

Spring 2003



Issue No. 26

# *The* Prexie Era

*The Newsletter of the BIA 1938 Presidential Era Study Group*

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### Chairman's Message

Now that the dust has begun to settle after the dispersal of the wonderful collections formed by Len Pisz-kiewicz and Steve Suffet, it will be interesting to see how the balance of power will change in the very competitive world of Prexie collecting and exhibiting. Stay tuned.....

A reminder --- There will be a Prexie-Era Study Group meeting at the APS StampShow to be held in Columbus, Ohio, on Friday, August 8, at 11:00 am. I hope to see many of you there. We also will get together at CHICAGOPEX in November 2003.

Jeff

### Inter-Camp Detainee Mail From Kooskia Detention Camp

by

Millard H. Mack

Shown below is a cover in my collection sent from a detained enemy alien who was likely confined voluntarily in Camp Kooskia, Idaho to avoid the barbed wire confines of the Santa Fe Internment Camp. The cover was sent to another alien internee, who was held at the Santa Fe Detention Station. The cover is dated December 1944. Kooskia [pronounced "KOOS-key"] was an enemy alien detention camp located in Idaho. It held approx-



-imately 250 Japanese nationals from other camps, who volunteered to help construct the Lewis and Clark Highway. Personnel from the Ft. Missoula Internment Camp, 120 miles to the east in Montana, administered this small road camp. Mail to and from the camp, if written in English, was censored at Kooskia; if written in Japanese, it was examined at Ft. Missoula. In the case of this card, the examination occurred at Camp Kooskia by an examiner who had the authority to read English language mail. [Editor's Note: Turn the page to see the censor's handstamp applied to the enclosure.]

I wish to thank Dann Mayo and Louis Fiset for their assistance in preparing this note.

**Red censor handstamp applied by the U.S. Immigration & Naturalization Service:**



“DETAINED ALIEN/ENEMY MAIL/EXAMINED/BY 31-3/U.S.I. & N.S.”

### **Full Digital Run (#s 1-26) Available; New Subscription Requirements**

Jeff Shapiro, John Grabowski and I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that it is time to meet the high costs of publishing the Newsletter by placing subscriptions on a formal basis rather than continue to rely on contributions. We will be offering two types of subscriptions: a digital (electronic) version of the Newsletter which subscribers will receive via e-mail; and, a print (paper) version of the Newsletter. In both cases, everyone will continue to receive the Newsletter without any additional charge through the last (Winter) Issue for the year 2004.

By subscribing to the digital version you will save us the costs of printing and mailing the Issue to you. In return, **I will send you immediately upon receiving your conversion notice a CD-R** containing the entire run of the Newsletter (Nos.1-26). Each Newsletter is in .pdf file format, and formatted for easy printing so that you can create paper versions of all Issues. Then, at the end of each publishing year, as long as your digital subscription is current, I will send you a replacement CD-R containing all Issues through that year (e.g., Nos. 1-28; then, 1-32, etc.). In the year 2005, you can continue your digital subscription for \$5 for four Issues, plus the year-end cumulative CD-R. [For your information, all illustrations, beginning with Issue No.22, are in color when viewed on your computer.] To subscribe, send your e-mail address to John Grabowski and to me, and state that you want to convert your subscription to the digital edition.

To continue to subscribe to the paper edition of the Newsletter, do nothing. To continue your print version subscription after the year 2004, you must then send \$10 for four Issues to John Grabowski. Subscribers to the paper edition of the Newsletter who wish to purchase the CD-R can do so by sending me or John \$10. All proceeds, less the costs of creating and mailing the CD-R , will go into the publication fund.

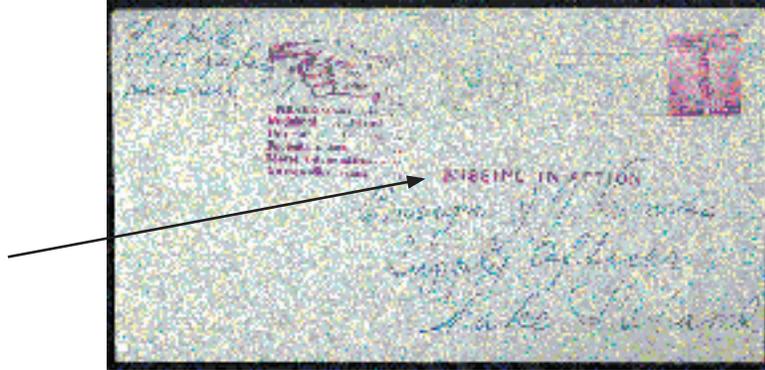
### **Wake Island WW II Cover From Pearl Harbor**

