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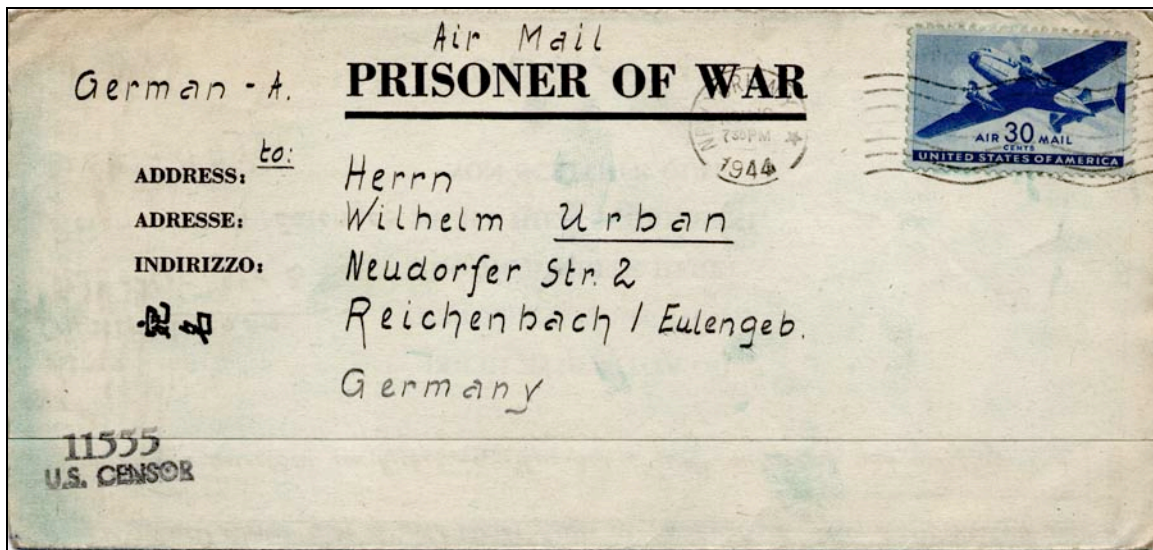
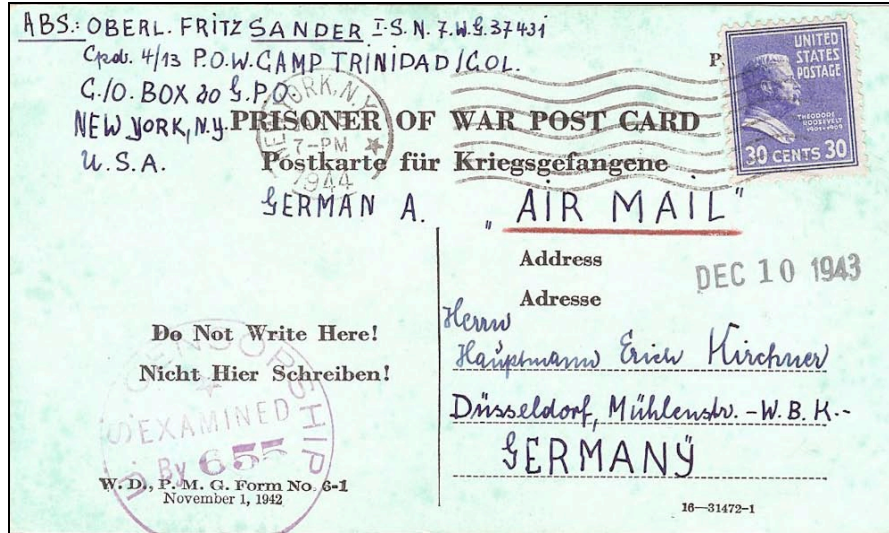
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Prexie/Transport Usage on POW Mail

by

Robert L. Markovitz



In World War II more than 600,000 German prisoners of war were brought to the US from the European and North African theaters. As a result, POW mail back to the homeland is common. Less common is POW mail sent by air, which required full prepayment of the prewar 30-cent airmail rate to Europe on both post cards and letterforms, the only permitted means of communication.

