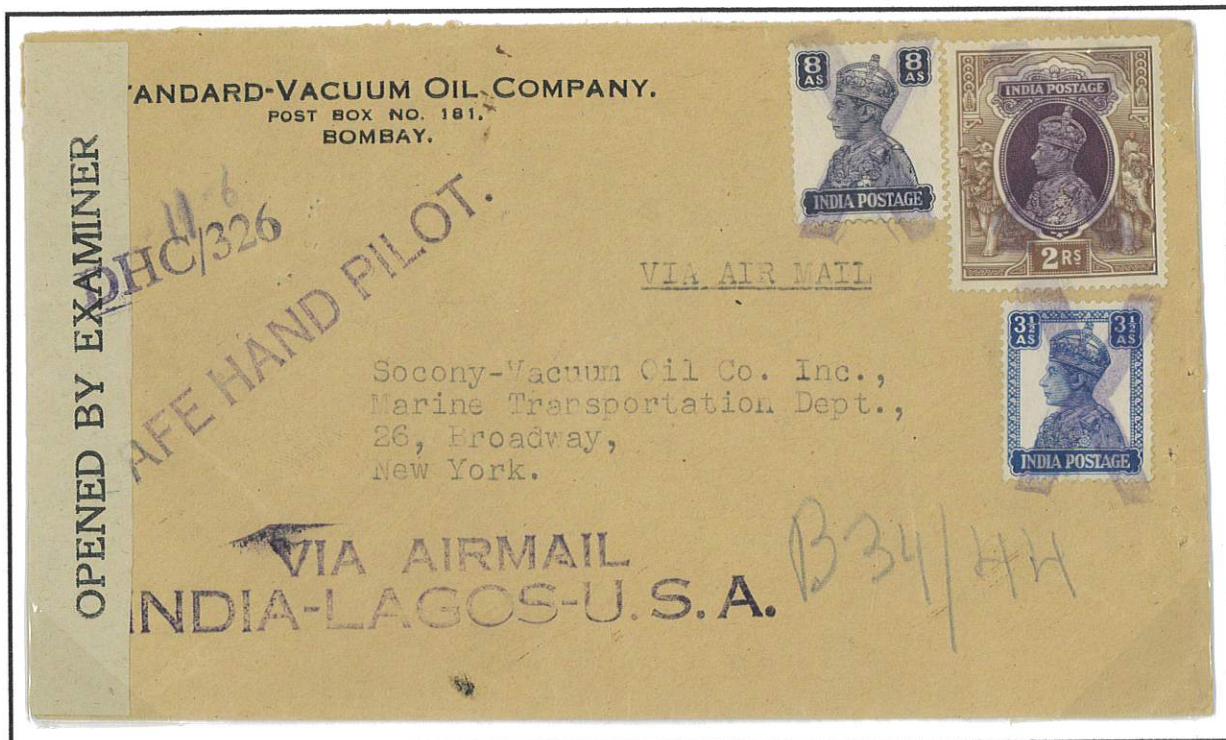


Trans-Atlantic Air mail

"Safe Hand of Pilot" from India to United States via Lagos.



Route: Presumably Bombay-Karachi by Tata Airways, Karachi-Cairo-Khartoum-Lagos by BOAC. Lagos-Fisherman's Lake-Natal-Miami-New York by Pan American Airways.

Rate: 3.5 Annas foreign basic; 40 Annas air fee = 43.5 Annas = 2 Rupees 11.5 Annas (as paid). Brown (Indian Airmail Postal Rates) has this rate introduced in September 1944 but I own a cover from Bombay endorsed "Via Lagos" with the rate, dated 22 December 1942.

Censor: Indian DHC/80 and DHC/326, both at Bombay. "DHC" style introduced March 1942.

Features: Endorsed "Safe Hand Pilot" and "India-Lagos-USA". Correct civilian airmail charges paid but no date information. Indian stamps cancelled by non-Post Office obliterator.

Trans-Atlantic Air mail

Pan American "Special Mission" flight from India to United States via Lagos.



Route: Bombay-Karachi by Tata Airways, Karachi-Cairo-Khartoum-Lagos by BOAC. Lagos-Fisherman's Lake-Natal-Miami-New York by Pan American Airways.

Rate: 3.5 Annas foreign basic; 40 Annas air fee = 43.5 Annas = 2 Rupees 11.5 Annas (as paid). Brown (Indian Airmail Postal Rates) has this rate introduced in September 1944 but this cover despatched 22 December 1942.

Censor: Indian DHC/65 and DHC/37, both at Bombay. "DHC" style introduced March 1942.

Features: Endorsed "via Lagos". Office dated receipt stamp of "FEB 8 - 1943". Probably carried from Fisherman's Lake to Natal on a Pan American "Special Mission" flight.

