

Back Issue of Military Postal History Society 'Bulletin': (War Cover Philatelist Jul 1943)

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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Story Behind the Cover (APO 732 cover)

THE WAR COVER PHILATELIST

An Occasional Publication

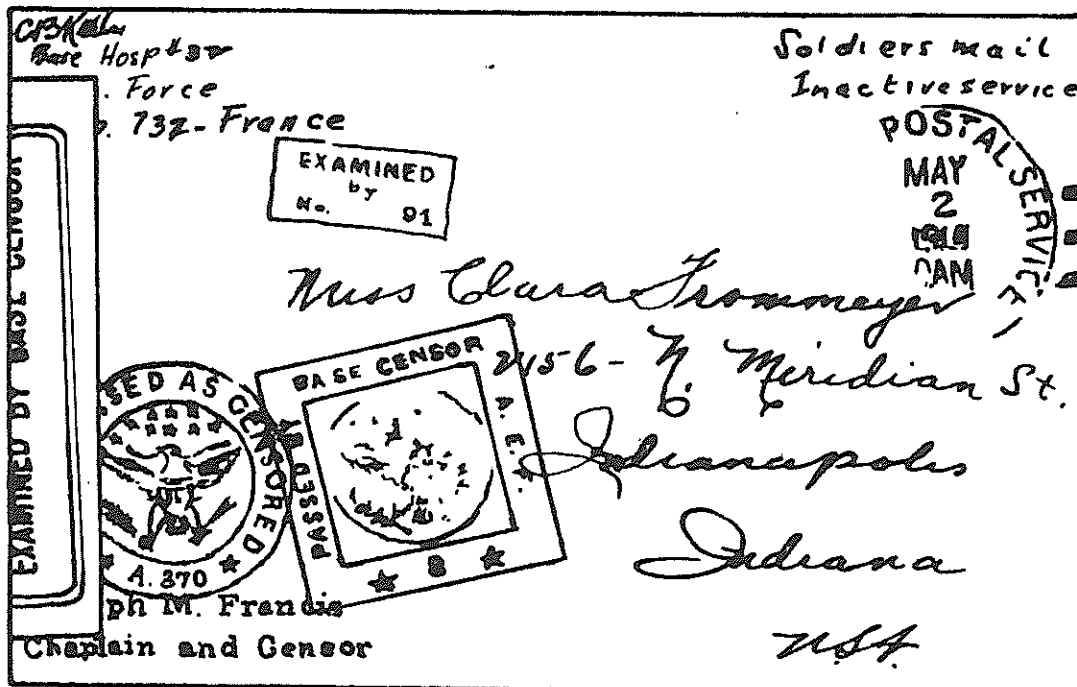
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THE STORY BEHIND THE COVER



Before proceeding further, can you figure out the story behind this cover based solely on philatelic and historical data, it being submitted by Rev. G.M. Legris, S.J.?

We first point out that it is unusual in that it contains practically all possible combinations of handstamped censor-marks: (a) Company censor "ph M. Francis--Chaplain and Censor" (b) Regimental circular A.370 (c) Rectangular Base Censor No.91 and (d) Square Base Censor No. 8, these in addition to a resealing label of the base censor.

Such combinations are decidedly unusual, and the company censor "...and Censor" being the first such seen.

Note the return address "Base Hosp.#32 (APO 732" or "737."

Now, for a few queries? Is it 732 or 737? The poorly struck postmark is of the Type A5 group but none has been seen used at either APO 732

or 737. (See our January 1939 issue) What is the year of use? 1917, 1918, or 1919?

We have been keeping for many years a careful record of thousands of censor-marks. From this record the Regimental Censor No. A.370 has been noted used only at APO 732. This then, is the first clue that it was used at APO 732 and not 737.

Then, article 26 of the Cyclopaedia of U.S. Pmks. & shows that APO 732, from War Dept. records, was established at Vittel, Vosges, Feb 16 1918 and discontinued Mar 5 1919. The Post Office Dept. records show the same date of discontinuance but the date of establishment is set as Feb 18 1918.

