

THE PREXIES GO TO WAR

At various times during 1938, 32 denominations of new U.S. definitive postage stamps were issued, in what was called the Presidential Series. They were officially known as the "Fifth Bureau Issue" and more colloquially as "The Prexies" since all but three of the designs depicted the former Presidents no longer living at the time. As the eventual replacement set wasn't issued until starting in 1954, it is obvious that the Prexies provided the workhorse postage used in the period just prior to, during and following World War II. The purpose of this exhibit is to show examples of all of the values used in a military context of one sort or another. This is not as easy as it sounds since many of the denominations involved unusual usages, not often seen in the ordinary mail activity of our soldiers and sailors.

Initially, members of the armed forces stationed outside the continental U.S. were allowed to send mail at domestic postal rates. However, as of April 1, 1942, surface letters and postcards from military personnel were allowed free franking. However, this did not apply to special services, including airmail, parcel post, registration, insurance or printed matter. Thus, the Army Post Offices and Fleet Post Offices needed to carry an inventory of postage stamps to meet the requirements of those desiring such services.

Examples have been selected in order to show a wide variety of uses, including from the bases that were leased from Great Britain before America entered the war, inbound and outbound covers to or from various parts of the world during the fighting, and occupation mail in the aftermath of the surrender of Germany and Japan.

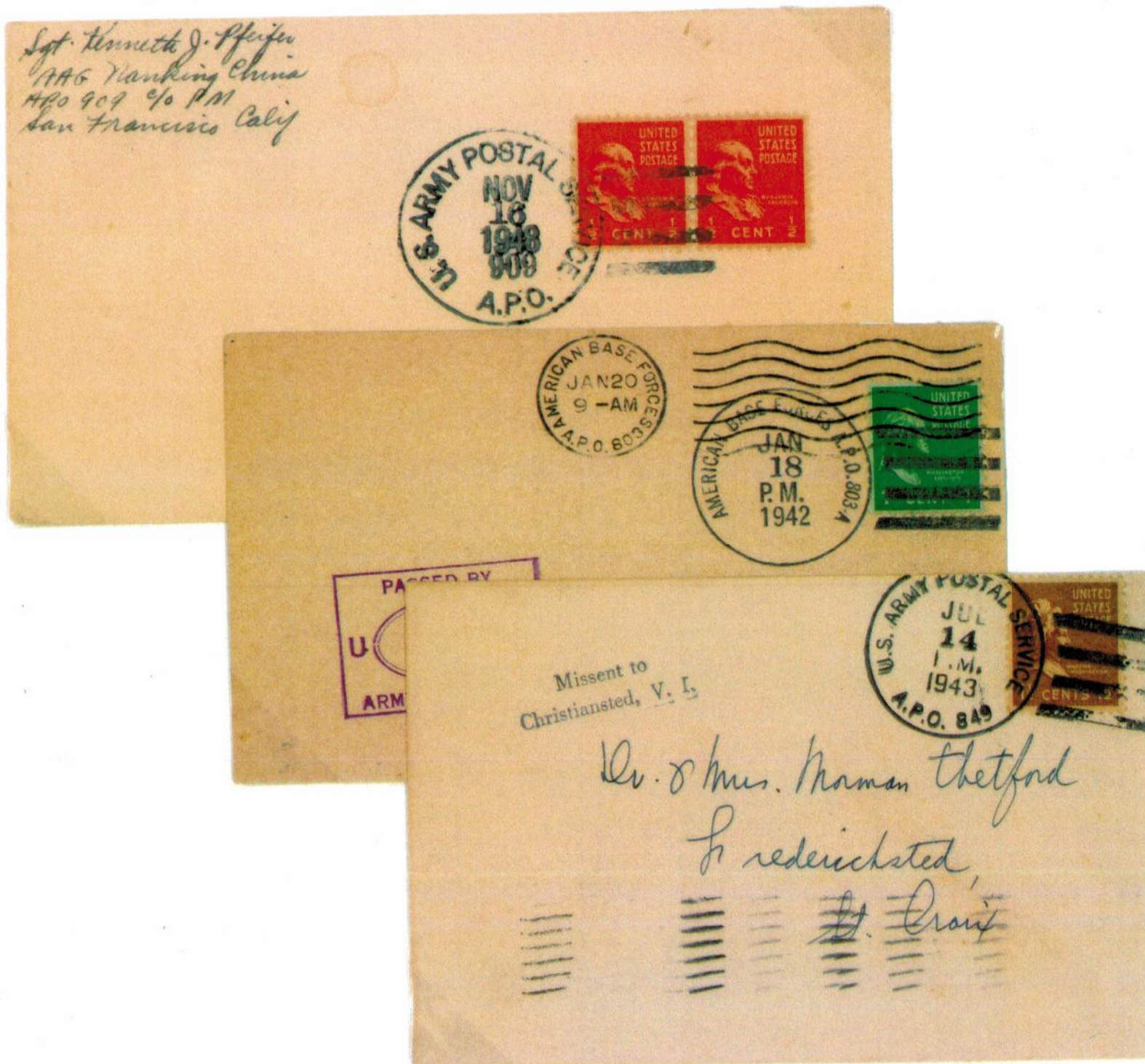
Considering that the armed forces eventually involved 12 million service men and women, the amount of military mail processed during this period was immense. However, the supply of covers showing the more unusual and higher denomination stamps is relatively modest. In fact, military use of the \$5.00 Prexy is negligible, with only a handful (about 5) examples having been reported.



Highly unusual address tag for an airmail shipment (of documents?) from the office of Admiral Nimitz, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet (located on Guam at the time) to Secretary of the Navy Forrestal in Washington. Counting stamps on the reverse of the tag, a total of \$30.46 in postage was affixed, including two copies of the \$5.00 Prexie. This meant 507 times the 6¢ military concession rate for airmail, which would cover a shipment weighing approximately 16 pounds.