by

Roland Austin

A single Defense Issue stamp pays the 3-cents surface rate to Wake island. Posted on December 3, 1941, at Pearl Harbor, the letter slowly traveled west about 2,300 miles by sea to Wake Island, a tiny atoll in the Pacific Ocean. The cover is addressed to one of the 447 Marines and 75 Army Signal Corps and Navy personnel stationed at this U.S. outpost.

Apparently the letter arrived at Wake Island and was returned to the sender sometime during the period when the Japanese began their attack on December 7 and overtook the Island on December 23, 1941.



During its return the cover was marked with a violet pointing finger auxiliary “Return to Writer” marking. Added is the “MISSING IN ACTION” handstamp used to explain the reason (Is this the earliest reported U.S. World War II cover with this marking?). Since Wake had no post office, most likely the markings were applied on the returning ship or at Honolulu when it arrived back there. I would venture that they were applied at Honolulu since, by the time of the letter’s return, there would have been such an “MIA” marking produced for use there.

I did not find Ensign J.J. Davis’ name on the list of POWs taken by the Japanese at Wake Island so I presume he perished in the valiant fighting.

Posted just days before the Japanese attacks, I am uncertain just how significant the cover might be -- having traveled in the mails from and to the December 7 attack locations (Pearl Harbor and Wake Island) and returned shortly after the United States declared war on Japan. Can any reader shed some more light on this cover?

### **A Reader’s Request for Help**

Reader Clyde Jennings has requested the following: I need, for a special collection, the following Prexies: Scott #s 808, 812, 816, 819, 822, 826 & 830. Must be used and superb or better -- i.e., perfectly centered; sound in all respects; no scuffs, thins, scrapes, short perfs; AND with an unobtrusive light face-free cancel. Cheap stamps, but I will pay a premium if you can furnish in this condition. Clyde Jennings, 319 West 70th Street, Jacksonville, FL 32208 (904-768-4602).

### **An Interesting Question From a Reader**

Jim Felton has asked the following question: “What would be the most difficult foreign destinations to obtain during the Prexie Era? Perhaps this has to be refined as 1938 - 1940; 1940 - 1945; and, 1946 - onward. My sense, writes Jim, is that the Portuguese colonies, Dutch colonies and certain French colonies might be a lot tougher to find than destinations in Europe, South America or the British Commonwealth.

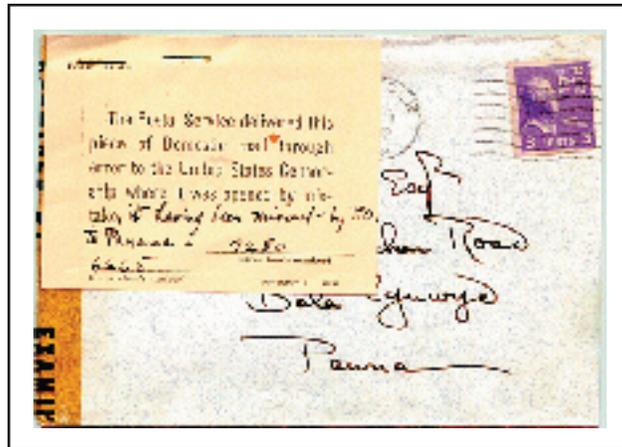
What do you think, Readers?

## Missent Domestic Letter Erroneously Censored

by

Chip Briggs

This cover, addressed to Richard C. Chen, Esq., 202 Conshohockan Road, Bala Cynwyd, *Penna*, was mistakenly sent to Panama. When the error was realized, the letter was returned to the postal service in the U.S., which then turned it over to the Office of Censorship as an incoming foreign letter! When this error was finally discovered, the exculpatory label was placed on the cover. The cover is postmarked Norfolk, VA., November 9, 1942. There is a Panamanian marking on the back: “Agencia Postal/DIC/1942.”



