

## Back Issue of Military Postal History Society 'Bulletin': (Bulletin Oct 1947)

Back issues of the Military Postal History Society 'Bulletin' are now available. The issues available span the period from 1937 to 2022. The MPHS is a non-profit organization for philatelists and stamp collectors interested in the collecting and studying of the postal aspects of all wars and military actions of all countries, including soldiers' campaign covers, naval mail, occupation and internment covers, patriotics, propaganda, V-mail, censorship and similar related material.

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MAIL MARKINGS, FIRST MARINE BRIGADE  
ICELAND, 1941  
BY MAJOR R. J. KENNEDY, U.S.M.C.

On the 7th of July, 1941, when the U.S. Marines went ashore at Reykjavik, Iceland, the postal problem became one of the biggest of headaches for the Navy mail Clerk, Sergeant, U.S.M.C. The lack of postal instructions and stamps plagued the Brigade until its withdrawal.

A little historical background is necessary so that the reader may understand the reason for these postal difficulties. When F.D.R. believed that the Germans were using the Azores and Martinique - Guadeloupe Islands in 1941, the Marines were ordered to prepare to seize and hold these islands. The 6th Marines, reinforced, was despatched secretly from San Diego, California, early in 1941. This regiment moved through the Panama Canal and into the Caribbean, and prepared to occupy the French Islands. When Admiral Robert of the French Navy, Governor of Martinique-Guadeloupe, acceded to U.S. demands, the 6th Marines was sent to Charleston, S.C.

Upon arrival at Charleston, awaiting orders sent the unit to Argentia, Newfoundland. The unit was designated first Marine Brigade, provisional. The hurried departure from San Diego and change of plans on the East Coast made the post office one of the most confused units in the brigade.

As a stamp collector and a cover enthusiast, the Author of this sketch was in a position to watch the postal developments and to collect some interesting covers during the stay in Iceland.

Mail was collected by the brigade post office and despatched by U.S. destroyers to be delivered at Argentia or Boston, Mass. it may be said that Fine Service was maintained, although much of the mail became water soaked in transfer to small boats at Reykjavik.

A cover in the Author's collection shows how confused the mail situation was at the start. Besides the regular air mail rate, the sender was required to add an extra Air Mail Stamp plus twelve cents more postage. This was because it was believed that the mail would have to pass through the Iceland Postal System which would collect the fee to which it was entitled.

By the 10th of July, the Naval Authorities had set the postal rates at the same figure as in the States, because all mail was carried by U.S. Vessels.

Censorship regulations were changing every few days, but no ban was placed on decorated covers. The Author decorated some covers to commemorate different dates and all passed through the mails without interference.

With the arrival of the Brigade Post Mark (Fig.1) from the States, the Brigade Post Office was established as a Shore Station. The first day of its use was 5th of August, 1941. Not over 100 first day covers were cancelled. Covers sent by State siders did not arrive in time and were cancelled a few days later.

Churchill stopped on his return from the conference with F.D.R. on the 'Four Freedoms' and inspected the Brigade, along with British troops in Iceland. The date was 16th of August, 1941, and the Author has a cover commemorating this event.

The lack of stamps became acute, So Personnel were allowed to write in the following, in lieu of Stamp: 'Marines Letter'. In some cases postage was collected in the States. In September, 1941, this wording was changed to read:

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'Marines Mail'  
'In the Field, No Postage Available.'

In Honor of the first flight of Navy Patrol Squadron, No. 75 over the Arctic Circle towards the Island of Jan Mayen, the Author mailed a cover with the Squadron C. O.

The advance unit of the Army arrived in Iceland on 20th September, 1941.

During the period October to December, 1941, the scarcity of stamps caused the Brigade Headquarters to issue a Frank Stamp (Fig.2). This was prior to the Armed Service Franking Privilege, and the Author has not been able to learn under what Authority this was done. No postage due was collected when this Frank Stamp was used, either in Iceland or the States.

