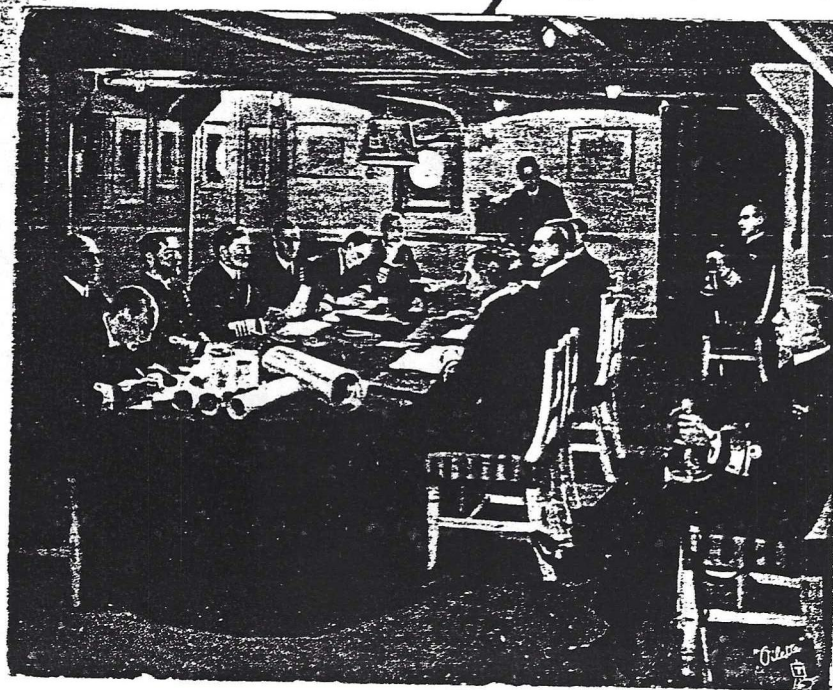
ARMISTICE COMMISSION
Spa

Deutsche Feldpost C
29 November 1918

Feldpost
Frau
Grete Loch



Musselhof
Leichstraße 10.



THE END.
THE SURRENDER OF THE GERMAN NAVY
Furcubim, H.M.S. "Queen Elizabeth," Rosyth, N.B.,
November 10th, 1918, Morning.
ADMIRAL BEATTY READING OUT THE TERMS.
Painted by Sir John Lavery, A.R.A.
The large colour reproduction gives the names of all the Representatives
participating in this memorable final act.

Plagued with revolt by Communist sympathizers, the German Navy had actually surrendered to Admiral Beatty on the *H.M.S. Queen Elizabeth* on the day before the formal Armistice agreement was signed. The Navy had its own representatives on the Armistice Commission at Spa, as indicated by the special marking shown above.

ARMISTICE COMMISSION
Düsseldorf

Deutsche Feldpost C
17 October 1919

Deutsches Postamt Spa
27 October 1919

Postkarte
laut Amtsblatt-Verf.
Nr 382 vom 11. 12.



from Major
van der
Gunn m. Min

Deutsche Waffenstillstandskommission
Düsseldorf.

Einschreiben.

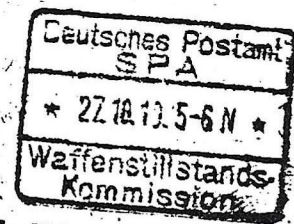
An das



Kriegsministerium



Heressache.



Waffenstillstandskommission
Düsseldorf

Berlin *WV*

The headquarters within Germany of the Armistice Commission was established in Düsseldorf. Mail could be sent free of postage if its official character were indicated. Postcard above refers to the regulation of 11 December 1918 to confer such status, while the cover has the official corner card of the commission. Although the Spa postmark was used in this case, a special marking for Düsseldorf was applied nearby.

