

UNITED STATES ARMY POST OFFICES IN EGYPT

by **Prof. Peter A. S. Smith** (ESC 74)

A recent chat with John Sears reminded me that the last time that the subject of these notes was mentioned in the *QC* was no less than 26 years ago (Vol. IV, No. 8, pp 102-103, January 1955). Since that time, there has been an illustrated article in *EGYPTIAN TOPICS* (Vol. 4, pp 84-89, August 1972). Meanwhile, the War Cover Club has published a new edition of the list of locations of *US APO's in World War II (GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS OF U.S. APO's, 1941-1978)*, compiled by James Shaffer, (1979), and there are some small changes from earlier lists, resulting from further access to official archives. The list presented here incorporates this new information.

Soldiers had the free-franking privilege, but it did not pay for air mail; many covers therefore bear stamps, adhesive or impressed stationery, to defray the 6¢ air mail rate. Civilians attached to the armed forces were allowed to use the APO's, but they had to use stamps even for surface mail (the rate was 5¢ per oz.). I have never seen an example of registered mail, and do not know if registry service was available. The stamps I have seen used on covers from Egypt are :-

1938 Presidential series: 2¢ carmine, 5¢ blue.

1942 "Win the War" 3¢

1940 "Defense" 1¢, 2¢

1938 "Northwest Territory" commemorative 3¢

1942 "Kentucky Statehood" commemorative 3¢

1934-44 postal stationery envelope with 6¢ orange impressed stamp, with or without red and blue border, and in two sizes.

1941 Air Mail, 6¢ carmine.

The cancellations used were of various types, generally consisting of a circular date stamp bearing within it, in various locations, the number of the APO, in duplex with an obliterator of parallel bars. A machine cancellation with wavy lines for obliteration was also used at some offices. A selection of these is shown on the illustrated covers. Inasmuch as regulations required the obliterating bars to fall on the stamp, and the date stamp on the envelope, stamps off cover can almost never be identified as having been used in Egypt.

From July 1st 1942, to March 9th 1943, a directive from the War Department required the APO numbers to be absent from the cancelling devices. The purpose of this is not clear, for covers from the period almost invariably include the APO number in the return address written clearly on the outside. There are many instances of a return address having a different APO number from that seen in the postmark. This situation results from mailing addresses not always being identical with the post office of despatch. In all examples I have seen, both APO numbers are from Egyptian locations.

The APO's were not permanently fixed in most cases, but were relocated as operations required. For this reason, one must pay attention to dates to be sure of a location in Egypt. Although the dates given in the list are for the most part official ones, they should not be regarded as infallible; it may have taken a number of days for an ordered relocation to be put into effect.

Mail not addressed to the USA or possessions required Egyptian stamps. Examples are extremely scarce, but they do exist.

(A) APO Numbers believed to have been put in use.

		Opened	
485	Kabrit	12 Jan '43	(to Castel Benito, Libya, June '43)
486	Deversoir	12 Jan '43	
	Heliopolis	1 Mar '45	CO 31 Oct '45
498	Camp Huckstep, Heliopolis (from Benghazi)	14 Oct '43	(to Tripoli 1 May '44)
616	Cairo	27 July '42	
	Camp Huckstep	Oct '43	
	Cairo	Dec. '46	(to Dharan, Arabia, 7 March '47)
616-2	Camp Huck.	(seen 11 Sep. '43)	
			(616-1, Dharan; 616A, Teheran; 616 Box 5, Beyrouth)
678	HQ, Middle East Com.		
	Camp Huck.	Seen 2 Mar. '42	CO Oct. '46
678-1	Camp Huck.		
681	Abu Suweir	20 Nov. '42	(from Palestine; to Libya Apr. '43)
683	Fayid	20 Nov. '42	(to Gambut, Cyrenaica, 1 Feb. '43)
684	Mobile Unit, US Air Force in Middle East	17 May, '43	(from Asmara)
	Camp Ataka	3 Oct. '43	
	Camp Huck.	16 Jan. '44	
	Alexandria	Apr. '44	CO 13 Dec. '46
685	Cairo (mobile)	16 May '43	
	Cairo	16 Jan. '44	(to Benghazi 1 Aug. '44)
686	HQ, Suez Canal Ports		
	Suez	3 Oct. '43	(from Massawa)
	Port Taufiq	27 Oct, '43	
	Camp Ataka	16 Jan. '44	
	Cairo (mobile)	Nov. '44	(susp. 6 Dec. '44; CO 15 May '46)
	Cairo	1 Mar. '45	
696	HQ 9th Air Force		
	Cairo	23 Dec. '42	(to England 25 Nov. '43)
785	Alexandria	30 Nov. '42	(to Gambut 4 Jan. '43)
786	Alexandria	5 Dec. '42	(to Gambut 24 Jan. '43)
787	HQ US Army Forces Middle East;		HQ Africa-Middle East Theater 21 Jan. '43 (CO Sept. '46)
788	John H. Payne Field, Heliopolis	3 Oct. '43	CO 7 Mar. '47
814	Cairo	25 June '42	CO 12 Aug. '42 (Replaced by 616)
1060	Cairo		(seen 8 Aug. '42, mailing address only)
1221	(Egypt)		(seen 15 Sept. '42, mailing address only) (also seen for Palestine and Libya)
1222	(Egypt)		(seen July '42, mailing address only)
1224	Heliopolis Depot		(seen Oct.-Dec. '42; mailing address only)
608	Khartoum, Sudan:		9 June '42 CO 17 July '45
608M	??		(seen 9 May '44)