Trans-Atlantic Air mail

Air Transport Command United States-India November 1943



Route: South Atlantic by ATC to Karachi. Redirected to Indian Advance BPO at Poona.
Posted 7 November 1943.

Rate: 2 x 6c concession airmail.

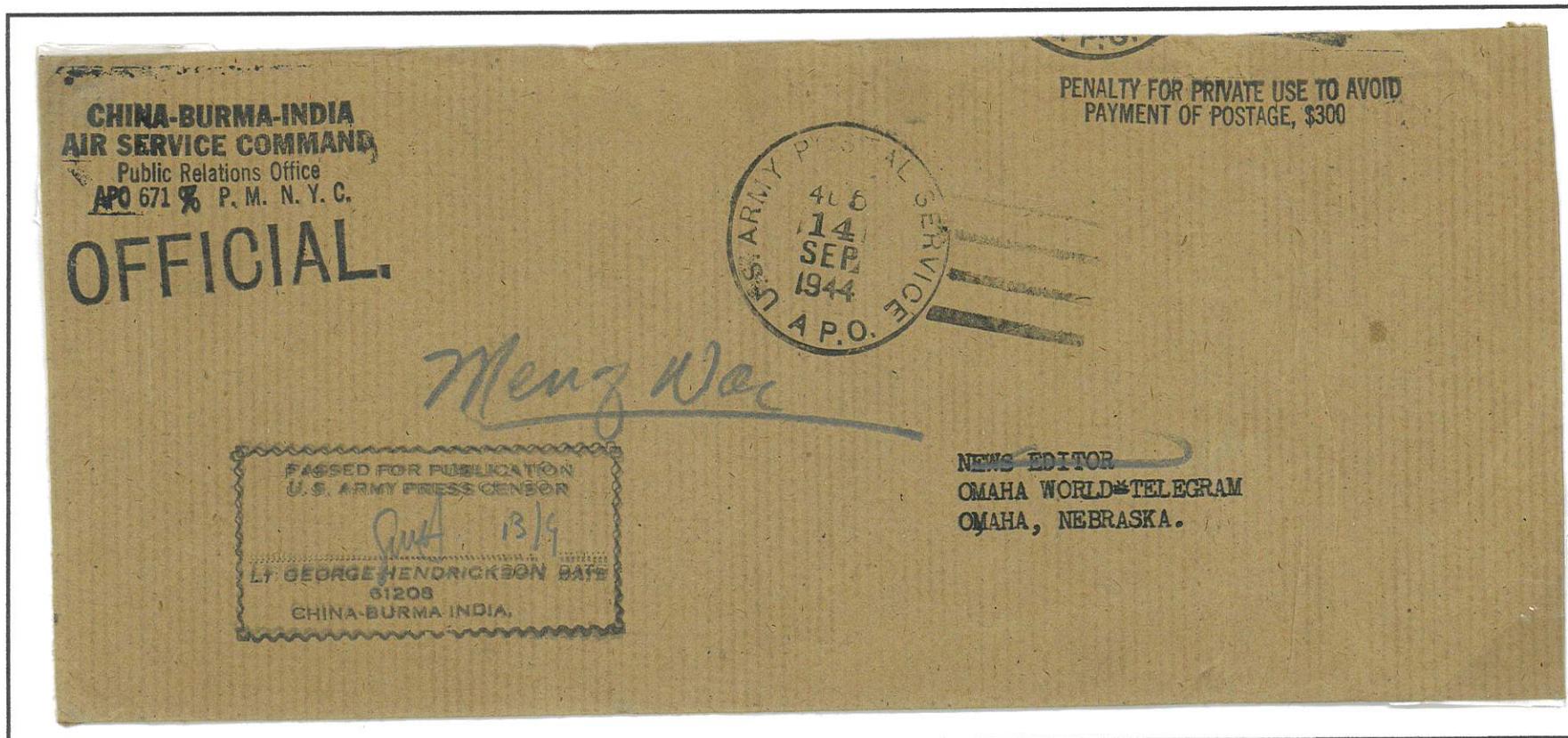
Censor: Bombay DHC/124 and DHC/50.

Features: Cover redirected at Karachi to Indian Civil post system before censorship. "ADV.BPO#21" was a British Indian Army post office located at Poona having been established there on 25 January 1943. This base was a major training ground for forward operations (i.e. towards Burma and the Japanese) so one must ask what an American unit was doing there? The answer lies in the addressee. Note the "Civ." And "American Field Service". This tells us that the addressee was serving with the volunteer ambulance drivers of the AFS, and reference to the "History of the American Field Service" shows that his unit arrived in India from the Middle East in June 1943 and had "established itself in spacious quarters at 126 Indian-British General Hospital in Poona...".