ARMISTICE COMMISSION
Frankfurt am Main

Frankfurt (Main)
10 April 1919
10 November 1919

Deutsche
Waffenstillstands-Kommission
Unterkommission Frankfurt am Main

H e r r n

Hermann F a l c h

Deutsche
Waffenstillstands-Kommission E i l b r i e f.
Unterkommission Frankfurt am Main

An

Artillerie-Werkstatt

M ü n c h e n .

Reichsdienstsache

0577

A sub-commission of the Armistice Commission was established in Frankfurt am Main. Mail could be sent free of postage if its official character were indicated, although a fee was required for services, such as special delivery in the case above. The marking on the lower cover refers to a "Commission for the Return of Machinery and Material (presumably that had been removed from Belgium and Northern France).

ARMISTICE COMMISSION
Posen

Spa
28 June 1919

DEUTSCHE
WAFFENSTILLSTANDS-KOMMISSION
ABTEILUNG: POSEN
BERLIN W. 9
BUDAPESTER STR 14



Sr.Exzellenz
Herrn Staatsminister M. Erzberger
Vors.d.Dtsch. waffenstillstandskomm.
B e r l i n W.
Budapesterstr. 14

A second sub-commission of the Armistice Commission was established in Posen (now Poznan in Poland) to oversee the cessation of hostilities on the Eastern Front. Cover addressed to State Minister Mathias Erzberger, the head of the German Armistice Commission.

PEACE DELEGATION
Versailles

Deutsche Friedensdelegation
2 June 1919
11 June 1919



A special post office was established for the use of the German delegates to the Peace Conference at Versailles. Note that the special seal of the Delegation still included the imperial eagle, even though the Kaiser and Crown Prince had abdicated some months earlier. Official Registered mail from this period is scarce.

PEACE DELEGATION
Versailles

Berlin
19 July 1919
3 November 1919

Gebührenfrei.



Frau

A. S a c h s e



Berlin-Charlottenburg 5

Fritschestr. 76.

Abs.: Sachse, Deutsche
Friedensdelegation
VERSAILLES.

Gebührenfrei

Einschreiben!

Herrn



Ing. H. Müller



Frankfurt/Main

Saigunstr. 43

After the signing of the treaty, the German Post Office for its Peace Delegation was closed down. Mail of the functionaries carrying out the terms of the treaty was carried by diplomatic pouch to Berlin, where it entered the mails at the Cabinet post office in the Reichstag building or a Courier office in the W8 district.

PEACE DELEGATION
Versailles

Berlin
7 February 1920
23 April 1920

Geld für den Posten (in Pouchen)



Handwritten scribbles and 'Fig' in the background

Einkaufspreise!