(B) Offices not believed to have been operated in Egypt, but assigned to Cairo in January 1946, for termination in April or May, 1946

523, 535, 680, 795, 797, 799, 816, 824 (APO 816 was issued to Dharan in March, 1946)

(C) Uncertain

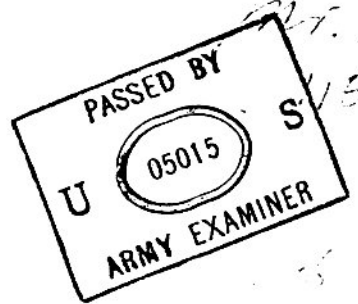
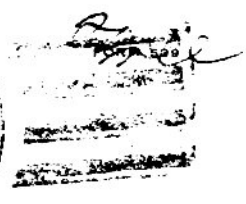
APO 626 assigned to Heliopolis 16 Jan. '43 (from Nairobi), and assigned to Benghazi in March, 1943

Camp D. H. Holabird 32250259



AMERICAN RED CROSS

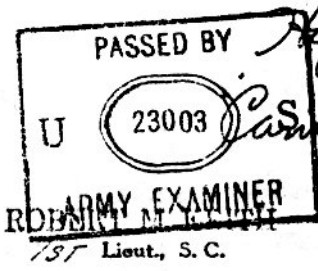
4th Field Hospital
Postmaster



Mr. M. Curadsky
153rd Medical Bn
Camp D. H. Holabird
A.P.O. 486

Cancellation of APO 485, return address APO 682, probably just after removal to Libya

Sgt. J. S. Goralek - 33266129
209th Sig. Depot Co.
A.P.O. 3405 Postmaster
N.Y. New York



T/Sgt. N. G. Fitzgenbeger
Co. 847th Sig. Tng. Bn
Camp Crowder Missouri
U.S.A.

Deversoir,
Egypt.

Surface Mail cover from APO 486; both cds and censor mark in blue

U.S. A.P.O.'s

Vol. Harry O. Kraft
Amer. Field Service
A.P.O. 616, % Postmaster
New York, New York.



Miss Laura

5799 Lakewood Avenue,
Detroit, Michigan
U.S.A.

AIR MAIL



Cover from APO 616 in 1943, with
APO Number restored

Nicholas J. Parrino
OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
CAIRO, EGYPT.



Mr. Bede Irvin
Associated Press Photo
The News
Detroit, Mich.
U.S.A.

Cover with APO Number excised (probably 616), identifiable
as to location only by return address

Vol. John H. Wisotzkey
Amer. Field Service
A.P.O. 616 - % Postmaster
New York, N.Y.



Mr. George Love

Dear George:
In fine health and busy 537 N. Duke Street.

Regards
John



York, Pa.
U.S.A.