½¢ BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
 1¢ PRESIDENT GEO. WASHINGTON
 1½¢ MARTHA WASHINGTON

Postwar Military Mission in China 1948
 Wartime Army Post Office in Newfoundland 1942
 Wartime Army Post Office in Virgin Is. 1943



There was no rate for the ½¢ Prexie denomination so it is never seen as a single franking but always in multiples or in conjunction with other postage. Here, a pair is used on a postcard from APO 909 at the Military Mission in Nanking. The 1¢ Prexie was normally used to pay the rate for postcards, in this case from APO 803-A in Newfoundland. The primary use of the 1½¢ value was for third class (unsealed) letters. The cover shown here was sent from APO 849 at Benedict Field on St. Croix.

2¢ PRESIDENT JOHN ADAMS
 3¢ PRESIDENT THOMAS JEFFERSON
 4¢ PRESIDENT JAMES MADISON

Wartime Army Post Office in Hawaii 1945
 Prewar Marine P.O. in Newfoundland in 1941
 Postwar Occupation Army P.O. in Germany 1949

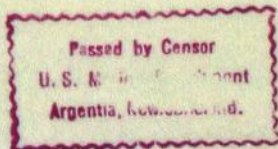
*Sgt. D. J. Love 12067109
 Co C 30 Eng Reg Bn
 APO 957 Schofield Barracks Oahu Calif.*

*Sister Anna Marie
 111 Elm St.
 Melrose New York*



Hunting & Fishing

275



*Nov. 15.
 Thanks a lot for your letter. Am glad things are going along so nicely for you & Dix. Am anxious to see your apt. Arrived here in Garmish, this morning for a week's stay in this hotel. It is beautiful here in the Bavarian Alps and there is enough snow for skiing. I hope to try it again while I'm here. There is lots to see of interest & lovely stores for shopping. Garmish is the playground of Germany, & now the Army is using it for same. This is the life! Love, Mildred*



*Mrs. W. D. Melick
 16 E. Watchung Gardens
 802 East Front St.
 Plainfield
 New Jersey
 U.S.A.*

This 2¢ Prexie is shown on a homemade wrapper for printed matter. The rate for this class of mail matter was 1½¢, so it was ½¢ overpaid from APO 957 at Schofield Barracks, Oahu. The 3¢ stamp paid the first class rate for letters, such as this example from the U.S. Marine Base at Argentia, Newfoundland. The 4¢ stamp paid the airmail postcard rate established on January 1, 1949.

4½¢ THE WHITE HOUSE
 5¢ PRESIDENT JAMES MONROE
 6¢ PRESIDENT JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

Wartime Army Post Office in Hawaii (1943?)
 Postwar Army Post Office in Germany 1948
 Wartime Army Post Office in Morocco 1943

*P.F.C. Roland Plattner
 Anti Tank Co. - 123 Inf
 A.P.O. #33 - C/P - 1
 Sa*



COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE - GENÈVE

AGENCE CENTRALE DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE



INTER ARMA CARITAS

Int. Committee of the Red
 Cross, OMCUS APO 742
 US Army



*Cpt. John Rolli (32342231)
 907 Signal Co. Dep. (AVN)
 A.P.O. 762 - 1/2 P.M., N.Y., N.Y.*