F. H.

Frau verw. Oberpostinspektor H. Sachs



Charlottenburg 5

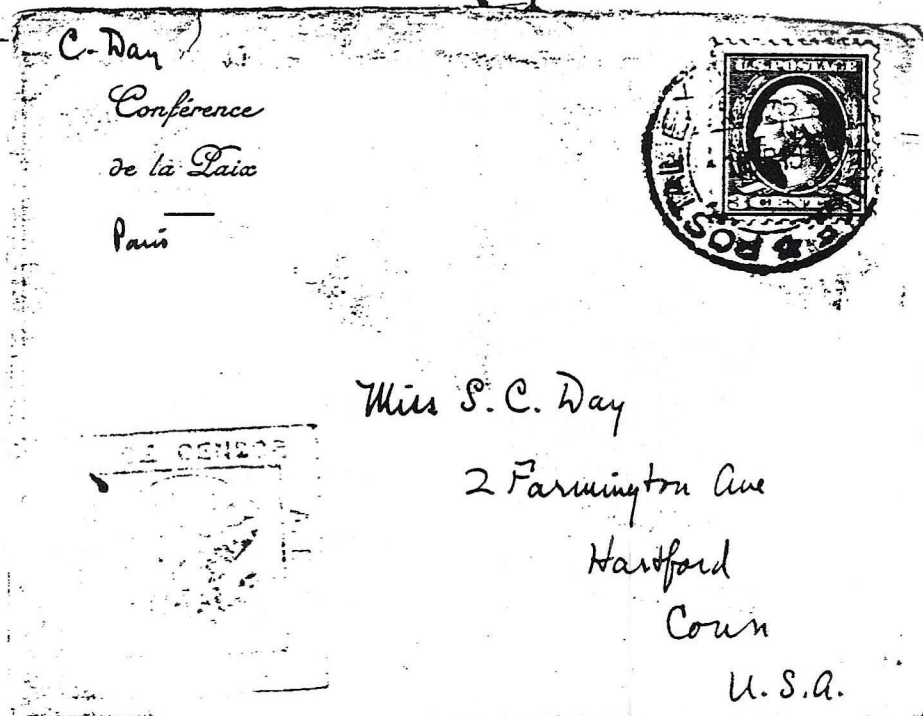
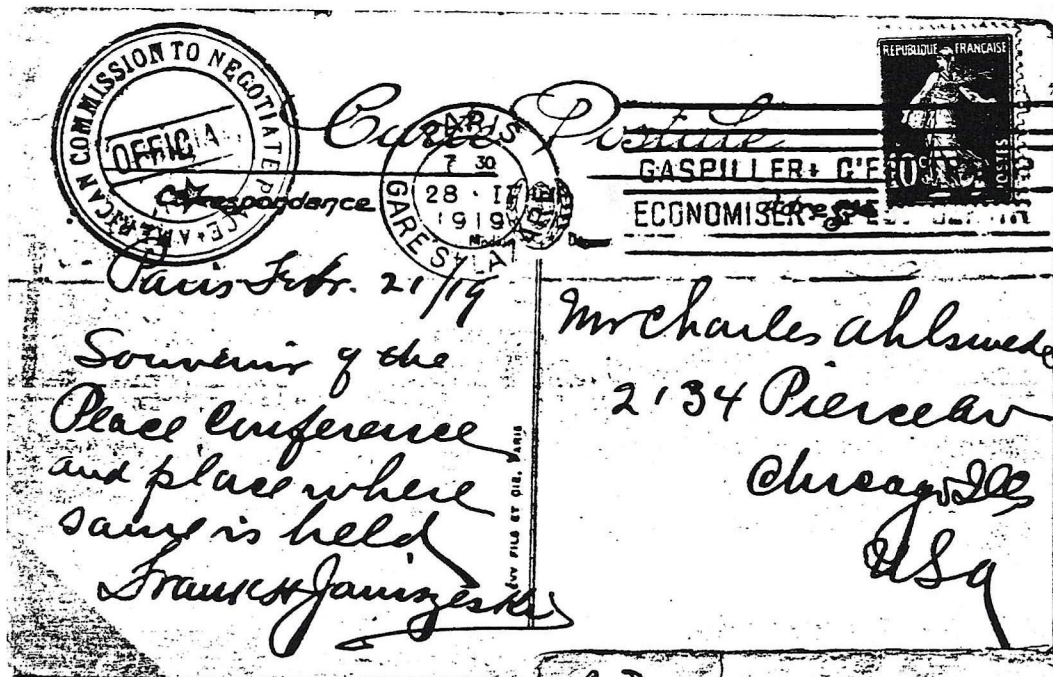
Friedrichstr 76.

As the work of the administrators continued, the office was moved to Paris and a more appropriate rubber stamp cachet issued, showing the new version of the eagle of the Weimar republic. Mail continued to be sent by pouch to the W8 Courier office. Registered mail showing this usage is very elusive.

PEACE COMMISSION
Paris

Paris
28 February 1919

Postal Express Service 975
1 March 1919



The American Commission to Negotiate Peace was established shortly after the signing of the Armistice. Its headquarters was established at the Hotel Crillon in Paris. Mail could be sent by commission members, staff and military guards through either the Military Postal Express Service or in the French postal system, but the payment of postage was required in the latter case.