26/10/43

Postcard from civilian at APO 616; surface rate overpaid

Sgt. Franklin E. Tracy
345 Bomb Sq. 98 Bomb Hq.
A.S.N. 33, 000, 599
A.P.O. 683
Postmaster, New York, N.Y.
M.E.F.



(written in English)

Miss Rachel Yardeni
26 Massada Str.
Haifa,
Palestine



Cover from APO 683 (Fayid), franked with Egypt 6m because it was addressed to Palestine. (This APO recorded to have been removed to Cyrenaica three months before)

The Postal Officer,
APO. 686.



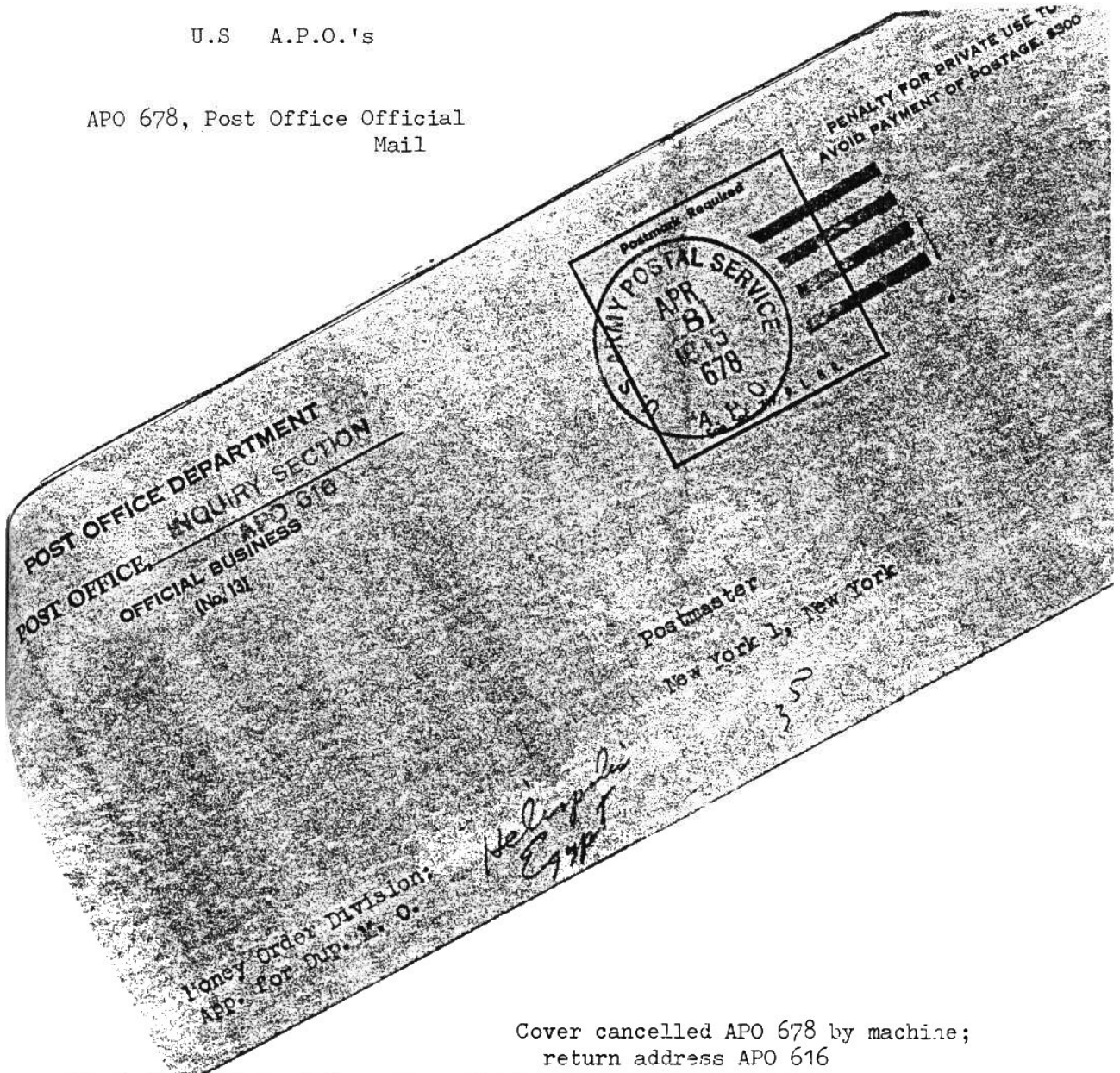
Col. S. A. Potter, Jr., O-269373,
21 Lafayette Street,
Haddonfield,
NEW JERSEY, USA.