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On August 1st there were 198 Army Post Offices still in operation. The Army divisions doing occupation duty in Europe and Asia are each assigned the surveillance of a considerable territory. To accomplish this task the three infantry regiments and the divisional artillery are each usually located in a different part of the division's district and each is usually served by a branch of the division's post office. A few of these branches show the unit number in their postmark.

Additions and New Members:

- 245- Browning, Lester L. PO Box 2, Natchez, Miss. P.O.W., Censored
- 265- Goodson, Willard S. 924 Scott St., Vincennes, Ind. Pictorial and V-Mail Greeting Cards, APO, Naval, Censored, POW, Camps & Forts.
- 266- Molnar, Chas. J. 2950 West 14th St., Cleveland 13, Ohio. Patriotic Post Cards - Covers of Span-Amer & W.W. 11, Allied Propaganda Leaflets of W.W. 1 & 11.
- 267- Chrisman, Marvin 425 Vine St., Connersville, Ind. All Kinds.

A Brief History of the Postal Service, Naval Air Station,  
Antigua, Leeward Islands - Richard Shepherd.

Long before the Public announcement that President Roosevelt had traded 'Fifty old age destroyers' for Defense Bases, these bases had been selected by the War Department, mapped and charted by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.

The first of the American civilians who were to build the Base in Antigua arrived in December 1940 and January 1941. The site was Crabb's Peninsula, Parham, about eight miles from St. Johns, on the Caribbean. It was selected because of its fine Harbor for seaplane landings and deep water for a dock. Parham Harbour had once been the main Seaport of Antigua.

The Island of Antigua is about 8 miles wide and 30 miles long, mountainous on the East or Atlantic side where the famous Nelson's Dockyard, shown on Antigua stamps, was a point of interest to all Americans. The population of the Island is about 10,000. About two hundred of these are 'white'.

Coolidge Air Field (Army) was built at the same time by U.S. Engineers. Several small mountains were removed to permit building of the long concrete runways.

The N.A.S. site was in cultivation, principally sugar cane, by peasant share croppers. It was first necessary to bulldoze roads thru the cane fields to the site of the Administration Building and Storeroom. The Barracks, Hospital and other facilities were constructed. The American construction force of engineers and foremen lived in a tented camp for fourteen months. Their messhall served as a recreation room. At times the working day was 12 hours, from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. This was, for a time, seven days each week.

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The Marine Detachment arrived in St. Johns Harbor on March 17, 1941. They came ashore in native sailing liters and landed at the sugar warehouse dock. They were transported by the narrow-gauge sugarcane railroad to a point near the Base. The Marines erected their tents on a high spot and made headquarters in an abandoned Estate House. In the B.W.I. a plantation is an 'Estate'. A P.X. was installed in the basement and soon 'State-side' beer arrived to replace the Puerto Rican 'Cerveza'.

The Post Office was set up in headquarters and the Marine Detachment postmark came into use. Previous to this our civilian mail was addressed to P.O. Box 3846, Santurce, Puerto Rico. It was usually delivered every second day by a P.B.Y. which flew from San Juan to Trinidad one day and returned to Puerto Rico the next day. This plane carried Navy personnel, civilians and Express. It stopped at St. Lucia also.

Occasionally ordinary mail came by ship to St. Johns, Antigua. I believe that the British required censorship before the Navy established it. We resented having a Navy construction officer censor our mail. It was like having a neighbor take your letters from your mail box to read before you saw them. It occasioned several incidents but it remained.

Life on the Base thru 1941 was burning sun, salty drinking water, mud to wash off of and out of shoes that were immediately put on again because all of our shoes were soaked; leaky tents, mildew, and insects that ate our clothes and tried to eat us. But with all of this there was no serious illness.