AIR
 MAIL



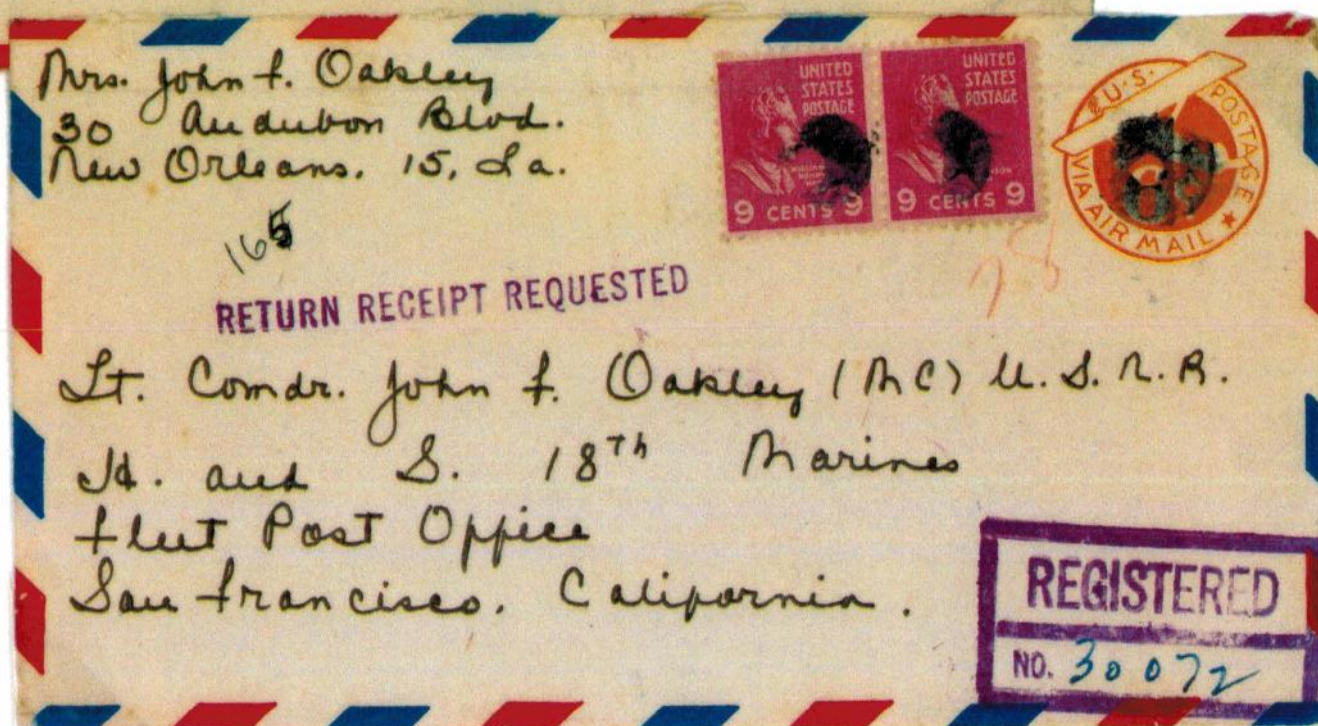
*Influenced
 2-18 sc*

*B. Altman & Co.,
 5th Ave. & 34th St.,
 New York, N.Y.
 U.S.A.*

The 4½¢ denomination paid for triple weight third class matter, in this case on part of a parcel wrapper, likely from APO 33 at Lihue, Kauai. The 5¢ stamp was used primarily for international letters, such as this Red Cross message from APO 742 in Berlin to Switzerland. The 6¢ stamp was widely used to pay the military concession rate on airmail letters, as this example from APO 524 at Gages Airport in Casablanca.

7¢ PRESIDENT ANDREW JACKSON
 8¢ PRESIDENT MARTIN VAN BUREN
 9¢ PRESIDENT WILLIAM H. HARRISON

Wartime Army Post Office in Australia 1943
 Inbound to U.S.M.C. P.O. New Caledonia 1943

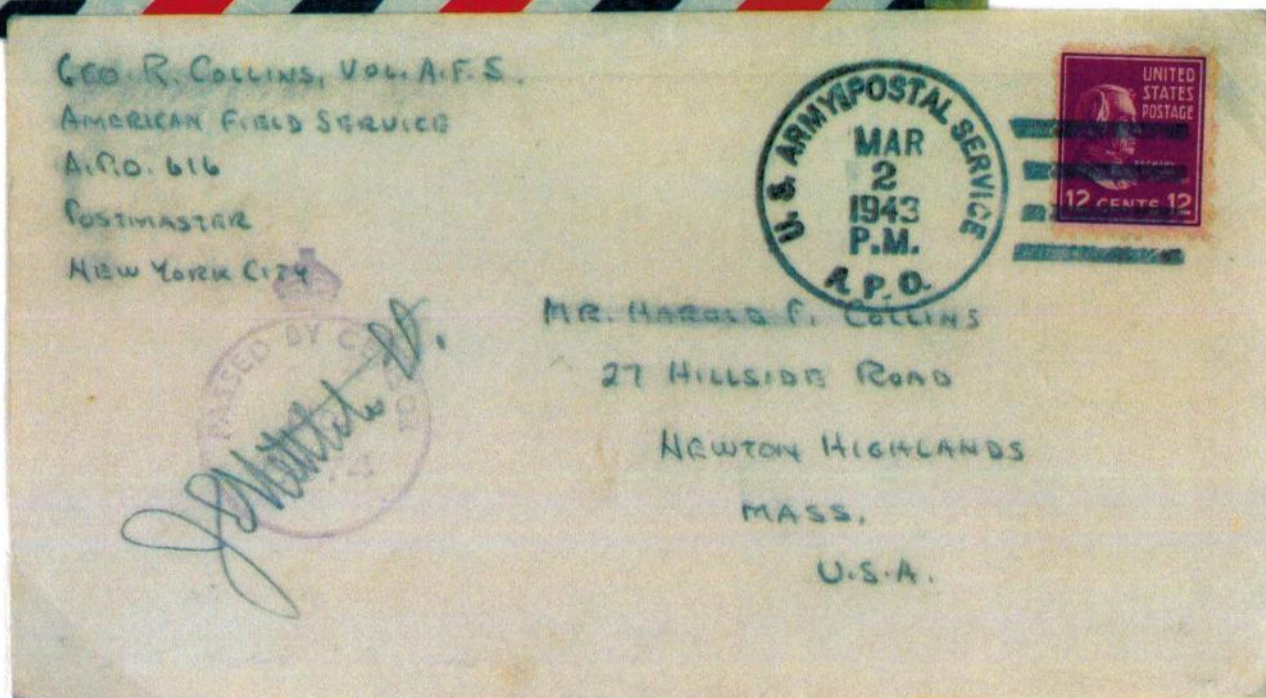


For lack of a 7¢ solo franking, the 7¢ and 8¢ are shown in combination on an airmail stationery envelope. The 6¢ imprint pays the postage rate, and the 15¢ in adhesives pays the registration fee from APO 920 at Mareeba, Australia. A pair of the 9¢ stamps on another stationery envelope pays the 15¢ for registration and 3¢ for a return receipt on a registered letter sent to the 18th Marine Headquarters at Marine Post Office 1045 in Noumea, New Caledonia.