Comp. [Signature]

Cover from APO 678, return address APO 686

U.S A.P.O.'s

APO 678, Post Office Official
Mail



Cover cancelled APO 678 by machine;
return address APO 616



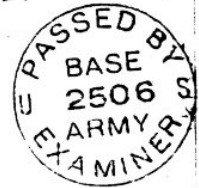
Col. D.T. Nelson, 7N
A.P.O. # 787,
% Postmaster, N.Y.

Cancellation APO 616; return address
APO 787 (Cairo/Heliopolis)



*Canceled by
Col. D.T. Nelson, 7N
A.P.O. # 787*

Mrs D.T. Nelson
2300 N. Columbus St
Arlington,
Cairo Egypt Va 500



MAJOR WILLIAM WALL O'HEARN, F.A.,

0-192519
William Wall O'Hearn

JICA
A.P.O. # 787,
% POSTMASTER,
NEW YORK,
NEW YORK.



Mr. P. T. BARNUM,
7 BASWORTH STREET,
Boston,
Massachusetts,

Cover cancelled at APO 696;
with return address APC 787
(both Cairo); Sept. 13th, 1943

*Canceled by
William Wall O'Hearn*

United States
of
Cairo Egypt for America.

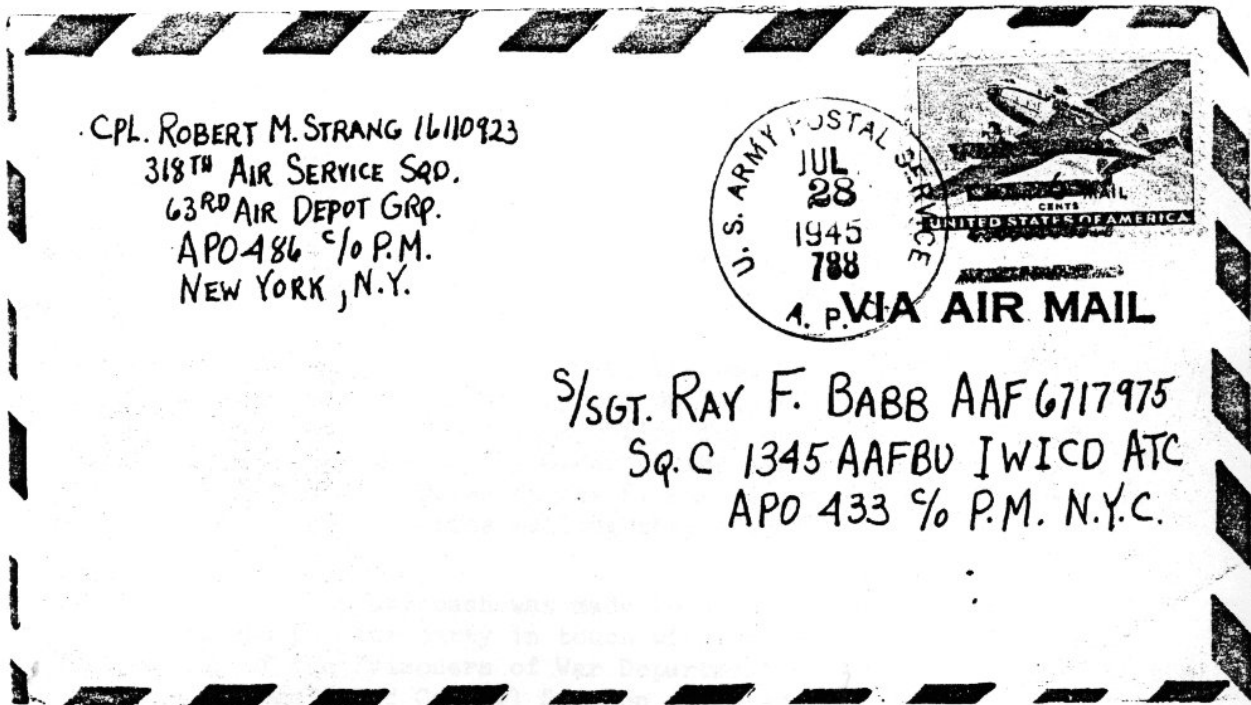
V5 Walter R. Abbott
170 Military Police Co.
A.P.O. 787, c/o P.M.
New York, N.Y.

