

PAPUA NEW GUINEA CALLING



Vol. 37 No.4 Issue No. 177

July 1991

OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE PAPUAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY

**Australian First Army Field Censorship Company -
an additional cover**

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**AUSTRALIAN FIRST ARMY FIELD CENSORSHIP COMPANY -
AN ADDITIONAL COVER**
by Anders G.J. Rhodin (U.S.A.)

In the December 1990 PNGC issue Jennings provided a listing of his and Garrett's few recorded covers (6 total) censored by the Australian 1st Army Field Censorship Company (circular rubberstamp marking "1/AFCC"). From 20 August 1944 through 1 September 1944 it was recorded on mail from Ravenshoe, Queensland; from 30 September 1944 on mail from Lae, New Guinea; and from 23 March 1945 to 21 May 1945 on mail from Merauke, Dutch New Guinea. Jennings also stated that detachments probably operated in various regions of Northern Territory, Queensland, Papua, New Guinea, Dutch New Guinea, and Borneo. Earlier information on this "1/AFCC" censor marking has been supplied by Collyer and Russell (PNGC June 1988) and Collas (1986) in "The Postal History of the Australian Army during World War II".

I have one cover with the "1/AFCC" circular marking. The marking is found on a single cover from a lengthy numbered correspondence from one soldier to a Mr. Jack Radford in NSW. The time period covered is from February 1943 to May 1945 and constitutes 78 covers mailed at regular intervals. The soldier's name appears in partially legible signatures to be something like D. Uhtrond. In February 1943 he was initially stationed briefly at Base P.O. 1 M.D. 02 (Brisbane, Queensland) using 4d stamps for 3d domestic letter rate plus 1d for Forces concession rate. From late February through October 1943

his entire correspondence receives "dumb" security postmarks (see Fig.1) indicating location probably on active duty either in Papua or offshore near Townsville (see article by Lee in June 1990 PNGC). He continues to use 4d postage during this entire time, and on 31 August 1943 one of his letters bears only a Townsville domestic datestamp, indicating probable brief shore leave in town. The "dumb" security marks are mostly small circular markers of four parallel bars, different from

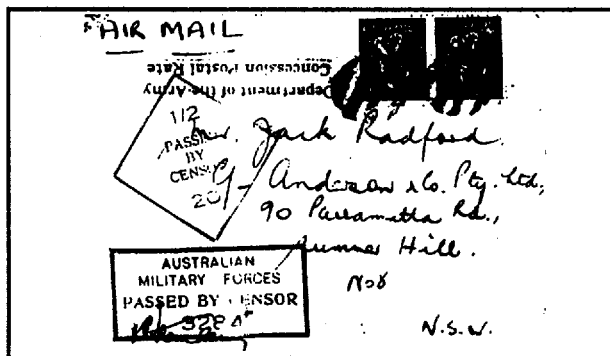


Fig.1. Cover, approximately late March '43, from near Townsville, 8d double-weight domestic air mail Army Concession rate. Note:- 'Department of the Army Concession Postal Rate', 'Forces Censor 328A, signed K.E.Stanley', Domestic Censor 1/2-20, two 'dumb' security cancels' and No.8 the writers letter number.

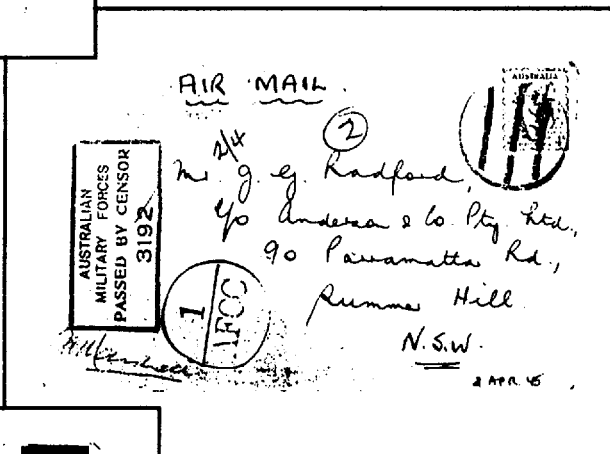


Fig.2. Cover from same writer, 2 April '45.

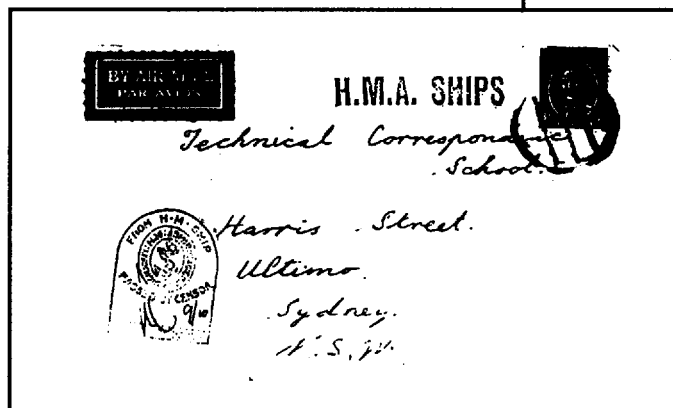


Fig.3. 'Dumb' security marking: Large ring with three central parallel lines, on HMA SHIPS cover.

the plain circles illustrated by Lee. However, one of his covers bears a marking identical to the ones illustrated by Lee as probably originating in Papua. On 7 November 1943 he arrives in Papua using 3d postage at APO 0112 at Sogeri near Port Moresby. He remains in the Port Moresby region through May 1944, when he moves north to Lae in New Guinea, using ABPO 7B by early June 1944, and remaining there until at least November 1944. As of 8 Jan 1945 he is back in Queensland, using domestic postage from BPO 3B in Brisbane. On 26 March 1945 he mails a letter from MIL. PO YEERONGRILLY in Queensland, and then evidently heads towards the front lines again. On 2 April 1945 his next cover in sequence (numbered and hand-dated) bears the "1/AFCC" circular censor (see Fig.2), in addition to a Unit censor No.3192. He uses domestic 4d postage, and the stamp is cancelled by a different type of elaborate "dumb" security marking consisting of a large ring with three central parallel lines. I have previously only seen this type of large security canceller on covers also handstamped "H.M. AUSTRALIAN SHIPS" or "H.M.A. SHIPS" and censored by the "tombstone" type naval censor marking (see Fig.3). It would appear that this one AFCC cover was mailed or processed on shipboard en route to the next military engagement.

His next five covers (the last 5 in the correspondence) are dated 11 April through 26 May 1945. They all bear 4d postage, are all censored by Unit censor No.2985 (unsigned), none by "1/AFCC", and the stamps are all cancelled by the Unit Censor applying very simple "dumb" security cancellers, usually using the edge of his square unit censor stamp as a crude X across the stamp. On one cover a crude purple ring-type security canceller was used.

Collas in his 1986 book noted that the use of the "1/AFCC" censorship marking was "particularly active in areas and situations where at the time security was a prime factor". This is borne out by the cover presented above, censored by the AFCC as the military unit headed northward into high-security and high-risk areas where security cancellers were also used. Based on the dates supplied by Jennings for the use of "1/AFCC" at Merauke, Dutch New Guinea between 23 March and 21 May 1945, one might assume that my cover censored by "1/AFCC" on 2 April 1945 may also have been posted through Merauke. However, it is certainly possible that different detachments of the 1st Army Field Censorship Company operated simultaneously in different locations. More information is clearly needed.