## Nutmeg’s Suffet Sale Analysis Coming in Issue No. 27

John Grabowski is preparing an analysis of the sale of Steve Suffet’s Prexies holdings which was held on April 15, 2003 (Sale #62) by Nutmeg Mail Auctions. To make the analysis meaningful, John needs your input. Because Nutmeg will not be issuing a list of prices realized, John asks that successful lot buyers contact him ([minnjohn@alum.mit.edu](mailto:minnjohn@alum.mit.edu)) and tell him the lot(s) number(s) and the purchase price(s) (**without the buyer’s premium**). Your identity will not be revealed by John who is interested only in compiling a record of, and analyzing, the prices realized.

## A Prexie Puzzler

by

Leonard Piskiewicz

The illustrated cover has 10 cents in Prexies (3x3c + 1c) and was postmarked with a seapost CDS of “SJP 7 GOTEBORG - NEW YORK”, with date “11.12 39” (European style for December 12, 1939). The light purple marking at the lower left indicates the cover was carried on the GRIPSHOLM of the Swedish-American Line; the word “Paquebot” is at the upper left. The postmark is well known from both the GRIPSHOLM and the KUNGS HOLM from at least the early 1930s. The cover has no backstamps and no return address.



The question is: what is this cover? Since the cover was carried on a Swedish vessel, it must have been mailed in an American port because it has U.S. stamps. The GRIPSHOLM departed New York December 9, 1939, at 3 PM (a Saturday) for Gotesborg. My opinion is that this is probably a supplementary mail cover (double sea postage) mailed at dockside just before the ship left. The seapost clerks probably did not get around to postmarking it until the following Monday, the 11th. Do any of our readers have any suggestions to explain this cover? Are there any pictures in existence of mail boxes at dockside in New York for the collection of such mail? Are there any pictures in existence of the supplementary mail offices at the New York piers?

### Readers Reply to Issue No. 25

Several readers responded to questions raised in the last Newsletter.

**Ken Lawrence** had this to say about the airmail cover to Argentina that was censored by Germany [Issue No.25, page 6]: “Your cover was censored at Frankfurt/Main (code e below the eagle), the designated control office for airmail to and from North and South America, so it could either be inbound or outbounds censorship. The tape is Riemer E-53, used April 1940 to May 1941. The handstamp that tied it appears to be Riemer E-2, in use about the same time. I’d guess it just got misrouted to Germany, but even that requires explanation. By mid-1940, all such mail was being examined, if not typically marked, by the secret U.S. - British joint intelligence collection office at Bermuda.”

**Jim Felton** observed that “...the cover to Argentina apparently censored by the Germans is intriguing. What if the recipient, Hooft, is connected to the German embassy? Is there any way to find out what was at the cover’s address?”

**Editor’s Note:** It also is possible that this mail was intercepted somehow rather than misrouted. I recently acquired an airmail cover addressed to England that was intercepted by the Germans, censored at Frankfurt/Main, and then returned to the sender. This cover had originated at a secret undercover address (Box 1754, 25 South Street) located at the Seamen’s Institute in New York City.

Len Piszkiwicz' article [Newsletter No. 25, page 8] "Unusual Prexie Usage: International Airmail Message Postal Card with Attached Reply Card", elicited several thoughtful e-mails. We reprint this one from **Chuck McFarlane**: "I don't have access to literature on Australian postal rates, but my guess is that the attachment of the Message Card, mailed back still attached to the Reply Card, required payment of the letter rate. Two reasons: Generally, when double cards of any type other than M&R cards are mailed within the U.S., the letter rate applies. The portion "attached" to the mailed card is considered an attachment, thus subject to the letter rate. Second, an analysis as a bureaucrat might think (I'm a retired one): The Message Card carries a tablet description "POSTAL CARD WITH PAID REPLY", implying that the rate paid conveys both cards, attached. The Reply Card carries a tablet description "REPLY POSTAL CARD", implying the rate paid conveys a single Card. The second explanation is likely correct based on reading Chapters 4 & 5 of Tony Wawrukiewicz on International Rates. Though not specifically mentioned, the use of the plural in the initial mailing, and the singular in the mailing of the Reply Card, implies that the rate paid for the Reply Card is for the single card only. ... [Also], it seems logical that the Australian Post Office required that the return mailing be paid with full payment of the Australian Rate with no "credit" for the 4 cents US paid". The 7-1/2 cents letter rate is correct per Tony Wawrukiewicz. Also, the Australians should not have applied its postmarks, but marked the upper left of the Card with a "boxed" red pencil to the left of the 1 cent Prexie and continuing below the stamp and indicia to the right margin, acknowledging the invalidity of the stamp and indicia to pay the letter rate to the Australian post office."