Internees and POWs who volunteered to work while interned received 80 cents per day in wages. Thus, payment of airmail postage was expensive. More, no guarantee existed that the letter would arrive any quicker than regular mail since postal service to Germany had been suspended since December 11, 1941. For these reasons, correspondence sent by air is seldom seen in dealers' stock. When it does, post cards and letterforms franked with Prexies and Transport stamps appear with the same frequency.

Tales from the Other Side – Part VII: Splices

by

Francis Ferguson

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Think of the high speed Stickney rotary presses churning out seemingly endless impressions of stamps on a continuous roll of paper (web). Wait one minute. Every roll of paper must have a beginning and end. So, how does the end of one roll get joined to the start of the next roll? One word – tape.

In the ideal world of rotary stamp production the forward and trailing edge of the web would be overlapped and taped together by hand, then marked in red pencil or crayon for removal during the post-press production process. Thankfully for collectors, such a perfect world does not exist, with a happy result that a lot of taped/sliced material has fallen into collectors' hands. While one would think the tape/splice kind of pieces would be mostly the same, in reality many varieties exist. In theory there should be sheet splices for every value of the series through the 50-cent definitive as well as the eight coil values. I have managed to obtain 12 examples of the 29 face-different stamps.

Because the \$1, \$2, \$5 values were produced on flat plate presses that did not employ a web, such splices would not be expected to occur.

Splice/taped material should be collected in strips or blocks to show the important elements of a splice. One or two placements of tape may be present along with single or multiple strokes of red crayon. [A word of caution: the adhesive nature of the tape after nearly 70 years is often in question. Make sure your pieces do not fall apart! Encase in mylar sleeves, if needed, to preserve the integrity of the item.] Most pieces show a close to 50/50 single/double paper layer. However, I have seen pieces that are either almost totally single paper and others that had nearly total double paper. It all depends on how much of a paper overlap was used and how it was taped.

The example accompanying this article is representative of splices to be found on Prexie stamps and other rotary stock. It shows both the splice and accompanying red pencil marking to alert post production press workers

Tales From the Other Side – Part VI: A Follow-Up

by

John M. Hotchner

I've been enjoying Francis Ferguson's series on Presidential EFOs. In Issue 44 (Winter 2009) he discusses gutter snipes and provides illustrations. He omits one differentiation evident in the illustration that is worth discussing. Let's look at his last two items, the 6-cent and 8-cent singles reproduced here.

Note that unlike the 6-cent value, the 8-cent example has a horizontal joint line through the margin. To put this into proper context, recall that web production resulted in a continuous roll of printed stamps in a repeating series of units of four-pane plate impressions totaling 400 definitive sized stamps, with plate numbers in the four corners.



Each plate impression is segmented from the other by a joint line where the two semi-circular rotary plates meet.

Converting the web (the large roll of paper) into finished stamps involved first slicing the web into plate impression sections of 400 stamps, then cutting the plate impression sheets into retail panes of 100.

A gutter snipe with a joint line in the margin results from a miscut involving the intersheet margin, and a clear margin from a more commonly seen intrasheet miscut.

The proof of this explanation is shown by the plate block accompanying this article. Note particularly the intersheet gutter snipe caused by a horizontal misperf. Complicating matters a bit further, this piece also shows the perforation process took place before the web was sliced into sheets of 400. Obviously the slicing keyed on the perforations. Had they been in the proper location the slicing would have been entirely accurate.

Now, if you are not thoroughly confused . . . you now know that gutter snipes with marginal joint lines and associated with plate numbers are very scarce items and much more desirable than plain intrasheet snipes. Happy hunting!

