

Puzzled? So Am I.

by Francis Ferguson

Yes, it is another Transport cover. This one caught my attention on eBay simple because of the unusual grouping of the 10, 30 & 50 cent stamps paying the air mail rate that was in effect on February 27, 1945. This works out to 8 cents per ounce with the assumption that this large envelope that shows obvious signs of having been stuffed with a thick sheaf of papers (or something else), weighed in at 11 ounces. Thus, the 90 cent postage rate which over paid the rate by 2 cents. The cover has numerous folds, tears and creases. This large envelope measures 10 inches long by 4¾ high which is considerably larger than a #10 envelope that measures just short of 9½ long by 4⅛ high. If only it could talk!

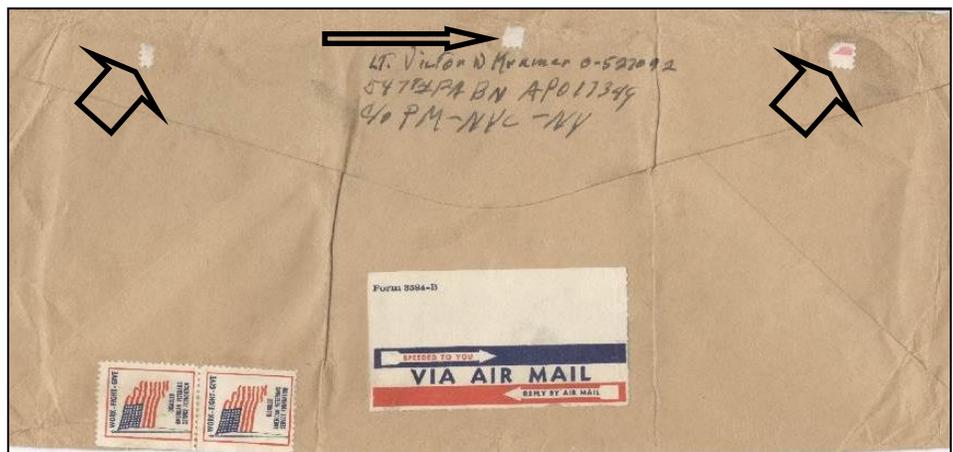
Here is the rest of the perplexing information. This is an APO cover dated February 27, 1945. On the back of the cover the sender Lt. Victor W. Kramer wrote "547th FA BN APO 17349 | c/o PM-NYC-NY". That would seem to be clear enough. The full description is: 547th Field Artillery Battalion. An example picture can be seen to the right. So, I pulled out my APO reference book to find out that APO number is in a group that are designated as being used as temporary numbers during WWII, thus, of no specific location.



The other interesting point is – where are the censor marks? The lack of those markings tends to make me believe this is a domestic use. The creasing of the envelope also brings up questions. There are obviously two vertical creases as if the cover was folded in thirds at some point. However, that creasing had to have been done BEFORE the etiquette label shown in the upper left corner was added as there is no evidence of a crease on that label.



To add a little more mystery to this cover, on the back there are three small spots that are the remains of something that was stuck there. The black arrows point out the three spots. The remains show perforations of some nature. What was there? I have not a clue as anything that I can think of would have covered the sender information.



You may ask why is this of interest? True domestic use of high value Transports correctly used in period are difficult to impossible to find. After collecting this material for a little over ten years, I have only obtained two domestic uses of the 30 and 50 cent values. A cover that correctly uses three of the Transports for domestic carriage would be a golden egg in my opinion.

All the information I have been able to locate shows Lt. Kramer as being in France when this letter was mailed. So, what is this? My guess is -- he left this cover with friend to be mailed when something became available to be mailed to his parent's address. Does anyone have a better guess?

A search of the world wide web resulted in this fascinating document showing up. It is a detailed history of the 547th Field Artillery Battalion from the initial formation and training to the deployment in the French theater of combat. I spent nearly an hour skimming through the document – it is incredible reading and the sender of this cover is mentioned numerous times.

<https://morrisswett.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15766coll2/id/1006>

| HEADQUARTERS BATTERY | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Battery Commander | <i>Capt. Robert E. Snelling</i> | <i>Lowell Road, Concord, Massachusetts</i> |
| Asst. Communications Officer | <i>1st Lt. Victor W. Kramer</i> | <i>705 North 7th Street – Phoenix, Arizona</i> |
| Motor Officer | <i>2d Lt. Clifton I. Johnson</i> | <i>Salt Lake City, Utah</i> |

Kramer, Victor William
88, died January 17, 2010.
Victor, a retired real estate broker, was born in Phoenix and lived here all his life. He was an Army Veteran of WWII and Korea. He was a member of Post #1 American Legion, VFW #720, DAV #1, and Military Order of Purple Heart #463.
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The images on this page have all come from the above referenced URL. This document is the definitive history of the 547th Field Artillery Battalion. It makes for highly interesting reading. The image immediately above shows Lt. Kramer as being attached to the Headquarters Battery and verifies the address of the cover as being his parent's home in Phoenix AZ. The image to the left is cropped from a larger picture and shows Lt. Kramer. The image below shows the text that pins the location of 547th on February 17 as being Camp 20 Grand in France. The 547th departed the Camp 20 Grand on the 5th of March to enter the theater of combat.

We arrived in Camp 20 Grand on the 17th of February after the trip from Le Havre. It was amid a maze of roads and tents that we found our billeting place and motor parks. We'll always remember that to get water for the kitchens meant a trip of 15 miles and to get to the motor park meant a walk of 45 minutes, but it was at this place that we really became combat-loaded. The ammunition sections went to Soissons for the ammunition and Ordnance checked the guns and inspections by various persons were commonplace occurrences.

The Battalion received its orders for combat here, and we departed 20 Grand on the 5th of March 1944. The history of the Battalion is now a matter of Battery importance and each Battery has its own life from here on.

[Thank you to Phil Fettig for providing guidance that helped to write this article.]