The Base construction was being rushed. The German Army was strong in Africa and we were an outpost in Hemisphere Defense. German subs were sinking ships from Florida to Trinidad. An air offensive against Trinidad, Puerto Rico and the Canal was considered a possibility. Fifty-five Marines had a couple of Machine guns, several automatics along with old springfield rifles. Twenty five civilians were assigned posts with the Marines and were taught to shoot at low flying planes with the springfields. When an alert was sounded in Puerto Rico all Caribbean Bases were alerted. Natives to the rear, Marines and civilians to the defense in the bush.

After Pearl Harbor the base on Parham Harbor became a war time base instead of a defense base. Restrictions were tightened and there was much activity. Later the question of the French in Martinique became a local problem and, on two occasions, we were at the point of cleaning up that mess; but diplomacy instead of bullets settled it, and a Naval officer was stationed there to observe the French.

The Navy took over command of the Base in April, 1942. At that time the Navy Postal Clerk had not received his regulation Navy postmark so the stamp used to indicate date of receipt on Navy correspondence was used provisionally. My earliest is April 30, 1942.

In the beginning our mail was addressed to Naval Air Station, Antigua. After Pearl Harbor we became N.A.S. Navy 11 (One One), F.P.O., New York. Later, when the tide of war had changed, the Base became N.A.A.F., Antigua, which is Naval Air Auxiliary Facility. Our mail was carried by either NATS land planes from Coolidge Field or by P.B.M. planes from our seaplane landing basin.

From correspondence received it is evident that I was in error when I stated that no philatelic mail was sent out for defense reasons. My first postmark bears the date of April 7th, which was very near the beginning of service after Marines arrived on March 17, 1941. Most philatelic covers were in June and July. I am curious about the cover which bears Marine cancel and Navy provisional cancel before the Navy took over. I presume that the correspondence stamp merely indicates the

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receipt of that philatelic cover when it was received to be forwarded.

Editor's Note. When the Navy took over the postal facilities in Antigua it apparently refused to honor philatelic mail. Covers sent by the editor and others were held for four years. The editor has such a cover returned in November, 1945, and cancelled with a straight-line handstamp reading "Antigua, B.W.I.".

## ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS TO APO LIST

- 6-3 Military Gov't. Units, Korea.
- 7B 7th. Inf. Div. Korea.
- 24 Hq. 24th. Inf. Div. Kyushu, Jap.
- 24-1 21st. Inf. Regt.
- 24-2 19th. "" ""
- 24-3 34th. "" ""
- 24-4 Artillery Units, 24th Div.
- 46 Hq. US Constabulary, Heidelberg, Ger.
- 57 Rhine Main, Ger.
- 58 Hq. Western Base Sect, Vienna: Paris.
- 61 Oberpfaffenhofen Air Depot, Landsberg, Ger.
- 62 Schweinfurt Airbase, Kissingen, Ger.
- 66 Herzo Base, Erlangen, Ger.
- 70 12 PRS. Jun. '45
- 74-1
- 74-2 Hq. Base "M" ('47)
- 80 Austria ('45)
- 85B 85th. Inf. Div. MP. ('43)
- 88 Trieste, It. ('47)
- 88A Venice, It. ('47)
- 88B Gorizia, It. ""
- 88C 88th. Inf. Div. 350th. Inf. Regt.
- 93 93d. Inf. Div. (Units spread over New G: Morotai & P.I. '45)
- 109 Ger. '45
- 114 Grafenwohr, Ger. '47
- 121B Add Fr. & Ger.
- 147 Hq. Kaufbeuren Military Post, Ger.
- 151 33 PRS Fr.?
- 159 Sansapoor, New Gui. '44
- 162 147th. Gen. Hosp. Darby, Eng. (2)
- 169 Giessen, Ger. '47
- 172 Garmisch, Ger. ""
- 174 Horsching, Austria. '47
- 181 Hq. Sugamo Prison, Tokyo.
- 197 Add Bel: Holl: Ger.
- 201-2 1st. Cav.Div. Units, Jap.
- 201-3 "" "" Artillery Units, Jap.
- 235-2 Hq. Units, Mil. Govt. Korea.
- 239 Hq. 1st. Air Div. Okinawa.
- 239-2 Hq. Naha Army Air Base, Commd. Okinawa.
- 246-3
- 249 16 BPO, Guam.
- 305 Straubing, Ger. '47
- 322 Camp Washington, Finschhafen.