10¢ PRESIDENT JOHN TYLER
 11¢ PRESIDENT JAMES K. POLK
 12¢ PRESIDENT ZACHERY TAYLOR

Wartime Army Post Office in Hawaii 1943

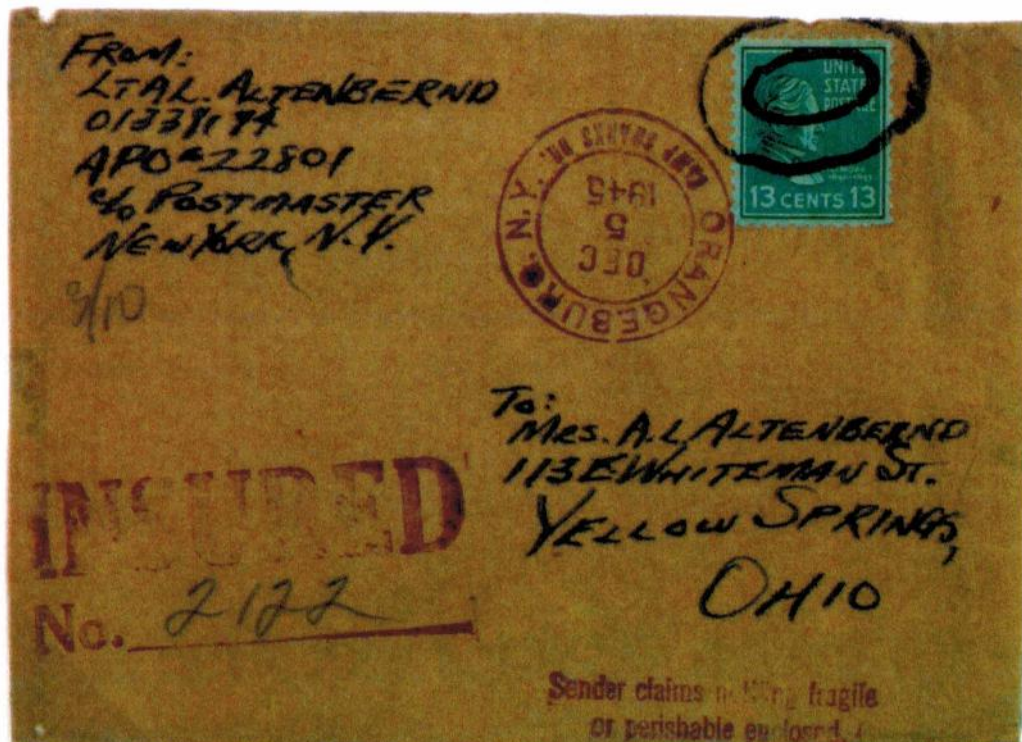
Wartime Army Post Office in Egypt 1943



For lack of an 11¢ solo franking, the 10¢ and 11¢ are shown in combination on an airmail envelope, thus paying the 6¢ postage rate and the 15¢ registration fee from APO 957 at Schofield Barracks, Oahu. Although the cover franked with the 12¢ Prexie is not so marked, it pays the rate for a double-weight airmail letter from APO 616 in Cairo.

13¢ PRESIDENT MILLARD FILLMORE
14¢ PRESIDENT FRANKLIN PIERCE

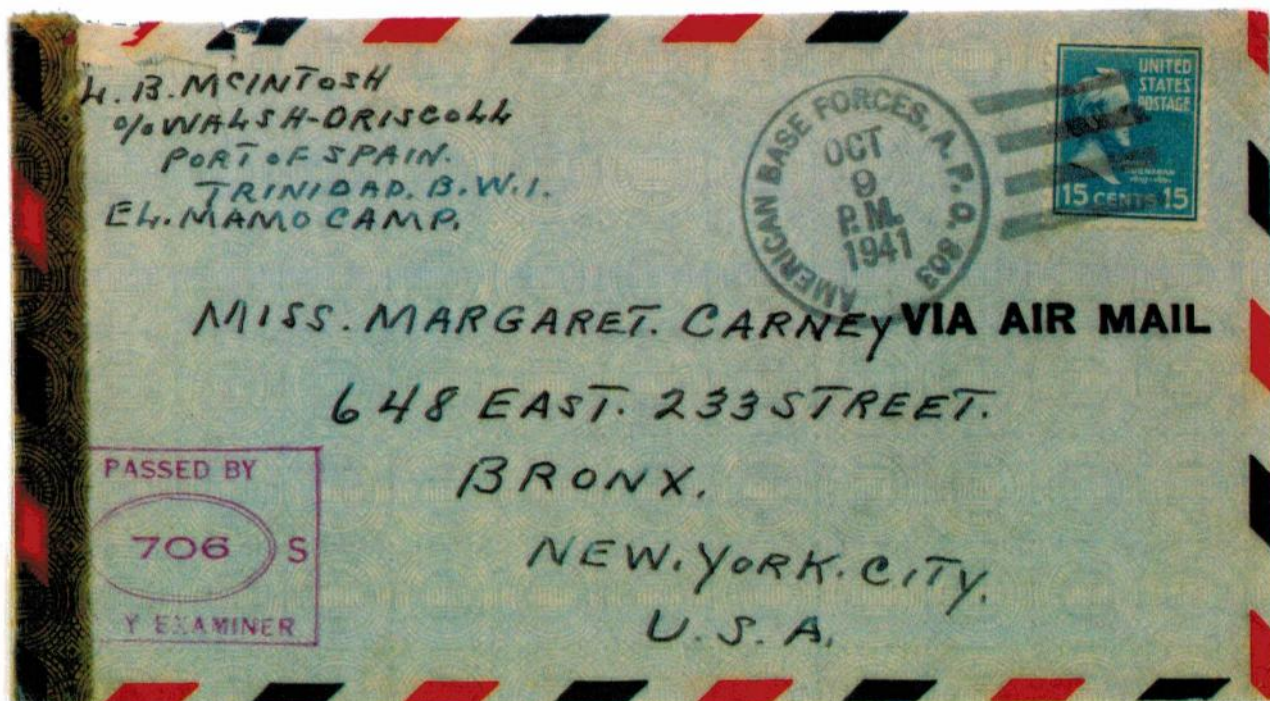
Postwar Army Post Office in England 1945
Wartime Army Post Office in England 1944



The 13¢ Prexie is shown on the address portion of an insured packet from APO 22801 from a soldier in transit shortly after the end of the war. This postage rate would cover a third class item weighing 4 oz. with insurance coverage between \$5 and \$25. A 14¢ stamp is shown on a 6¢ airmail stationery envelope. It was mailed by a civilian employee of Standard Oil (N.J.) from APO 507 in Liverpool, with payment of the 20¢ clipper airmail rate to Hawaii.

15¢ PRESIDENT JAMES BUCHANAN
16¢ PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Prewar Army Post Office in Trinidad 1941
Wartime Army Post Office in Tunisia 1944



Trinidad was the location of one of the bases leased to the U.S. in exchange for 50 old destroyers, which were badly needed for convoy duty. The 15¢ denomination paid the standard airmail rate for a letter from APO 803 at Port of Spain prior to the military franchise rate. The 16¢ stamp paid for 6¢ airmail and the 10¢ special delivery fee on the lower cover sent from APO 372 at Bizerte, Tunisia.