Next, turning to a report published by the Historical Section of the Army War College, we find that a station or depot was established at Vittel (Vosges) for the Advance Section of the Services of Supply

on January 27 1918 to serve as a hospital center. This is a tie-in with the return address on the cover "Base Hosp. #32."

Further, there is the report of the postmaster at APO 732 in the World War Records Division at the War Department and published here, possibly for the first time:

"APO 732 was established at Vit-tel (Vosges) Feb 16 1918 and... handled mail for four base hospital units, located in two towns, Vittel and Contrexeville...up until the American drive in July, little mail was handled at this station for other than the personnel of the hospital units located here.

"A great many Allied patients were treated at this hospital center during the spring and early summer; but with the exception of British patients, the mail for all others was handled entirely by the French...


"In latter June, the order was received to evacuate all Allied patients, preparatory to handling only American cases. Up until that time the mail had been comparatively light...The stamp business was very light.

"Shortly after the big Allied drive took place thousands of American wounded began pouring into this...perfectly equipped hospital center...This center had as many as 8100 patients at one time...I believe we never handled less than 5000 letters a day at that time (Note: During the Allied offensive)"

Confirming the italicized words in the report that little mail was handled before July, this is the first cover from APO 732 used before July 1918 which we have recorded. The next earlier item is Jul 8 1918, Type A13.

Your Editor also collects French view post-cards used by Americans and finds in his collection two; one with a view of Contrexeville postmarked Dec 18 1918 (Type A17) with the return address "Med. Dept. Base 32, APO 732," the other with a view of Vittel postmarked Feb 28 1919 (Type A17) with the return address "Base Hosp. 23 APO 732." These two picture post-cards, of course, tie in nicely with the history quoted and the "Base Hosp. 32" noted on the cover which we are now discussing.

From the other italicized words, that mail of British soldiers was handled at APO 732 up to June, when they were evacuated, we wonder if any English collectors have covers sent home by wounded Tommies, post-marked at the American APO 732!

As for the year of use: The rectangular base censor mark is known used from Mar 25 1918 to Nov 1 1918. It was superseded by a circular base censor mark, first known used Nov 4 1918 as illustrated. Further, as the APO was established in Feb 1918 and discontinued in Mar 1919, the cover would have to be used in 1918, confirmed by a 1918 backstamp not here-

 tofore mentioned.

Rev. Legris informs me that the addressee is known to him, and this is to ask if she has any recollection as to the circumstances under which this letter was sent which may, or may not, confirm the above.

Not until this war is over and historical records available & philatelic data compiled will it be possible in many cases to get at the story-behind-the-cover of this. Global War.

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CAUTION:

There are strict orders to soldiers overseas not to answer letters from strangers. Don't write to soldiers whose names you see on current war covers. You might be reported and find yourself called upon to make an embarrassing explanation to someone not familiar with our hobby.

In this connection, out of the desire to be doubly cautious, in many cases the postmarks illustrated have APO numbers and dates changed so that they are not pictures of actual postmarks but illustrations of general types of postmarks only.

THE WAR COVER CLUB

Membership List (July 1, 1943)