PEACE COMMISSION
Paris

Military Postal Express Service 702
28 April 1919
22 November 1919

AMERICAN COMMISSION
TO NEGOTIATE PEACE
MISSION FOR GERMANY.



7778

Major A. Tasslee,
Chief of Courier Service Division,
American Commission to
Negotiate Peace,



By courier service
of Gen. Harries.

PARIS.

J.E. Sterrett.
AMERICAN COMMISSION
TO NEGOTIATE PEACE



File

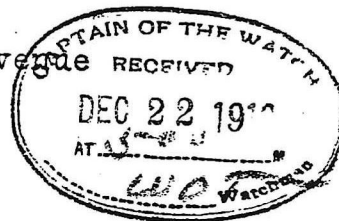


John E. Walker, Esq.

Bureau of Internal Revenue

Treasury Department

Washington, D.C.



Solicitor's Office.

0-4089

Special imprinted envelopes of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, the one printed for the Mission for Germany subgroup being unrecorded in *The Postal History of the A.E.F., 1917-1923*.

PEACE COMMISSION
Paris

Postal Express Service 975
7 April 1919
12 May 1919

St. John W. Lawton
AMERICAN COMMISSION
TO NEGOTIATE PEACE



Mrs John W Lawton.
1528 Rodney Drive.
Hollywood.
California
U.S.A



Sgt. J. H. Mcclaw
Peace Conference Branch
A. P. O. 702, Amer. E. F.