17¢ PRESIDENT ANDREW JOHNSON

Postwar Occupation A.P.O. in Japan 1945

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



REGISTERED MAIL

Army War Bond Office,
Office of the Fiscal Director,
366 West Adams Street,
Chicago 6, Illinois.

WAR DEPARTMENT
FINANCE OFFICE
APO 704

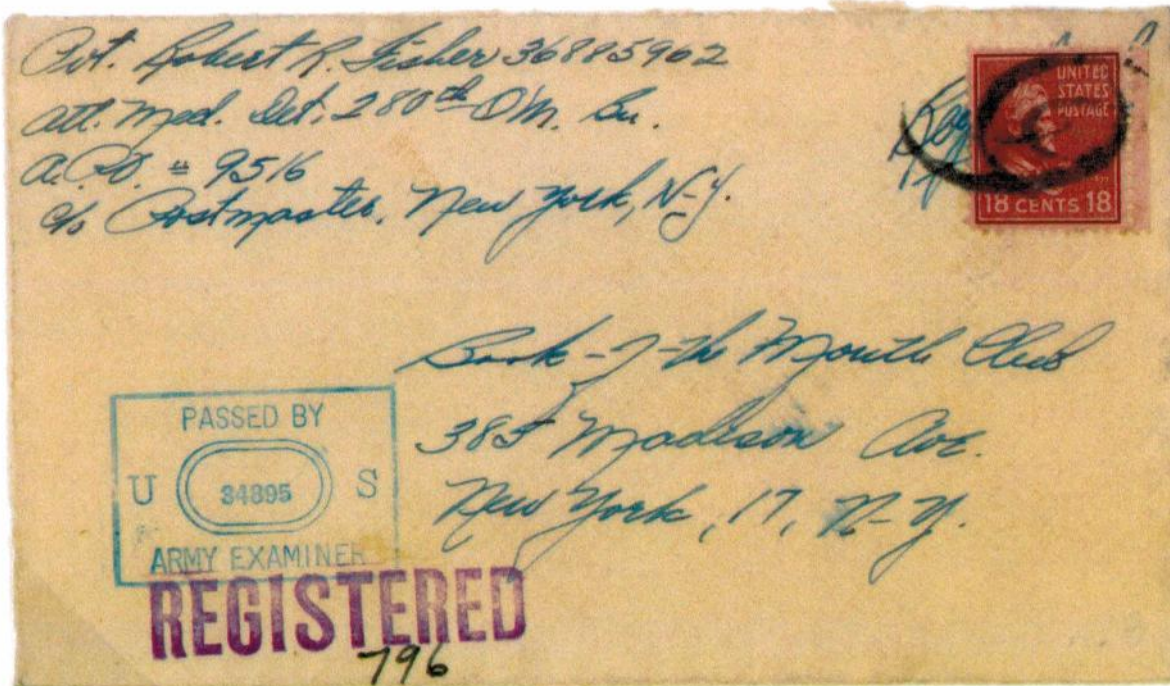
OFFICIAL BUSINESS



As official mail, this cover was free from ordinary postage. However, the 17¢ denomination was used, along with a 3¢ stamp, to pay the 20¢ registration fee for this letter from APO 704 at Tachikawa Air Base in December 1945.

18¢ PRESIDENT ULYSSES S. GRANT
19¢ PRESIDENT RUTHERFORD B. HAYES

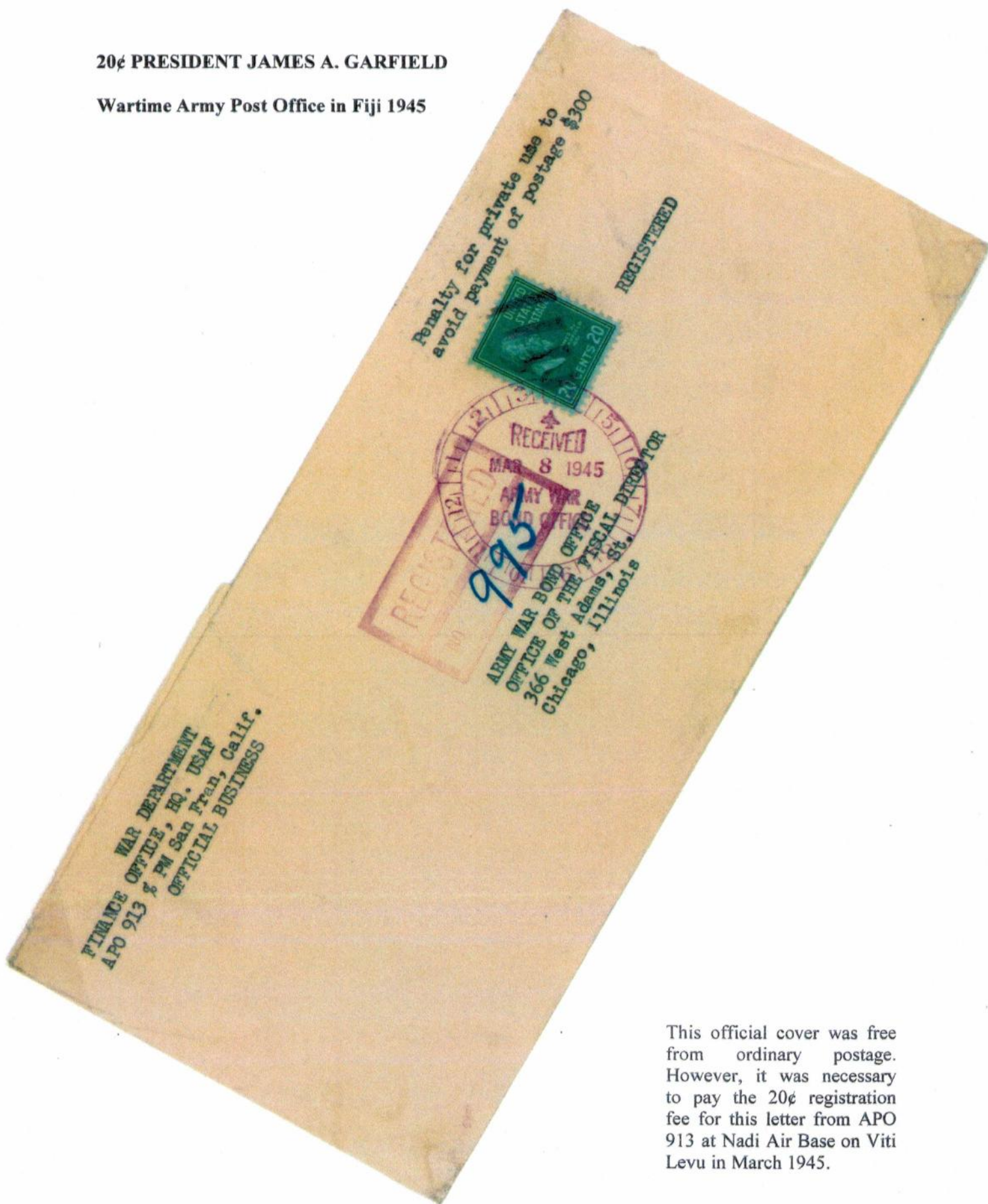
Wartime Army Post Office in England 1944
Postwar Domestic Soldier's Mail 1945