(continued from Page 4)

322-1 364th. Sta. Hosp. Finschhafen.  
 323 Fuchu, Honshu, Jap. '47  
 331 Hq. Ryukyu Commd. Okinawa: 21 BPO.  
 331-7 Military Govt. Ryukyu Is.  
 334 North Army Air Base Commd. Guam.  
 349 28 BPO, Bremerhaven, Ger.  
 349A 232d. Sta. Hosp.  
 397 It.  
 403A Hq. Sub-Sector #1 CBS, Mannheim, Ger.  
 407 29 BPO, Pasing, Ger.  
 407A Munich Air Base: 98th. Gen. Hosp.  
 413A 827th. Conv. Center, London.  
 425 37th. Gen. Hosp.  
 439 9 PRS (Dec. '45)  
 468 Sapporo, Hokkido, Jap.  
 492 28th. Air Depot Hq.  
 493 Hq. 20th. Bomber Commd. India.  
 502 Camp Barnes, New Cal.  
 502-2 Noumea Air Force Units.  
 503 Dobadura (2): Goosab (3) New Gui.  
 508A 154th. Gen. Hosp.  
 510A Eng.  
 511 127th. Gen. Hosp.  
 512 Hq. USF-MTO. Leghorn: Zone 4 Florence Hq. ('47)  
 513A 108th. Gen. Hosp.  
 514 116th. "" ""  
 514B 115th. "" ""  
 518A 91st. "" ""  
 518B 154th. "" ""  
 520 15th. AF, Bari, It. (May '45)  
 528-2 12th. AF Service Commd. Morocco.  
 541 Hq. Civil Censorship Grp. Salzburg, Ger.  
 549 Allied Liason Ser. 5th. Army, It.  
 574A 9th. Troop Carrier Base, Fr.  
 595 30 PRS, Ger.?  
 603-1 153d. Air Base Unit.  
 612 Miyazu, Honshu, Jap. '47  
 613 12th. Inf. Div. Tarlac, Luzon, P.I. (Philippines Inf. Div.)  
 616 Middle East Service Commd. Camp R.B. Huckstep. (correction)  
 617 Eritrea Base Commd.  
 633 Hq. 8th. AF. Eng. (in '43)  
 638A Hq. 9th. Bomber, Commd. Eng.  
 640A 418 9th. US Hosp. Plant.  
 640-1 8th. Convalescent Hosp. Eng.  
 649 112th. Gen. Hosp. Eng.  
 655B XII Army Group Units.  
 660 Itami Air Base, Jap.  
 675-1  
 696 9th. AF, Weisbaden, Ger. (May '45): 27 BPO Furth, Ger.  
 696A Nurnberg, Ger.  
 696B Hq. 32d. FA Bn. 1st. Inf. Div. Ger.

(continued from Page 5)

702-2 Airbase Units, Whitehorse.  
 703 Zama, Honshu, Jap.  
 704 Jama Army Air Base, Jap.  
 713-1 247th. Gen. Hosp.: Hq. 40th. AA Brig.  
 717-1 17th. Weather Sqdn. Solo. Is.  
 719-1 Hq. 6th. AF Ser. Grp. (last)  
 719-2 209th. Malaria Survey Unit, P.I.  
 722A US Engrs. Office.  
 722-3 16th. Weather Sqdn. Edmonton.  
 740 1st. Allied AB Army, Maison LaFitte, Fr. (May '45)  
 760 Hq. Troop Carrier Force, Naples.  
 771 Fr. ?  
 777 15th. Army Grp. Florence, It. '45: ACC Bulgaria-US Delegation '47.  
 781A Replacement Center.  
 804 Ger. '45  
 835-1 Post Ex.  
 851D Hq. Units.  
 854 Ft. Bundy, P.R. '47  
 858 1st. Arctic Search & Rescue Sqdn.  
 886 6 BPO  
 888 12th. Bomb. Sqdn.  
 900-1 Manila  
 901 Ascom City, Korea.  
 912 Hq. Nankin Commd. '46  
 920 Brisbane (1)  
 921-1 5th. AF Units.  
 921-2 Base One Finance Office.  
 922 Camp McClung, Townsville.  
 926 Perth, W. Australia, (1)  
 931A Canada.  
 937 Mile 26, Alaska. (Airfield near Fairbanks)  
 945 Shanghai,  
 958 15 BPO  
 980-2 West Const. Co.  
 994 Hq. Johnson Army Air Base, Jap.  
 1052 49th. Gen. Hosp. Tokyo.  
 1054 34th. " " " " " " Korea.  
 1105 10th. " " " " " " Ft. McKinley, Luzon. '47  
 1106 78th. Sta. Hosp. (ETO. loc.?)