Common as Dirt – The 6-Cent Transport Airmail Stamp

by

Bill Helbock

Continued from Issue No. 45

As is the case with domestic uses of the 6-cent Transport, one may find occasional international uses that are frankly surprising, or at least very unusual. The cover below originated with a Filipino national—perhaps associated with the American military. It is franked with a 6-cent Transport and was posted to the International Correspondence School in Scranton, Pennsylvania. The stamp is tied by a manuscript “Victoria, Tarlac, Philippines” and dated February 8, 1945. The author has seen no references to POD authorization of the concession airmail rate extended to civilians in the Philippines. And, if the sender was an employee of the U.S. military, it is not clear why the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD) would have censored his mail.



My final example of an unusual international use of the 6-cent Transport is illustrated in the next figure. This cover, from the purser of the S.S. *Carlsbad*, is franked with a 50-cent Malaya KGVI value overprinted B.M.A./MALAYA and a 6-cent Transport stamp, both tied SINGAPORE May 10, 1946. The letter is addressed to Berkeley, California, with the Via Air Mail envelope endorsed “Via London.”

BOAC resumed twice-weekly air service between Singapore and the United Kingdom on February 5th, 1946. The 50 Malay cents paid the current rate for air carriage to the UK and onward steamer across the Atlantic. The 6-cent Transport apparently paid the 6-cent airmail concession rate extended to civilian crews of the U.S. Merchant Marine on January 1, 1943. Since the purser was apparently eligible for the concession rate, the 6 cents postage would have been sufficient to provide U.S. airmail service. Likely he believed that a combination of British and American carriage would provide his letter faster delivery.

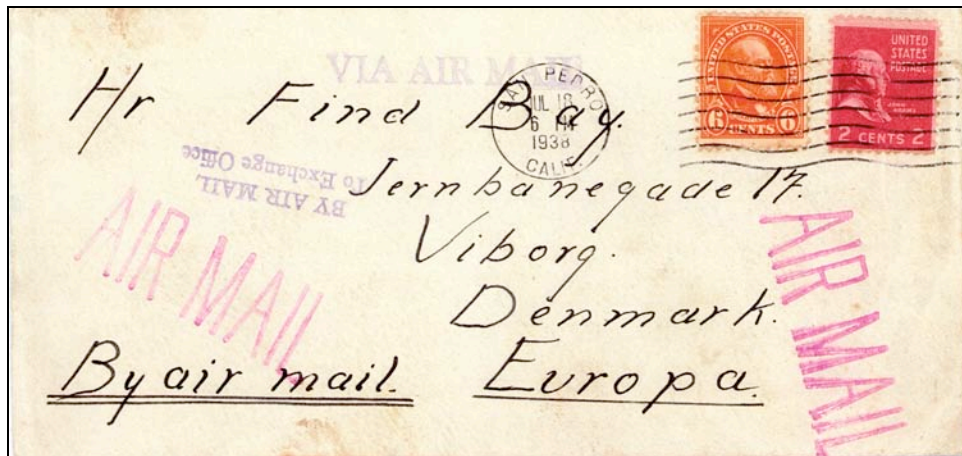


These are but a sampling of the interesting kinds of stories that might be told with examples of the humble 6-cent Transport used internationally. I do not claim the search for such material will be easy. However, with perseverance and patience there are pearls to be found. Happy hunting!