132 Aldrich, Fred W.	515 E. Garfield St., Glendale, Cal.	Censor WW2
150 Arnold, James R.	Metuchen, N.J.	
130 Atwood, W.R.	1308 Carlton Drive, Glendale, Cal.	Flown, Censored
90 Baggett, M.R.	1413 N. Allen St., Charlotte, N.C.	All Wars
57 Bartley, D.C.	6035 8th Ave. NE, Seattle, Wash.	Naval
75 Bearman, J.H.	23 Frost Lane, Hewlett, L.I., N.Y.	Europe & Col.
163 Benjamin, Maj. R.E.	1036 S. Highland St., Arlington, Va.	US Army, Navy, For
140 Berman, Cpl. L.	Hq Co. 323 Inf. 81st Div. Camp Rucker, Ala.	Camp, Fort, Air- field
141 Billings, Mrs. G.M.	P.O. Box 326, Greenwich, Conn.	WW 1 & 2
133 Bird, Marshall N.	665 Hale St., Palo Alto, Cal.	General
126 Black, Stephen D.	209 4th Ave., Three Rivers, Mich.	APO, Cens, Naval
144 Boesen, George	2029 Morse Ave., Chicago, Ill	
46 Brenner, C.D.	5 Montrose Rd., Berkeley, Cal.	WW 2, Military
82 Briggs, L. Cabot	Lloyd Harbor, Huntington, L.I. N.Y.	Censored
93 Buck, Lewis D.	1115 N. St., N.W., Washington, D.C.	General
102 Burr, David H.	25 N. Main St., Gloversville, N.Y.	
111 Carroll, Andrew D.	185 Purdue Ave., Berkeley, Cal.	POW, HEF, FPOs
52 Case, Wm. O.	56 Prospect St., Hartford, Conn	WW 1
155 Clark, Hugh M.	1 W. 47th St., New York, N.Y.	Civil War Patr
152 Clough, S. DeWitt	14th St. & Sheridan R., N. Chicago, Ill.	General
91 Cummings, Eugene P.	1106 Glen Drive, San Leandro, Cal.	AEF
116 Day, Martin S.	756 11th St. SE, Washington DC	Censored
18 DeGroot, Mortimer	110 W. 34th St., New York, N.Y.	WW 1, General
153 Dougan, Chas. W.	O/o P.A. Pedersen, RFD 2, USNR Hamilton, Mont.	China, WW1, Cens
62 Fassett, Howard H.	2817 Hillside Dr., Burlingame, Cal.	General
138 Faulstich, Fred	1860 Billingsley Ter., Bronx, NY	All US wars, Boer War, General
151 Fusmer, Homer Wm.	Box 183, Canajoharie, N.Y.	All cens. airmail
149 Gift, Lt. Thos. E.	Co. F, 394th Inf., Camp Van Dorn, Miss	APCs WW 1 & 2, airmail, US WW 1 & 2
7 Gray, Eva F.	166 Irving Ave., Providence, R.I.	
63 Hahn, Dave	5509 Bartlett St., Pittsburgh, Pa.	
101 Hamill, Pvt. Jas. L.	Hq. Det. 41st Inf. Div., Tacoma, Wash	WW 2
31 Hertzberg, B.	554 Merritt Ave., Oakland, Cal.	All
30 Hertzberg, M.	736 Hillgirt Circle, Oakland, Cal.	All
127 Hourvitz, Clarence	3522 Beechwood Blvd. Pittsburgh, Pa	WW 2
1 Hunt, Milton B.	Southport, Conn.	WW 1 General
106 Jones, Mrs. S.W.	4325 Erie Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio	Cens. WW 2 US
60 Knauer, Col. J.G.	817 Whittier Pl., Washington 12, DC	AEF, Span. Amer.
70 Kretzer, Comdr. Harry H.	Naval Air Sta., Pasco, Wash.	WW 2
157 Landry, A.S.	54 Downing St., Concord, N.H.	WW 2 -US & China
136 Leach, Floyd S.	Noroton, Conn.	US General
142 Lee, Mrs. Bette	7201 Seashore Dr., Newport Beach, Cal.	WW 2
148 Legris, Rev. G.M., S.J.	Loyola Univ., 6525 Sheridan Rd. Chicago, Ill.	WW 1 and 2
161 Logan, Wm.	Patterson, Cal.	WW 2
160 Lundgren, F.T.	417 Forest Ave., Glen Ellyn, Ill.	All, V-Mail
81 Mikucki, Chester J.	1844 N. Winchester Av., Chicago, Ill.	Occup. Poland, WW 1 and 2
122 Mangum, Robt.	247 Del Mar Way, San Mateo, Cal.	WW 2, Cens. Mil.
137 Martin, Geo. M.	220 N. 35th Ave., Yakima, Wash.	WW 1 & 2, All

Membership List (Continued)