The 18¢ Prexie was used on March 9, 1944 to pay for a single-weight registered letter at 3¢ postage plus the 15¢ registration fee. In this case, the letter was sent from transit APO 9516 in England. The 19¢ stamp plus a 1¢ value on the lower cover paid the 20¢ registration fee on November 8, 1944 (which had increased from 15¢ as of March 26, 1944). This example mailed domestically by a Sergeant was free of ordinary postage.

20¢ PRESIDENT JAMES A. GARFIELD

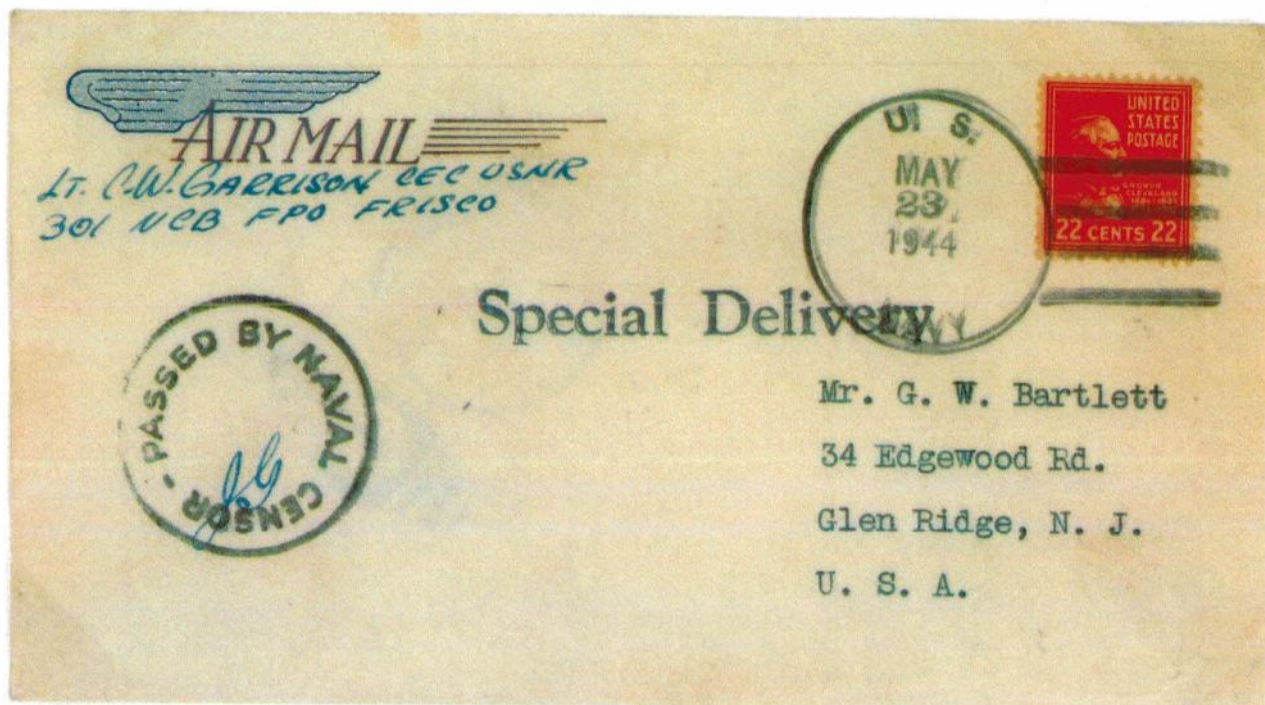
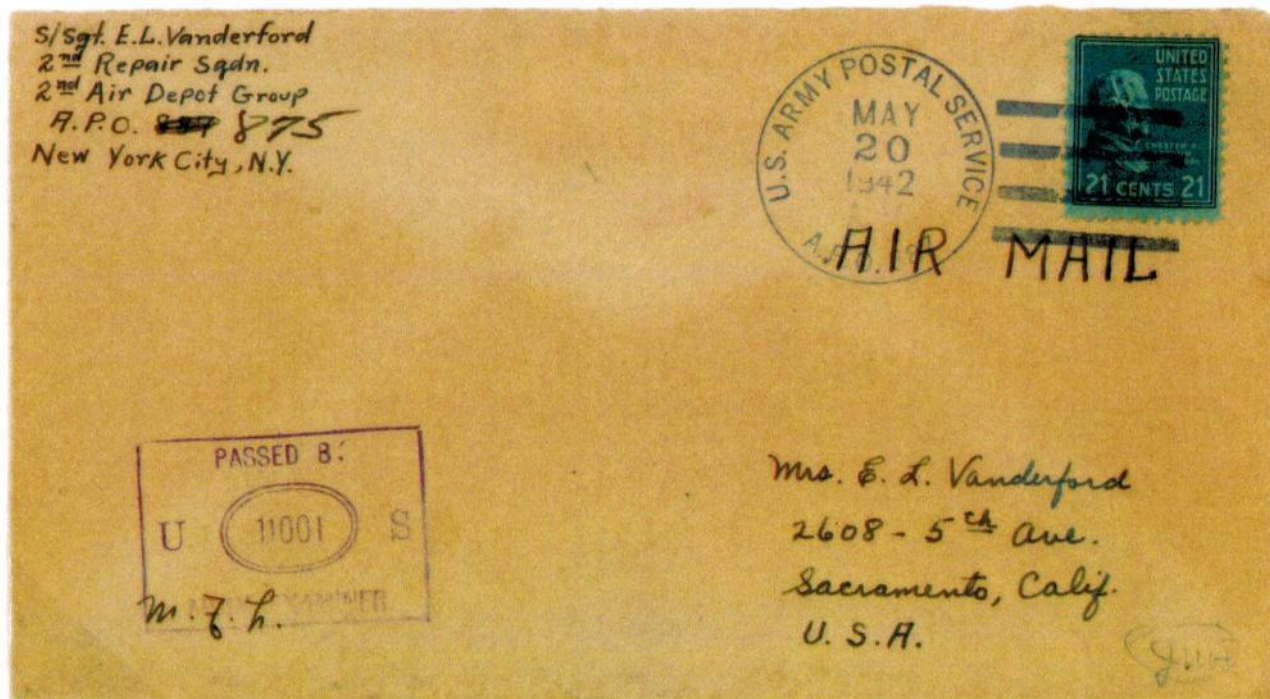
Wartime Army Post Office in Fiji 1945