Mixed Franking On An Early Prexie Airmail Cover

by

Jim Felton



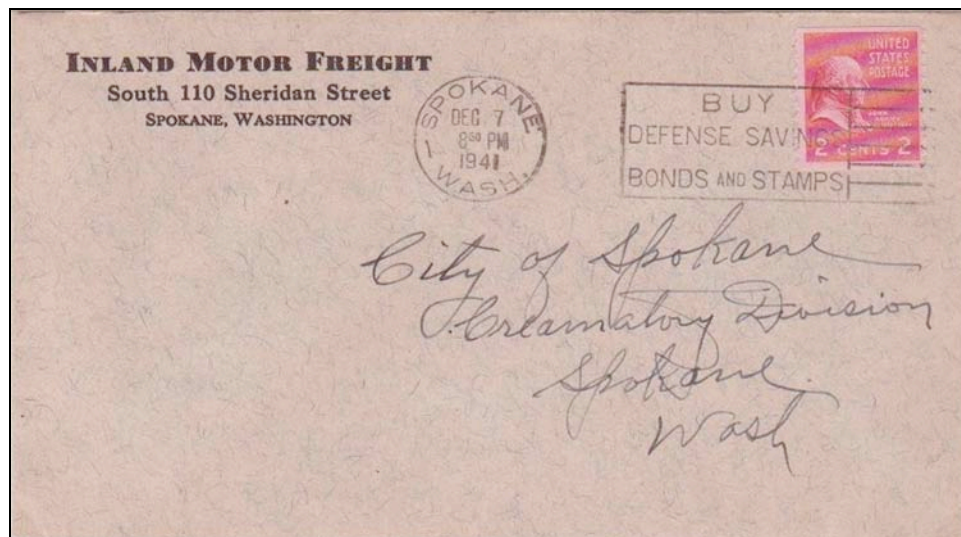
Mixed franking on early and late Prexie covers is popular among some Prexie collectors. Illustrated here is a cover to Denmark postmarked July 18, 1938, with postage paying the 3-cent domestic airmail surcharge from California to the exchange office at New York in addition to the 5-cent UPU rate.

The 6-cent value of the Fourth Bureau Issue used here was still current, since the 6-cent John Quincy Adams value that replaced it did not appear until July 28th, ten days later.

Spokane Postal History – A Day of Infamy

by

Larry Mann



My collecting interest focuses on the postal history of Spokane, located in eastern Washington state, from its beginnings as Spokan Falls in 1881 down to the present time. My covers touch on most aspects of nineteenth and twentieth century U.S. history, including World War II.

The most unusual aspect of the Prexie cover illustrated here is the December 7, 1941 cancellation. This was the day of the Pearl Harbor attack by Japanese Imperial forces that brought the U.S. into World War II. This commercial cover was sent by a freight company to the City of Spokane's Crematory [*sic*] Division.

The "BUY DEFENSE SAVINGS BONDS AND STAMPS" Spokane slogan cancel goes well with the date. First used in cities around the United States beginning in spring 1941, it advertised a campaign to encourage citizens to invest in savings bonds and stamps in support of national defense. Savings stamps were first issued May 1, 1941 and could be redeemed later for US Treasury Defense, War, or Savings bonds.

Cancellations with a December 7, 1941 date are scarce because this was a Sunday, and most post offices were closed. Mail already in the system, however, was canceled at mail processing centers, such as the one in Spokane.

This cover also shows a legitimate usage of the 2-cent Prexie vertically perfed coil paying the carrier post office local letter (in-city) rate, effective July 1, 1933 to March 26, 1944.

FAM 14 Airmail To Australia Via Hong Kong

by

Louis Fiset



Although beginning July 2, 1940 the FAM 19 route was available for airmail service from San Francisco to New Zealand and onward by air to Australia, correspondents could also direct their mail along the well established FAM 14 route from San Francisco to Hong Kong, with onward BOAC airmail service to Australia. The rate of 70 cents per half-ounce was the same for mail carried on both routes, with an estimated 13-day transit time between San Francisco and Sydney.

This double weight registered letter, postmarked August 26, 1940 at New York City, was routed on FAM 14 to Hong Kong where it was opened by censors then allowed to pass. However, the correspondent clearly indicated his preference for the new FAM 19 route as indicated by the directive "By P.A.A. Clipper to NEW ZEALAND." The letter arrived at San Francisco too late for the scheduled August 24th flight to Auckland and was placed on the next available flight, to Hong Kong, scheduled to depart on September 3rd. The alternative was the next FAM 19 flight scheduled to leave San Francisco September 11th. The Postal Bulletin indicated airmail service for Australia would be routed via Auckland as well as via Hong Kong.

