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The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

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With this issue your subscription to *The Prexie Era* has expired. (Subscribers who mailed dues earlier in the year can disregard this notice.) Please renew your subscription for 2008 with a check made out to Jeff Shapiro, the Prexie-Era Study Group Coordinator. Send \$5 if you want an electronic copy of the Newsletter or \$10 for delivery by "snail-mail". Address any questions to Jeff directly:

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If your subscription is not current by the time the next issue comes out this will be the last one you will receive.

Two volunteers have stepped forward to carry on as editor/publisher of the Newsletter. Jeff will be making his selection soon. Both have expressed their willingness to make a minimum two-year commitment, beginning with No. 40, scheduled to appear in February 2008. In the meantime, please continue to send submissions to your acting editor. I am in need of material.

* * * *

Mixed Foreign Franked Usages Of The Transport Airmail Series - Part II

by

Joseph Bock

The 30-cent and 50-cent values represent the last two Transport stamps in the original 1941 series and were issued on September 25 and October 29, 1941, respectively. Copying the original design, two additional Transports appeared later. The six-cent booklet pane was released in May 1943 for the convenience of military personnel eligible for the special military airmail rate. The eight-cent value appeared in March 1944 when the domestic airmail rate went from six cents per ounce to eight cents.

30-cent per half-ounce trans-Atlantic rate



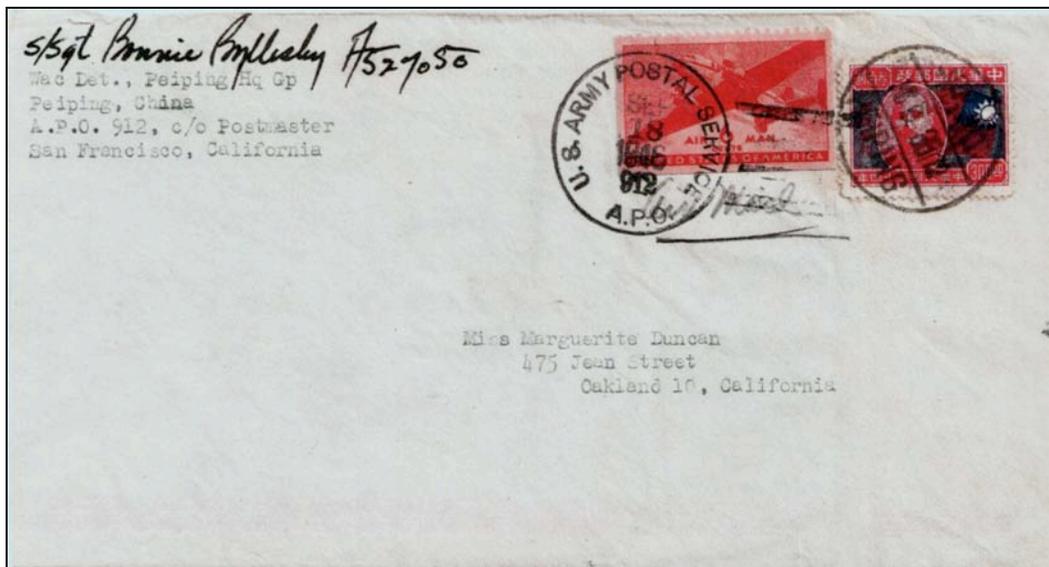
Originally sent to a French Military Chaplain in London. One shilling three pence British stamps were added for forwarding by airmail to Brazzaville, French Congo, thence forwarded within French West Africa to Duala, French Cameroun. Censored at New York and Bermuda.

50-cent usage to China assessed postage due



“Poste restante” (General Delivery) to China, December 1945. The correct 70-cents per half-ounce rate to Asia was correctly paid. However, General Delivery was assessed an 8-cent penalty, paid with a surcharged 8c value Chinese definitive stamp, as postage due stamps did not appear until 1947.