This official cover was free from ordinary postage. However, it was necessary to pay the 20¢ registration fee for this letter from APO 913 at Nadi Air Base on Viti Levu in March 1945.

21¢ PRESIDENT CHESTER A. ARTHUR
22¢ PRESIDENT GROVER CLEVELAND

Wartime Army Post Office in England 1942
Wartime Navy Post Office 1944



This 21¢ Prexie was used from APO 875 at the Army Air Force base in Kettering, England in May 1942. It is unclear what postage rate it was intended to pay, but it presumably covered an airmail letter at 6¢ postage plus 15¢ registration. The 22¢ stamp was used to pay for double-weight airmail at 12¢ plus special delivery service at 10¢ from the Fleet Post Office servicing the 301st Navy Seabee Battalion.

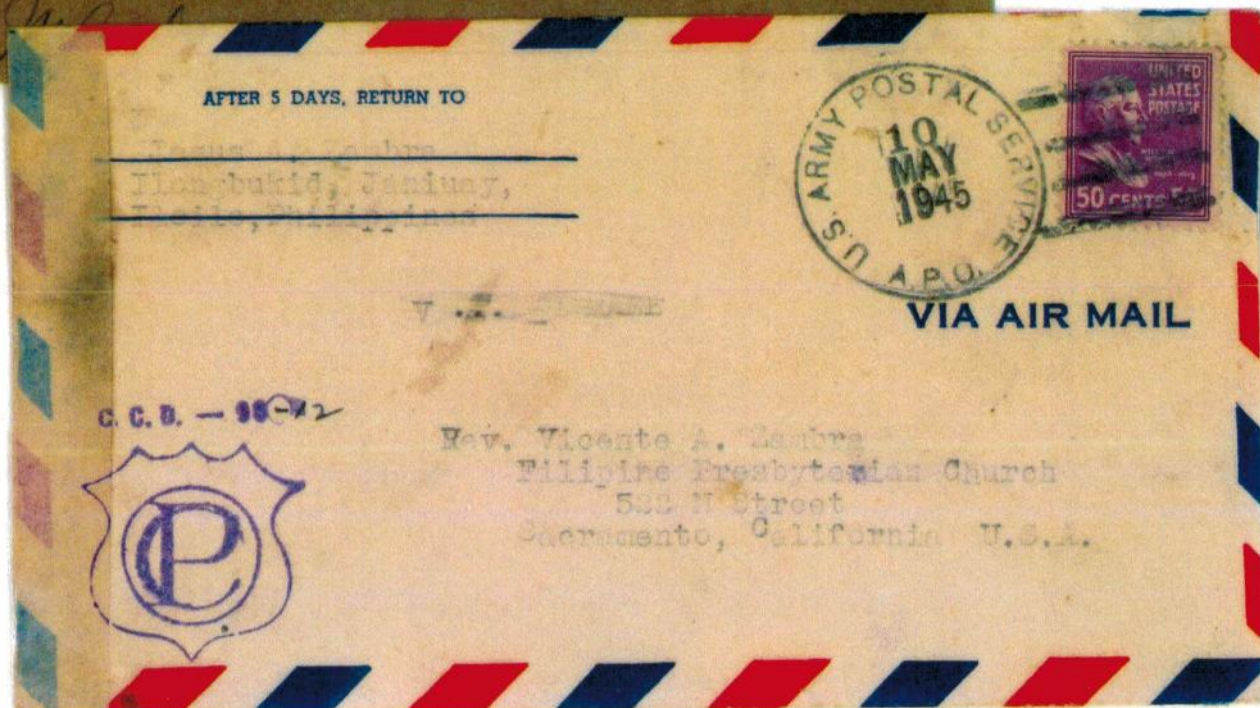
24¢ PRESIDENT BENJAMIN HARRISON
25¢ PRESIDENT WILLIAM MCKINLEY

Inbound to USMC P.O. New Caledonia 1943
Wartime Army Post Office in Australia 1944



This 24¢ Prexie was used on a letter to a Naval officer at the Marine Corps Post Office #1035 in Noumea. It paid for 6¢ airmail postage, 15¢ registration and 3¢ return receipt fee. Below, the 25¢ stamp was used on a heavy envelope from APO 920 in Cairns, Australia. Sent by airmail, it would have been a penny overpaid in the fourth weight class.