U.S. Official Postal Guide Monthly Supplement - July 1940

FOREIGN AIR-MAIL SERVICE

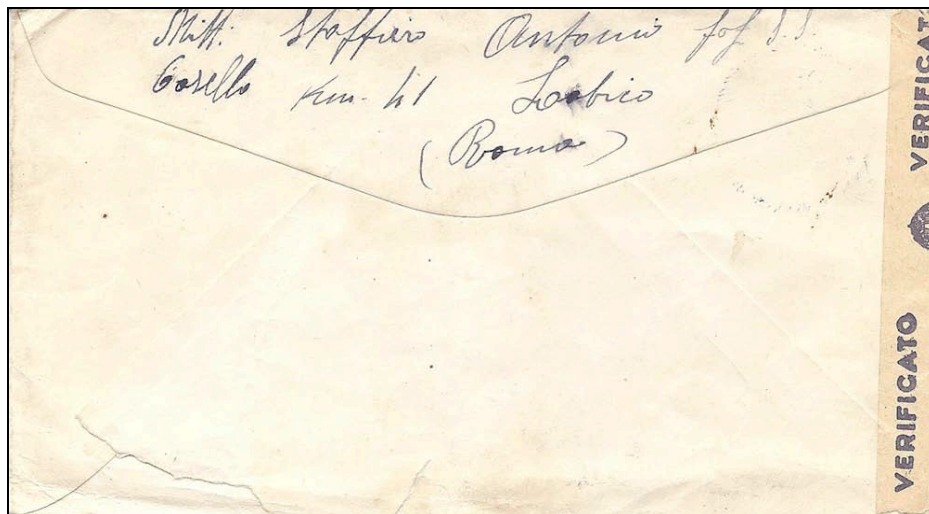
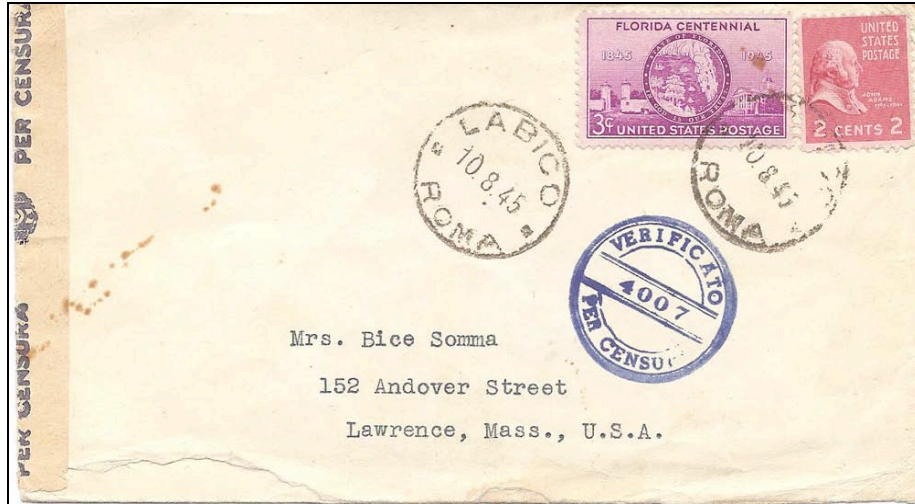
There is fortnightly air-mail service on the route from San Francisco by Los Angeles, Honolulu, Canton Island (South Pacific), and Noumea (New Caledonia), to Auckland (New Zealand), with connecting air service between Auckland and Sydney (maintained by New Zealand). The British air-mail service has been resumed from Hong Kong via Bangkok, Singapore, and Netherlands Indies to Australia, connecting at Hong Kong with the weekly service between San Francisco and Hong Kong. The transit time between San Francisco and Sydney is about 13 days weekly. Air mails for Australia will be routed via Auckland as well as via Hong Kong. Air mails for New Zealand will be routed via the direct service only. Air mails for Thailand (Siam), Malay States, Indo-China, Straits Settlements, and Netherlands Indies will be sent through by air.