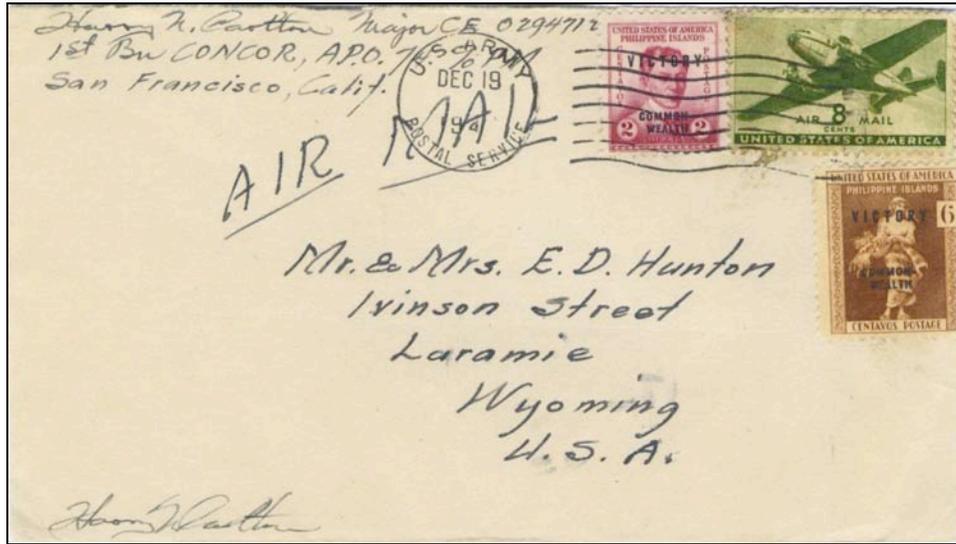
Booklet stamp paying the 6-cents per half-ounce special military airmail rate



From a WAC (Women’s Army Corps) in Peiping (Beijing) China, September 1946. Originally posted PEiping September 12, 1946 with a \$300 value Chinese stamp and postmarked as local

Chinese mail. Peiping is a large city and it may have originated through a civilian post office. Six days later, on September 18th, it received an APO 912 cancel in Peiping. It appears the Transport stamp was added later. The special military airmail rate was still in effect, and likely APO mail provided more efficient and safe service than through the Chinese postal service.

8-cent military airmail from the Philippine Islands



Double the 6-cent per half-ounce special military airmail rate from the Philippines in December 1945. Posted at APO 74 (Clark Field). Eight cents in Philippine postage was affixed, equivalent to 4 cents in U.S. postage. Thus, 12 cents paid in total paying the military airmail rate for a letter weighing between one-half and one ounce.

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APO Airmail to Foreign Destinations: 5c DC-4 Skymaster, Japan to England

by

Steve B. Davis

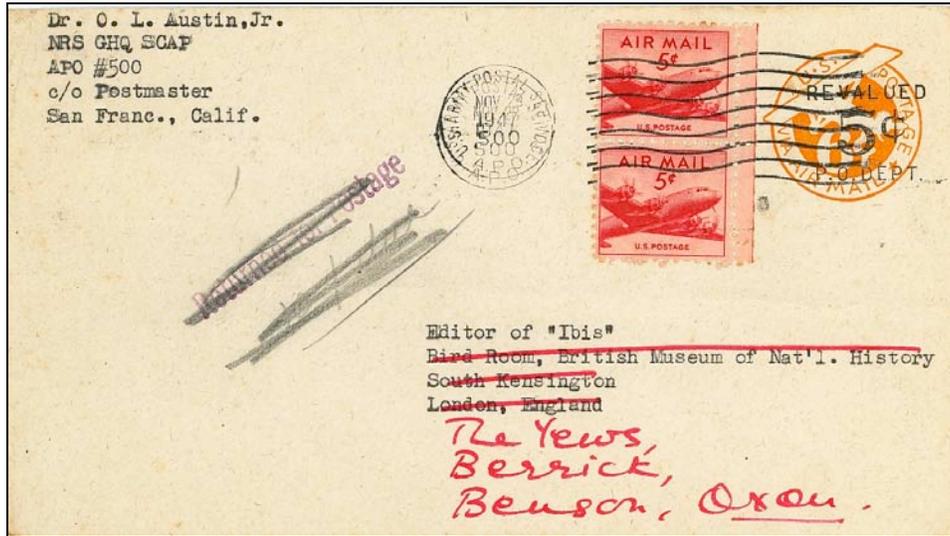
The six cents per half-ounce concession rate for service personnel expired September 30, 1946. Effective the next day the new 5-cent domestic airmail rate was extended to personnel serving overseas provided an APO (Army Post Office) or FPO (Fleet Post Office) was used. The sender paid the same rate that a correspondent living in the United States mainland was assessed.

The cover illustrated, mailed in November 1947 from APO #500 (Tokyo, Japan), was addressed to London. The uniform airmail rate from the United States to Europe became 15 cents per half-ounce on November 1, 1946. In this case the cover traveled across two oceans, from Japan to England, for the European rate.