9 PRS, APO 439 ('45)  
 12 " " " " 70 " "  
 15 " " " " Cherbourg (2)  
 30 " " " " 595 Ger. ?  
 33 " " " " 151 Fr: P.I. ?

6 BPO, APO 886  
 12 " " " " 502 Noumea  
 15 " " " " 958

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(continued from Page 6)

16	BPO, APO 249	Guam
17	"" ""	Cherbourg (1)
21	"" ""	331 Okinawa
27	"" ""	696 Furth, Ger.
28	"" ""	349 Bremerhaven, Ger.
29	"" ""	407 Pasing, Ger.

Certain members are not insuring Sales Department circuits when they forward them or are placing minimum insurance on them which has only five dollars total indemnity. In such cases members will be held liable for any loss not covered by insurance. Insurance companies sell booklets of parcel post insurance tickets, such as are sometimes found in circuits, but these cover only one forwarding.

The Office of Naval History in Washington published in March of this year a Glossary of U. S. Naval Abbreviations. Despite the title, U. S. Army abbreviations are also given. Furthermore, there is a complete list of the more than 600 U. S. Navy post offices established throughout the world during and after the recent war. The origin of many covers may be determined from this list. The supply of copies of this publication was quickly exhausted, but it should be possible to consult it at most large libraries. A new printing is being considered.

One of our members, Gordon F. Johnson, has just published a book entitled Notes on the Army Postal Service and Handbook of Provisional Military Revalued Envelopes. As the title indicates, the book falls into two parts. One part gives more information than has hitherto been available in any one place on the organization and functioning of the Army Postal Service, much of it taken from official sources. The other part gives all the information that the author could gather about the 6 cent on 2 cent and the 5 cent on 6 cent air mail overprints. Not the least valuable are illustrations of all the types of these overprints. This book is a must for all those interested in the recent history of the Army Postal Service as well as for air mail specialists. It may be obtained from Mr. Johnson for \$2.00. P. O. Box 768. El Paso, Texas.

The American Philatelist for September, 1947, contains an article entitled "The Army Postal Service" by G. H. Shirk, which supplements Gordon Johnson's book on the same subject. The following interesting facts are taken from this article:

On July 1, 1942, the War Department ordered the APO number to be removed from all cancelling devices for security reasons (Letter WD, 1 July 1942, file AG 311.1 (7-1-42) AP. Subject: Use of APO Numbers). The ban on this practice was lifted on March 10, 1943.

The first APO in Europe, excluding Iceland, was 813, established in Belfast on January 29, 1942. Mail was sent from there without postmark until a hand canceller was received on February 10.

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Dr. A. E. Perry, Associate Editor.



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APO 887 was established in London on April 10, 1942. It was moved to Paris on August 31, 1944.