The air-mail postage rates involved, per half ounce, are as follows: From the United States to Canton Island, 30 cents; to New Caledonia, 40 cents; to New Zealand, 50 cents; and to Australia, 70 cents. From Hawaii to Canton Island, 10 cents; to New Caledonia, 20 cents; to New Zealand, 30 cents; and to Australia, 50 cents.

Curious U.S. Postage on Post-War Italian Mail

by

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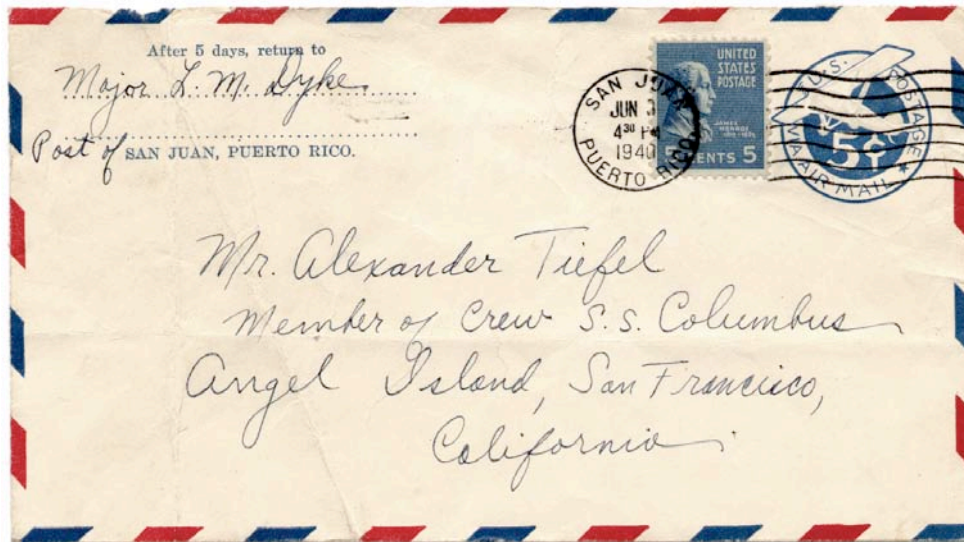
The cover shown here was postmarked Labico Roma (a commune located 35 km southeast of Rome), on August 10, 1945, and addressed to the United States. It has an Italian censor tape as well as a censor hand stamp put into use after Italy's capitulation in 1943. Instead of Italian franking, affixed were a 2-cent Prexie and 3-cent commemorative stamps paying the then current 5-cent UPU rate for a foreign letter from the U.S.

This curious cover raises questions. Postal service from the U.S. to Rome resumed July 12, 1944, but more than a year would pass before full service was restored to the entire country. When did mail service *to* the U.S. resume, and what role did the APO system play in helping move the civil mails? Why were U.S. stamps tolerated on this letter – no Italian stamps available at the rural post office, perhaps staffed by U.S. army personnel? Please contact me or your editor with your ideas so any explanation can be shared with the readership.

5-Cent Stamped Airmail Envelopes In Partial Payment of A 10-Cent Rate

by

Louis Fiset



When the 5-cent airmail letter rate within the continental U.S. went to 8 cents per ounce on July 6, 1932 the 5-cent airmail stamped envelope, in production since 1929, became obsolete. In anticipation of a return to the 5-cent rate, the Post Office Department continued to produce the envelope until 1937. The resumed 5-cent rate, however, was still nine years away. Rather than destroy the entire large stock on hand, POD shipped some of its excess to post offices in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands where the airmail rate to the continental U.S. was 10 cents. Postal patrons could affix a 5-cent Prexie to make up the difference, as seen here in the two examples, from Charlotte Amalie, V.I. and San Juan, P.R.

The second example is of added interest to me because the addressee was a crewman from the German liner, S.S. *Columbus*, scuttled off the coast of New Jersey in December 1939. The detained ex-*Columbus* crew was awaiting repatriation at the Angel Island quarantine station. Repatriation never came, and the crew was subsequently interned at Fort Stanton, New Mexico throughout the war. Mail from U.S. dependencies to interned Axis sailors is uncommon.