It appears the sender thought the 5-cent concession rate applied to APO mail to foreign destinations. This was not the case, as uniform airmail rates applied as if the mail originated from the United States proper. As seen, cover was "Returned for Postage". Below this marking in pencil was "10/Due". The additional postage was applied in the form of two 5-cent Skymaster

small format stamps (Scott C33). The correct postage having been affixed, the letter was sent on to England where it was redirected to another British address.

The cover itself is a 6-cent postal stationary envelope revalued to accommodate the new 5-cent domestic rate (Scott UC10). The 5-cent per ounce domestic rate replaced the 8c per ounce rate that had been in place since March 1944. The lower rate remained in effect until January 1, 1949 when it increased to 6 cents per ounce.



As a point of interest "Ibis" is a scientific journal devoted to the study of birds. The official name is *Ibis: The International Journal of Avian Sciences*. The journal has been in continuous publication since 1859. The correspondent, Dr. Oliver L. Austin, Jr., (1903–1987) one of the eminent ornithologists ("bird scientists") of the 20th century, was co-founder with his father of the Austin Ornithological Research Station on Cape Cod (now the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary), as well as a long-time editor of *The Auk*, author of a definitive study, "Birds of the World," and curator of birds at the Florida State Museum.

The mystery here is why Dr. Austin was using the military mails. He must have been performing contract work for them. Perhaps studying birds around air bases? But then that's what makes research into these covers so interesting. There is always a story to be discovered, both philatelic and otherwise.

* * * *

PRISONERS-OF-WAR MAIL
Freedom from Postage in the Domestic Mails
ORDER No. 19127; EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 8, 1942.

Letters, post cards, consignments of money or valuables, and parcels of other mailable matter not exceeding four pounds in weight intended for or dispatched by prisoners of war, including civilian enemy detainees and internees, shall be accepted free of postage when mailed at and addressed to any place where the United States mail service is in operation. Such matter shall be endorsed by the sender to show in the upper left corner of the address side his name and address and in the upper right corner the inscription: "FREE—Prisoner-of-War Mail." Information bureaus instituted pursuant to Article 77 of the Convention between the United States of America and other powers, proclaimed by the President of the United States August 4, 1932, shall enjoy the same privilege of freedom from postage on postal matter as set forth in this section.

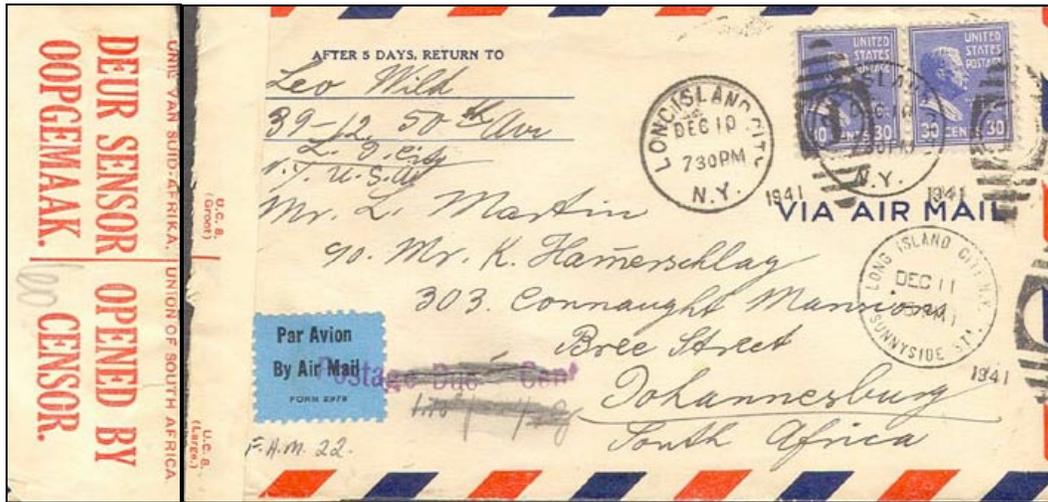
(For information concerning prisoners-of-war mail in the international postal service, see Change No. 64 for Part II of the July 1941 Postal Guide, appearing on pages 47 and 49 of the May 1942 supplement thereto.)

An Early FAM-22 Non-Military Cover

by

Louis Fiset

FAM-22, the southern Atlantic route via Miami to Leopoldville, in west Africa's Belgian Congo, officially began operations on December 6, 1941. Four days earlier, in anticipation of the new route, the airmail postal rate to the Union of South Africa went from \$1.10 per half ounce to 60 cents. Students of FAM-22 aerophilately suggest planes did not carry non-military mail on a regular basis until May 1942. The cover shown here, however, appears to represent an early example of the new routing.