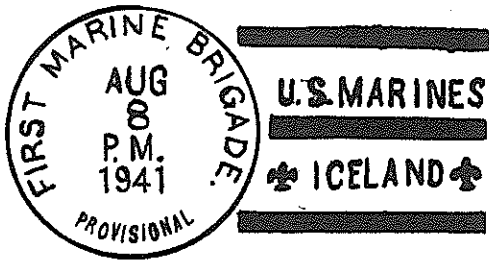
With the invasion of the continent APO 10 was the first to be set up, on Omaha Beach. It sent the first mail back across the Channel on June 12, 1944. The second APO to be set up was 71, on Utah beach.

Many varieties of V-Mail greeting cards were designed and used for Christmas 1942. To curb this excess, only three approved greeting forms were distributed in the ETO the following year.

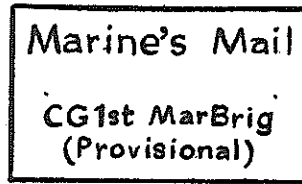
On V-E Day, there were 318 APO's in the ETO: 254 on the continent, 64 in England.

On V-J Day, slightly over 800 APO's were providing service in 55 countries.

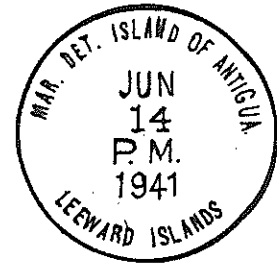
THIS MONTH'S ILLUSTRATIONS. Nos. 1 and 2 illustrate our first article. No. 3 is an example of the postmark used by the Marine force in Antigua referred to in Mr. Shepherd's article. Nos. 4 - 6 are additional types of censor marks used on mail of P.O.W.'s in this country. No. 7 is a scarce censor stamp, perhaps provisional, used on the mail of prisoners whom we captured in N. Africa. It is found on an unreported type of white letter sheet with all directions in English, German, and Italian, printed in black. This sheet is form W.D., P.M.G. No. 4-2, March 22, 1943. It may have been used only in Africa. No. 9 seems to be a new type of APO hand stamp. It has a wider margin between inscription and outer circle than the similar common type. No. 15 is found on the cover of a letter to a conscientious objector who had been transferred from a camp to a hospital.



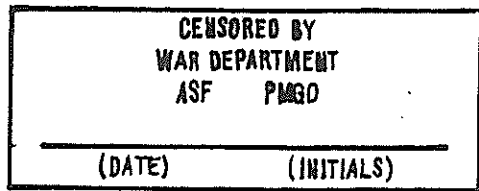
1.



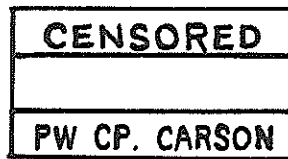
2.



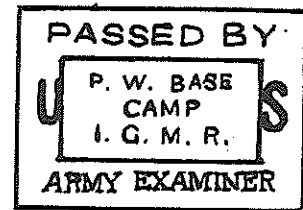
3.



4.



5.



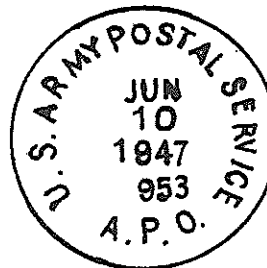
6.



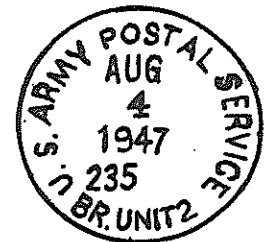
7.



8.



9.



10.



11.



12.



APO 629 Chabua, Assam, India.

" THE SILVERSMITH CANCEL"

13.

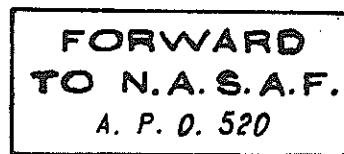


TRANSFERRED BY OFFICAL ORDER OF SELECTIVE SERVICE

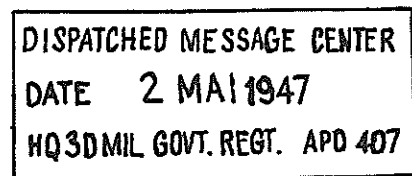
15.



14.



16.



17.