**Len Piszkiwicz** replied: "Chuck's explanation...is exactly right and rings true, especially the singular and plural "card" and "cards" business. That's an aspect of *bureaucratise* that the Post Office always used (and I have a hard time recognizing sometimes).

**Louis Fiset** wrote with respect to my note on "A Security Marking in WW II" [Issue No.25, page 2]: "I think the six bar marking is a *jusqu* marking indicating from a certain point onward the letter is to be carried by ordinary means. The key here may be the 'HMS Alternham', which suggests to me the addressee is on a ship somewhere. Likely applied in London indicating from this point on the letter is to be sent by ship. Perhaps that was the only means to reach the Lieutenant's ship at this particular time.

So, to answer the questions you pose, here is what I think: (1) To indicate the letter should be sent from that point on by surface; (2) Not in the U.S., but by British postal authorities, usually London; (3) I've seen this marking on civilian mail. [By the way, the marking seems to have been applied by a roller.]; and, (4) Usually applied at the exchange office, which means somewhere in transit.

There are many *jusqu* designs. In this country the only ones I've seen are text in boxes reading something like 'By airmail over U.S. domestic routes only.' "

**Editor's Note**: I pointed out to Mr. Fiset that R.G.Wike describes similar markings as security devices in his monograph, "British Empire Civil Censorship Devices/World War II/Trinidad and Tobago". Mr. Fiset then correctly pointed out that the illustrations in Mr. Wike's work have no more than five bars, not six. So.....?

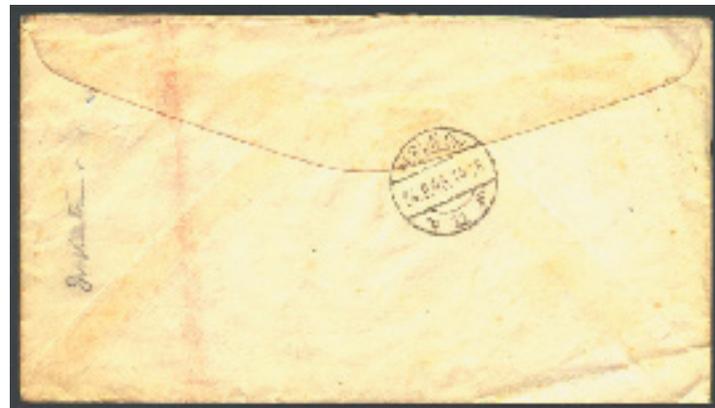
### **An Early Cold War Prexie Usage**

by

Jeffrey Shapiro

The illustration shows a seemingly ordinary Prexie Era cover franked with two 15 cents Buchanan stamps paying two times the 15 cents per half ounce uniform airmail rate to Europe, in effect from

Novemebr 1946 through June 1961, but is in reality a dandy little piece of post-World War II history.



This cover was mailed and postmarked in Middletown, Connecticut on September 20, 1948, and was addressed to Berlin, Germany where it was received and cancelled on the reverse, September 24, 1948. This speedy four day trip across the Atlantic suggests airmail transport directly into Berlin --- NOT just any air transport, but transport by the famous Berlin Airlift.

With the defeat of the Nazis in 1945, Germany was occupied by the victors: the United States, Britain, France and the Soviet Union. Each controlled a zone of the occupied country. In addition, Berlin, the former capital, surrounded by the Soviet Zone, was divided into four sectors.

After the United States, Britain and France took initial steps to consolidate their three Occupation Zones to create a West German government, the Soviets retaliated on June 24, 1948 by cutting off all surface traffic into the western sectors on Berlin, with the ultimate goal of controlling all of the city.

Faced with the choice of abandoning the city to the Soviets or attempting to supply the city's 2.5 million residents by air, the Western Powers, in the first major test of Soviet aggression of the Cold War, chose the latter solution, and Operation Vittles, as the Berlin Airlift was unofficially known, began on June 26, 1948.