The letter, postmarked December 10, 1941 and destined for Johannesburg with 60 cents airmail franking, was returned to the writer for additional postage intended to pay the \$1.10 trans-Pacific rate. The postage due marking was penciled out, no additional postage paid, and the letter reposted December 11th. An “F.A.M. 22” manuscript marking appears at the bottom left directing the letter be carried on the new foreign airmail route.

The letter was carried on the third flight of FAM-22, which departed Miami January 3, 1942. The Leopoldville backstamp, dated January 14, 1942, verifies the route. This southern trans-Atlantic route went Miami → San Juan → Port of Spain → Belem → Natal → Bathurst → Lagos → Leopoldville, a multi-stop flight taking approximately six days, barring bad weather, censorship, or other unforeseen delays. From Leopoldville the letter went by air to Windhoek, South West Africa, for censorship,¹ then by air on South African Airways to Johannesburg.

Civilian mail carried on the early FAM-22 flights is scarce and keenly sought after. Prexie and Transport Issue collectors should be on the lookout for this elusive mail.

¹ John Little, *British Empire Civil Censorship Devices World War II: Colonies and Occupied Territories in Africa* (Civil Censorship Study Group, 2000), Type 1C1, earliest recorded date, August 8, 1941.

Tales from the Other Side – Part II: “War Perfs”

by

Francis Ferguson
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This column focuses on the wartime part perforations or, “war perfs,” to be found on most values of the Prexie Series, as well as the Defense Issue stamps. War perfs resulted from the government’s ration of metal parts for non-military production during World War II. Many machines had to make due with aging delicate metal parts that during peacetime would be replaced on a regular basis.

In stamp production, rationing resulted in worn or broken pins on the perforating bars producing the horizontal holes and caused recurring patterns of holes not to be punched at all. The varieties of missed punch holes have been categorized into seven distinct patterns. Types I, II, & III are the most common and may be found on most stamps in the series. This contrasts with Type VII found only on the 1.5-cent stamp.

In the examples shown above, the 1.5-cent and 22-cent stamps are Type I, while the half-cent, 8-cent, and 16-cent stamps show the Type II variety.

It should be noted that war perfs can also be found on the vertical axis. However, the patterns of missing holes do not repeat with consistency because the vertical perforating wheels did not reset to a predetermined position from sheet to sheet.

War perfs differ from “blind perfs”. While the former result from a lack of a pin creating a hole in the paper of the stamp, blind perfs are normally incompletely punched holes with the paper still attached to some degree giving the general visual impression of the holes not being there. However, under closer examination the punch holes can be seen thus being called a “blind perf”.

Most stamps with war perfs are readily available, especially Types I and II. The higher values with histories of lower production numbers, such as the 22- and 24-cent stamps, will cost more. Since blind perf stamps can mimic war perf varieties, collectors should inspect the stamps carefully before buying.

More information on production anomalies may be found in Roland E. Rustad’s book, *The Prexies*.

A Pricey Prexie Postage Due

by

Richard W. Helbock

It's not unusual to find Prexies paying postage due on short paid mail during their period of use, but the 1951 cover illustrated here required 76 cents in due postage—equivalent to \$6.15 in 2006 dollars! I don't know about you, but if I have to pay over \$6 to read someone's letter, it had better contain a pretty darned worthwhile message.



This cover has been resting comfortably (I hope) in my Prexie Collection for 15 or 20 years. I've admired it several times for its aesthetic multicultural intermingling of Indian and American themes, images and colors; but never really stopped to ask the relevant questions about it. Thanks to my friend—and our acting editor—Louis Fiset who recently asked for a bit of copy, I decided to look into the nature of this piece and its pricey payment of postage due.

Fortunately, another friend of yours and mine—Henry Berthelot—recently wrote an article for *La Posta* that laid out the details of assessing international postage due. According to Hank:

Beginning 1 October 1907, a new procedure was commenced regarding the rating and marking of insufficiently paid items in the International Mail. Foreign Office clerks in the country of origin continued to denote an insufficiently paid item with a T-marking, but now they were also responsible for doubling the deficiency and denoting on the item the total amount insufficiently paid, expressed in francs/centimes. After the item was marked deficient, it was routed to the destination country.