APO 787 (Cairo), July 4th, 1945

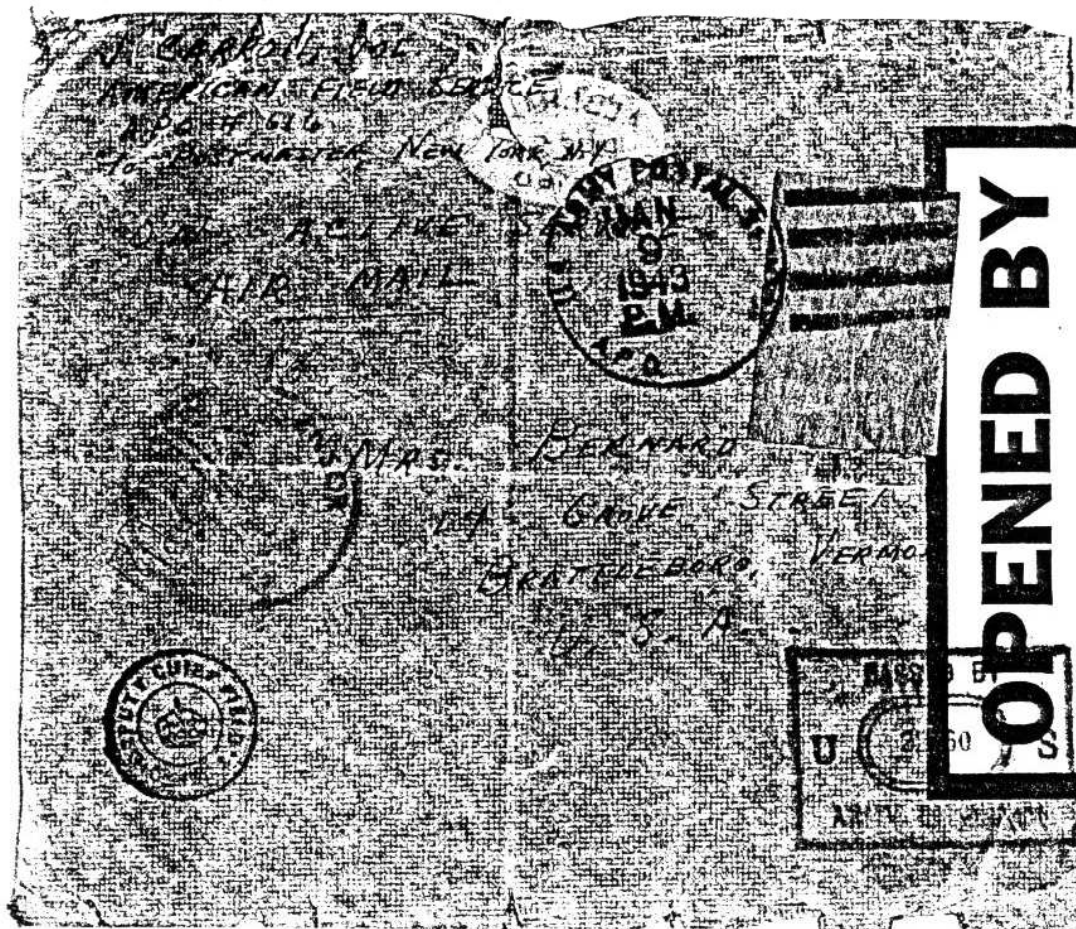


VIA AIR MAIL

George D. Stribley,
301 Muskegon Building,
Muskegon, Michigan.



Cover from APO 788 (John H. Payne Field, Heliopolis)



Cover from APO 616, Jan. 9th, 1943, showing APO Number excised from the date stamp; British and U.S. Censorship; stamp (Egyptian ?) removed by authorities