The U.S. Air Force and the British Royal Air Force started slowly, carrying 80 tons of food on the first day, but slowly escalating to 600 flights a day, transporting 2500 tons of provisions, by July 15, 1948. By Easter Sunday, 1949, a record 1398 sorties (about one per minute!) flew into Berlin bringing well over 5000 tons of food, coal and other essential materials to the city's residents. In a propaganda coup for the U.S. and Britain, 10,000 Christmas gifts were flown in for the children of Berlin in the last two weeks of December, 1948.

In the face of this determined opposition and the growing propaganda nightmare, the Soviets lifted the land blockade to Berlin on May 12, 1949, but because of the huge backlog of material needed for Berlin's residents, the Airlift continued until September 30, 1949.

### Two Airmail Covers from the United States via the Horseshoe Route

by

Steven M. Roth

Airmail from the United States to points in the Middle East and Asia flown over the British Horseshoe Route are not common. One example I recently acquired is shown below.



This letter would have traveled from England to Durban, South Africa by ship; then by air to Palestine.

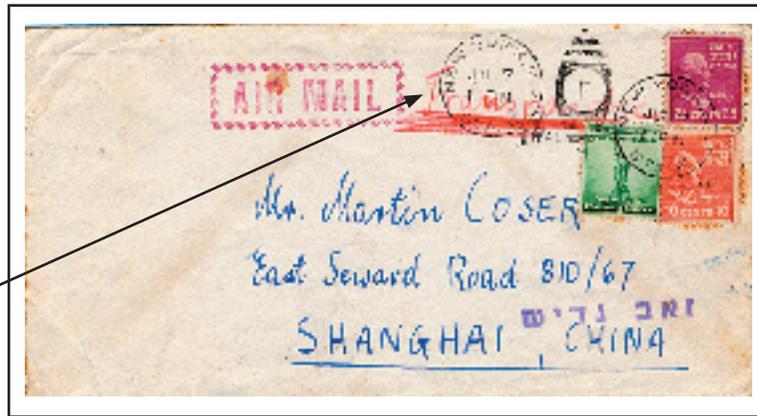
This appears to be a 1-1/2 oz. letter, franked with 30 cents, as follows: double weight airmail in the U.S. (Tucson to New York) = 2 x 6 cents (per ounce) [= 12 cents]; surface from Europe, and airmail from South Africa to destination, 6 cents per 1/2 ounce [3 x 6 cents = 18 cents], hence the 30 cents franking.

I also recently purchased a cover going to Shanghai from the U.S. that traveled via the Horseshoe Route.

This cover is dated July 7, 1941. It originated in New York City. It contains the sender's manuscript admonition "Trans Pacific". It is franked with 36 cents postage. The letter arrived in Shanghai on September 3, 1941, as evidenced by a Shanghai backstamp receiving marking.

The cover traveled from the United States to London via ocean mail. It went from London to Durban via ship, as well. From Durban, the cover traveled via air to China via Calcutta, etc. The rate was

calculated as follows: 5 cents surface mail from New York to London; 31 cents for surface to Durban and airmail from Durban by BOAC to destination.



The sender's admonition that the letter be routed via the trans-Pacific route (for which the basic airmail postage was 70 cents) was ignored [See, arrow for admonition inscription].

This cover was addressed to Martin Coser, a member of the large Jewish refugee community that had fled Nazi Germany and settled in Shanghai [1933 - 1948].

My thanks to Roger Schnell and Robert Wilcsek for their comments on these covers.

#### **Editor's *Prexie to Tibet* Cover Available to Trade**

I will trade the *Prexie Tibet* destination cover described in Newsletter No. 23 for a comparable airmail foreign destination *Prexie Era* cover used during WW II from the United States. Contact me at the e-mail address shown on page 1 of this Issue. This offer is subject to prior trade.

#### **Temporary Rerouting of Ship Mail via Japan and Siberia**

For approximately thirteen weeks in September, October, November and the first week of December, 1940, ocean mail from the United States to Germany, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and the USSR was sent via San Francisco to Japan, then to Siberia where it was carried by the trans-Siberian Railway to St. Petersburg and on to Berlin for distribution to its destination. Trans-Pacific airmail service was not then available to these countries. [PB Nos. 18022 and 18026]