At a Foreign Office in the country of destination, a clerk only had to convert the deficiency noted on the item into that country's currency and indicate with a domestic marking the postage due amount to be collected from the addressee. The item was then forwarded to the post office of delivery. There, if the destination country issued postage dues, one or more dues were sometimes affixed to account for the amount collected.¹

This procedure remained in effect until January 1966 so the postage due assessment applied to this 1951 cover should have been governed by these regulations. The cover was franked with a strip of four 4-annas blue Bhuvanesvara, a pair of 9-pies green Trimurti and a single 2-annas red Nataraja. In 1951 there were 12 pies in one anna, and 16 annas in one rupee. The postage applied to this cover totalled 19½ annas, or R1, 3a, 6p. Interestingly, this was equivalent to 25.3 US cents at that time. Was the sender thinking that, since the US postage airmail rate to India was 25 cents, perhaps the rate from India to the US should be the equivalent in Indian currency? If so, they were mistaken on both counts. The airmail rate from the US to India was 25 cents per *half-ounce*, and the Indian airmail rate to the US was not quite equivalent.

The Indian Foreign Office mail clerk took one look at this cover and probably said something in Hindi like, “Whoa, this weighs way too much to meet the basic rate.” He or she probably spoke in Hindi, but English is a distinct possibility since this was only four years after Indian independence and the bureaucracy of the Raj conducted business in His Majesty’s English. At any rate, the clerk determined the sender had underpaid postage required to send this cover via air by some 23 annas. In other words, the correct postage for a cover of this weight and destination should have been R2, 10a, 6p. I realize that sounds like a very odd rate, but since I do not have access to a table of air post rates applicable to 1951, I must assume that the clerk knew his stuff.

Having determined the deficiency, the clerk doubled the amount and converted the 46 annas to Postal union centimes at a rate of 4.9 centimes per anna. He then hand stamped the cover with a large T-in-circle struck in black ink and wrote “226” in blue ink.

The cover was postmarked 19 November and arrived in New York about a week later confirming it traveled by air. Once the letter reached the Foreign Department of New York City’s General Post Office, the American clerk noted the 226 centimes due and divided by three since one US cent was then equivalent to 3 Union centimes. The amount calculated at 75.3 cents and that was rounded up to 76. He hand stamped the cover “Postage Due Cents” and wrote “76” in the gap. The cover was then sent on to Lima, New York for delivery and collection of the postage due. Happily for us, the clerk in Lima opted to affix a 50¢, 25¢ and 1¢ Prexie to denote payment and then tied the stamps with his Lima utility dater.

The cover and its contents then reached the Reverend J. Carlton Spencer, Esq., Principal of the Elim Bible College. Presumably, he was pleased to read the missive, and he may well have been the person who wrote “Bernice” in blue ink on the cover. Ah yes, I remember Bernice. She was a diligent scholar, but not gifted in mathematics....

¹Hank Berthelot, “U.S. Foreign Offices’ Use and Handling of Fractions on Insufficiently Paid UPU Cards,” *La Posta*, Vol. 37, No. 6 (January 2007)

A Rate that Never Existed: Or Did It?

by

Bob Hohertz



This cover was sent from an APO to Australia by air in 1945 with 20 cents postage. There is no indication that a stamp is missing, or that it was not given airmail handling.

The airmail rate to Australia was seventy cents per half-ounce from July 2, 1940 until November 1, 1946. If the sender had meant for it to go by surface to Australia and then air within the country, the first ounce should have been five cents surface and five cents for air within for the first half-ounce, and then an additional five cents if it had weighed between one-half and one ounce. And does it make sense to pay for air inside Australia when the letter is to go to Sydney?

I showed this cover to Jim Forte shortly after I bought it, and he came up with a theory. APO 503 was in New Guinea from December of 1942 until sometime in August of 1945, then left for Japan at the end of that month. Let us assume that letter was mailed from the Philippines.

We are aware that the cost of an airmail letter to Australia when mailed from Hawaii at this time was reduced to 50 cents, as a holdover from the time when airmail to Hawaii from the mainland was 20 cents. The cost of an airmail letter to the Philippines was 50 cents per half-ounce, so if we subtract that from the 70-cent rate to Australia we get 20 cents, which is what was paid on this cover.

That rate did not exist – or did it? Perhaps only in the mind of a postal worker assigned to the APO?

I suppose it is more likely that the sender meant to pay the surface rate to Australia and then for air within the country for a letter weighing between one-half and one ounce, but had no idea how to do that, so overpaid by five cents. But the other theory is fun to entertain, if only for a while.