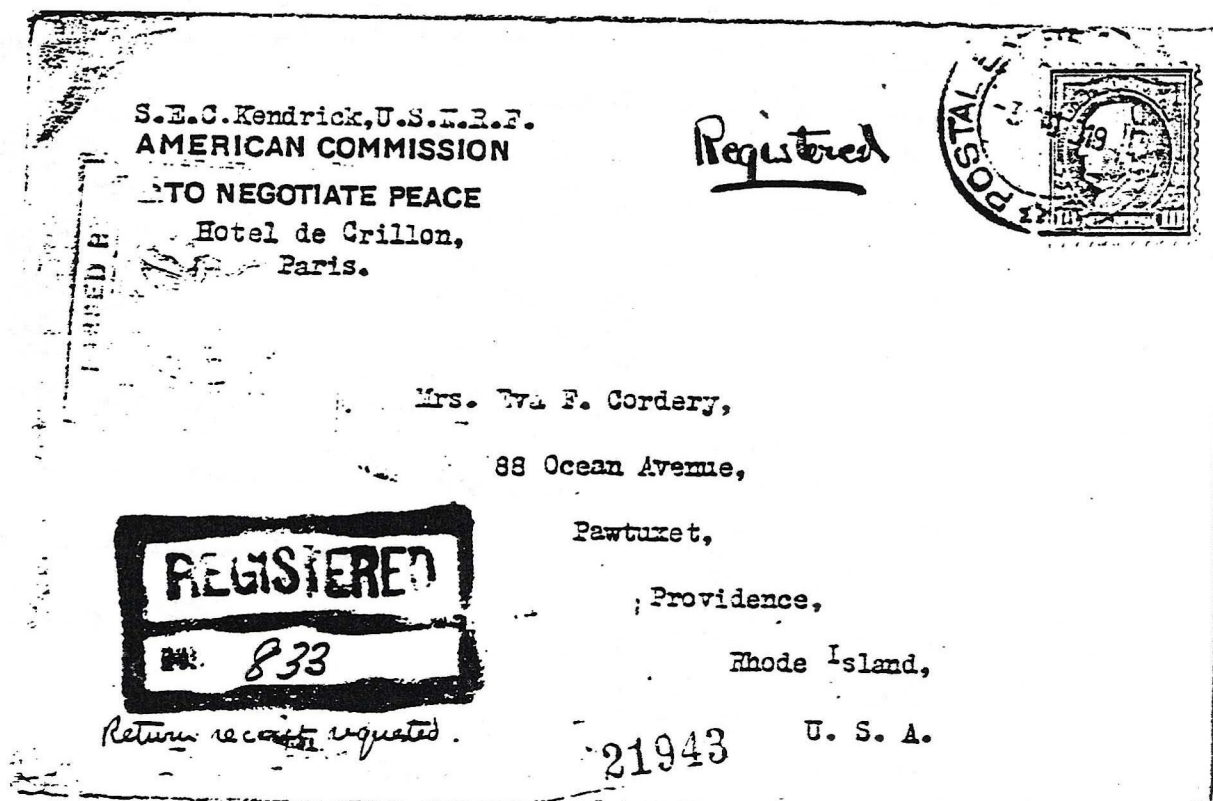
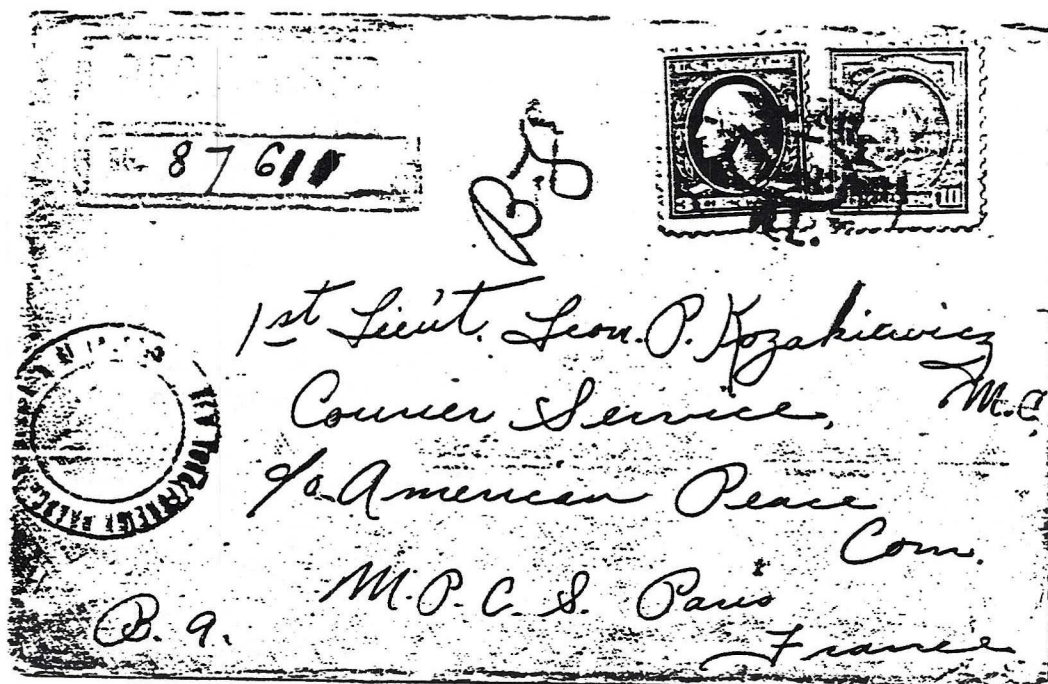
Miss Florence C. Odette,
3640 Eleventh St. N.W.
Washington, D. C.
U. S. A.



A special numbered post branch of the Postal Express Service was established for the American Commission to Negotiate Peace. Reported dates of use of its postmark are from 20 December 1918 to 21 August 1919.

PEACE COMMISSION
Paris

Postal Express Service 975
April 1919
3 May 1919



Registered mail inbound and outbound passed through the special branch No. 975 of the Postal Express Service established for the Peace Commission. Such examples are substantially more elusive than ordinary mail.