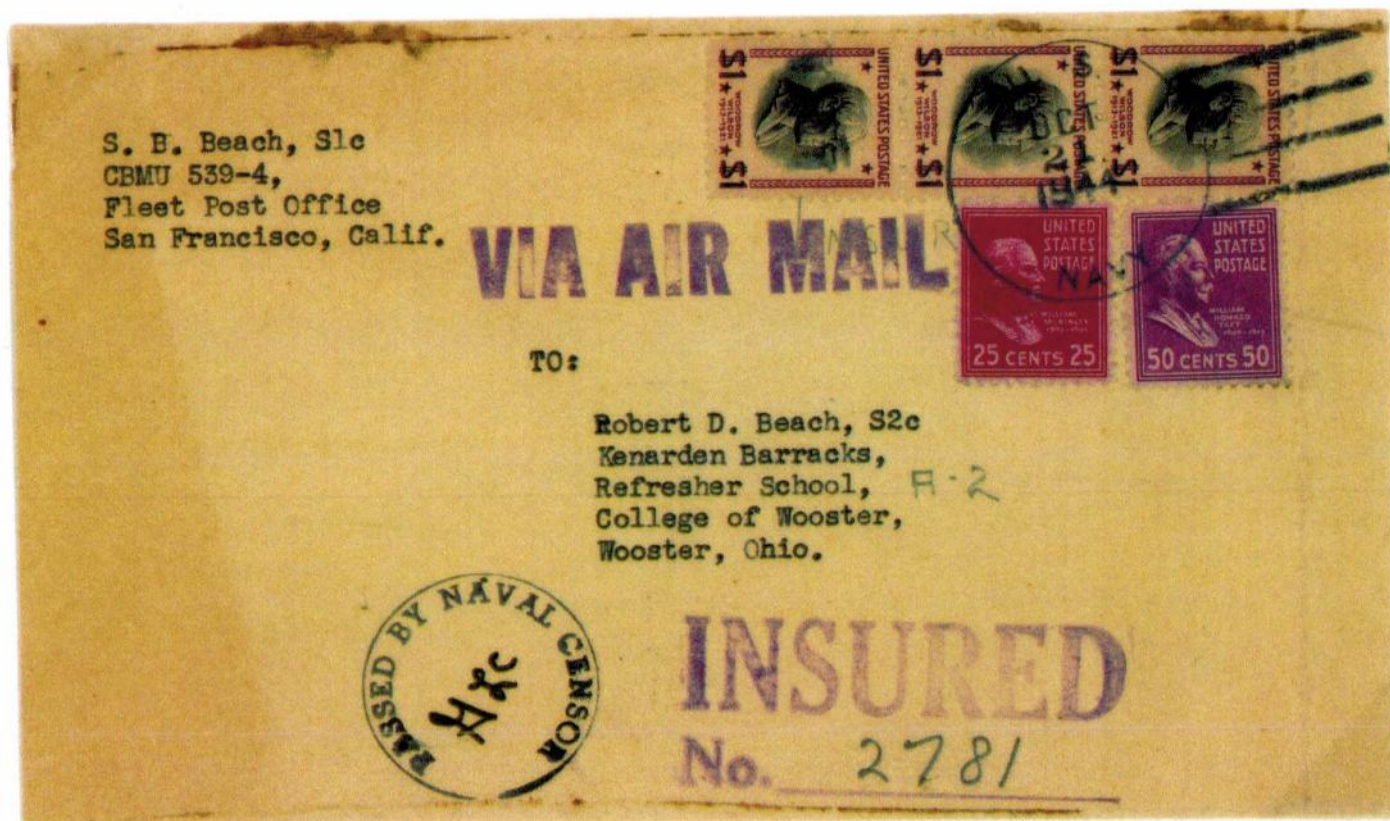
30¢ PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT Wartime Army P.O. in the New Hebrides 1944
 50¢ PRESIDENT WILLIAM H. TAFT Wartime Army P.O. in the Philippines 1945



The 30¢ Prexie was used on a cover from APO 502 at Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides in March 1944. It paid 12¢ for double-weight airmail, 15¢ for registration and 3¢ for a return receipt. Below, a 50¢ stamp paid the standard civil postage rate for airmail from the Philippines to the U.S. mainland. It was processed by the APO at Iloilo.

\$1.00 PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON

Wartime Navy P.O. 1944



The dollar values of the Prexies were primarily used on heavy and/or valuable mail. Three copies of the \$1.00 Wilson stamp plus 75¢ in additional postage was affixed to this address portion of a light-weight cardboard box sent from Seabee Mobile Unit #539. With no indication of weight, it is not possible to determine how much was allocated to pay for postage and how much for insurance.

\$1.00 PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON
\$2.00 PRESIDENT WARREN G. HARDING

Army-Air Force P.O. in Korea 1953

Col R. L. Underwood
US 52 234 615
Lt. Gen. D. W. Adams
APO 9, APO 248
C/O PM San Francisco,
Calif.



11/7/53

Mr. H. L. Underwood
Greenville Nat'l Bank
Fourth & Broadway
Greenville, Ohio
U. S. A.



This large portion of a parcel wrapping is franked with \$3.20 of Prexie stamps. The airmail rate at the time was 6¢ per ounce, indicating that the package must have weighed 53 ounces since there is no indication of any insurance coverage or other service requested. This example was mailed from APO 248 in Chunkok, Korea in November 1953.