89 Mathes, Roger A.	1597 Della Ave., Akron, Ohio	WW 2
115 Mathys, Della	608 Belmont, Grand Forks, N.D.	WW 2
24 McCune, S.W.	21270 Morewood Parkway, Rocky Rivr, O.	AEF covers
164 McNaney, T. Earl	Post Office, Elmira, N.Y.	WW 1
166 McVicker, Affie	3976 Van Noord Ave., N. Hollywood, Cal.	
146 Nelson, E.E.	513 Weeks St., Jamestown, N.Y.	Patriot at MPOs
118 Newcomer, J. Raymond	RFD #2, Lititz, Pa.	Cens. APOs, Naval
Nichols, C. Malcolm	Box 552, Jamestown, N.Y.	Used Patriot. APO Nos.
158 Nixon, Scott	SFO Bldg., Augusta, Ga.	WW 2, Civil, Spam.
4 Norona, Delf	315 7 St., Moundsville, W. Va.	All US wars
25 Perry, Dr. A.E.	314 State St., Albany 6, N.Y.	AEF WW 1 & 2
147 Price, Chas. V.	Charleston Natl. Bnk. Bldg. Charleston, W. Va.	WW 1, covrs. with 1c, 2c, 3c stamps
156 Puls, E.E.	156 E. Frank St., Birmingham, Mich	APOs with Nos.
2 Robinson, Rev. H.K.	Simsbury, Conn.	US WW 1
44 Safarid, R.R.	71-47 Manse St., Forest Hills, LI, NY	AEF
32 Sanford, Hennen M.	1268 French Ave., Lakewood, Ohio	WW 1 General
113 Seymour, W. Hall	608 S. Erie, Wichita, Kans.	US, For. Military
114 Sickel, Arthur M.	317 Delaware St., Leavenworth, Kans	WW 2
145 Smith, K.H.	3925 Muriel Ave., Cleveland, O.	Military
45 Sperry, Pierrepont	E., P.O. Box 291, Sunbury, Penna.	WW 2
72 Stringham, Orville	L., 1403 Chenango St. RD #3, Binghamton, N.Y.	Censored General
96 Tower, Rev. Wm. H.	68 Lloyd Road, Montclair, N.J.	All Wars generl
154 Turner, George T.	37 King St., New York, N.Y.	Philatelic literature
159 Van Alsburg, Lt. J.H.	2222 Eye St., N.W. USNR Washington 7, D.C.	Patriotics
162 Warren, H.A.	202 S. Carol Blvd., Upper Darby, Pa.	
51 White, Marcus W.	15 Sherburne Ave., Worcester, Mass.	U.S. covers
22 Williams, Mrs. J.W.	1269 Clark Ave., Roanoke, Va.	AEF of WW 1
136 Ziehlsdorff, A.H.	Midwest, Wyo.	WW 2, For. APOs
143 Zieler, Cpl. L.C.	Hq. Btry, 2d Bn. 61st C.A. (AA) APO 860, Care P.M. New York, N.Y.	WW 2 all
183 Zimmerman, Geo. J.	657 42nd St., Des Moines, Iowa	Commerc. censored

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Several members have merely overlooked the matter of current dues. In a future issue their names, together with new members, will be listed.

The cost of printing has nearly doubled since 1942, so for that reason this issue is reduced in size. Material is on hand to triple the size of this publication, limited circulation and income only preventing it.

Another club problem is that our efficient sales manager, due to war activities, has to curtail the service of that department somewhat. We pledge, however, that the club will be held together for the duration.

Your President will be at the S.P.A. meeting at St. Louis, Mo., August 19th to 22nd, and will hold a meeting for all war cover collectors there.

The following from the Bureau of Public Relations, War Dept., Washington, D.C., speaks for itself: "Your publication...has been looked over carefully. The War Department has no objection to its publication providing there is a continuance of the same careful policy of selection of material that is shown in the attached April, 1943, copy."

Our policy is, generally, to illustrate no military postmarks indicating APO locations and publish no information unless it has already been published in magazines and periodicals of general circulation.

US and Foreign covers, WW 1 and WW 2, also some earlier. Want lists filled or ask for W.C.C. Circuits. W. HALL SEYMOUR, Sales Manager W.C.C. 608 So. Erie, Wichita, 9, Kansas.