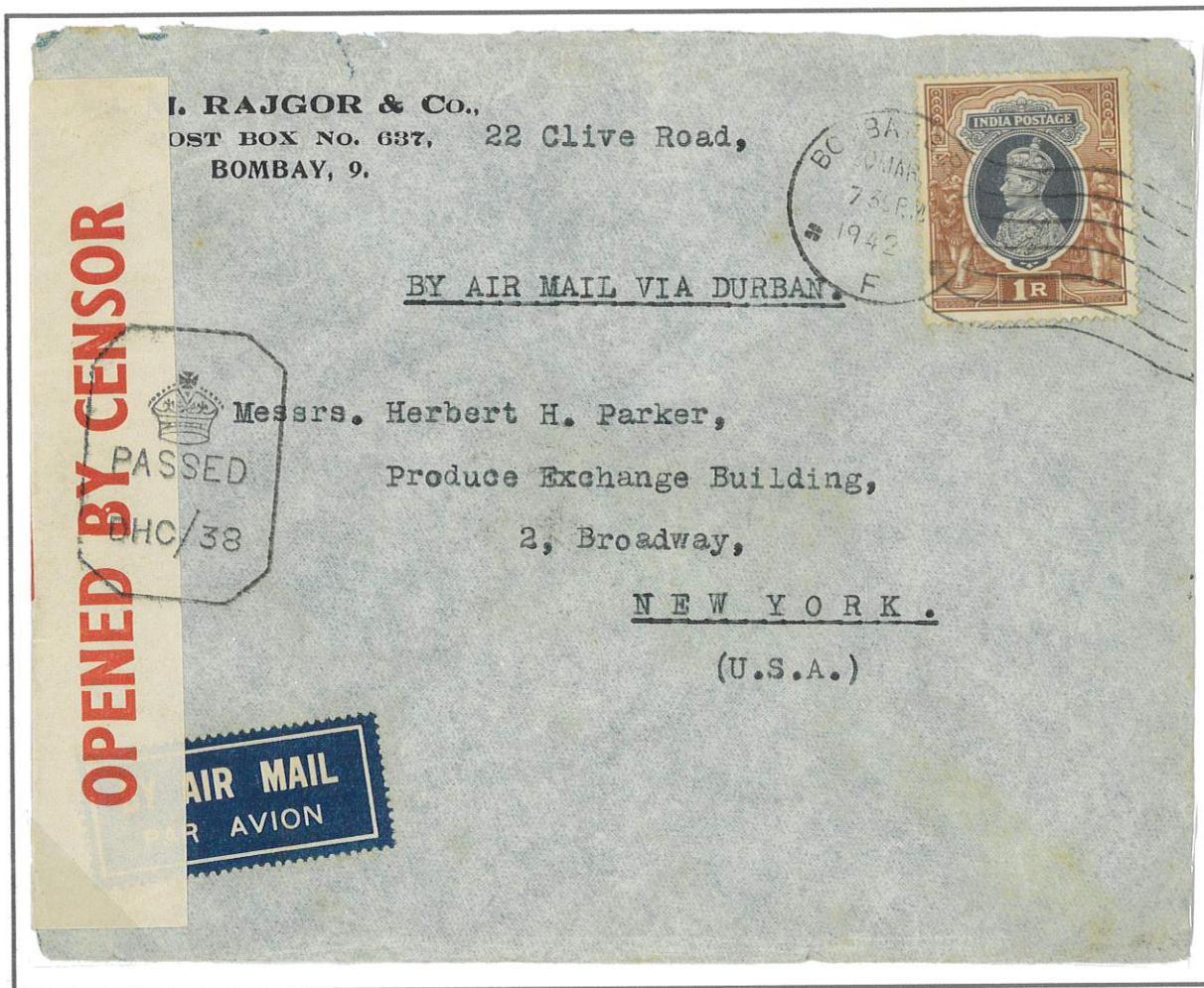
World War 2 Airmail

India to United States 1944

Official cover from India to Omaha, Nebraska carried by US Air Transport Command via Cairo, Casablanca, Azores, Gander to New York. Route opened in December 1943/January 1944. Sent from APO 671 (somewhere in India) with a transit strike of APO 466 (India) dated 14th September 1944. Contents subjected to US Army press censorship and hand annotated "Men of War". Sent free with a penalty notice for private use.



Trans-Atlantic Air mail
India to United States via Durban



Route: Bombay-Karachi-Cairo-Khartoum-Durban by BOAC 'Horseshoe'. Durban to New York by sea.
Despatched 20 March 1942.

Rate: 3 1/2 Annas surface. 2 X 22 Annas air fee. Total 2 Rupees 15 1/2 Annas.

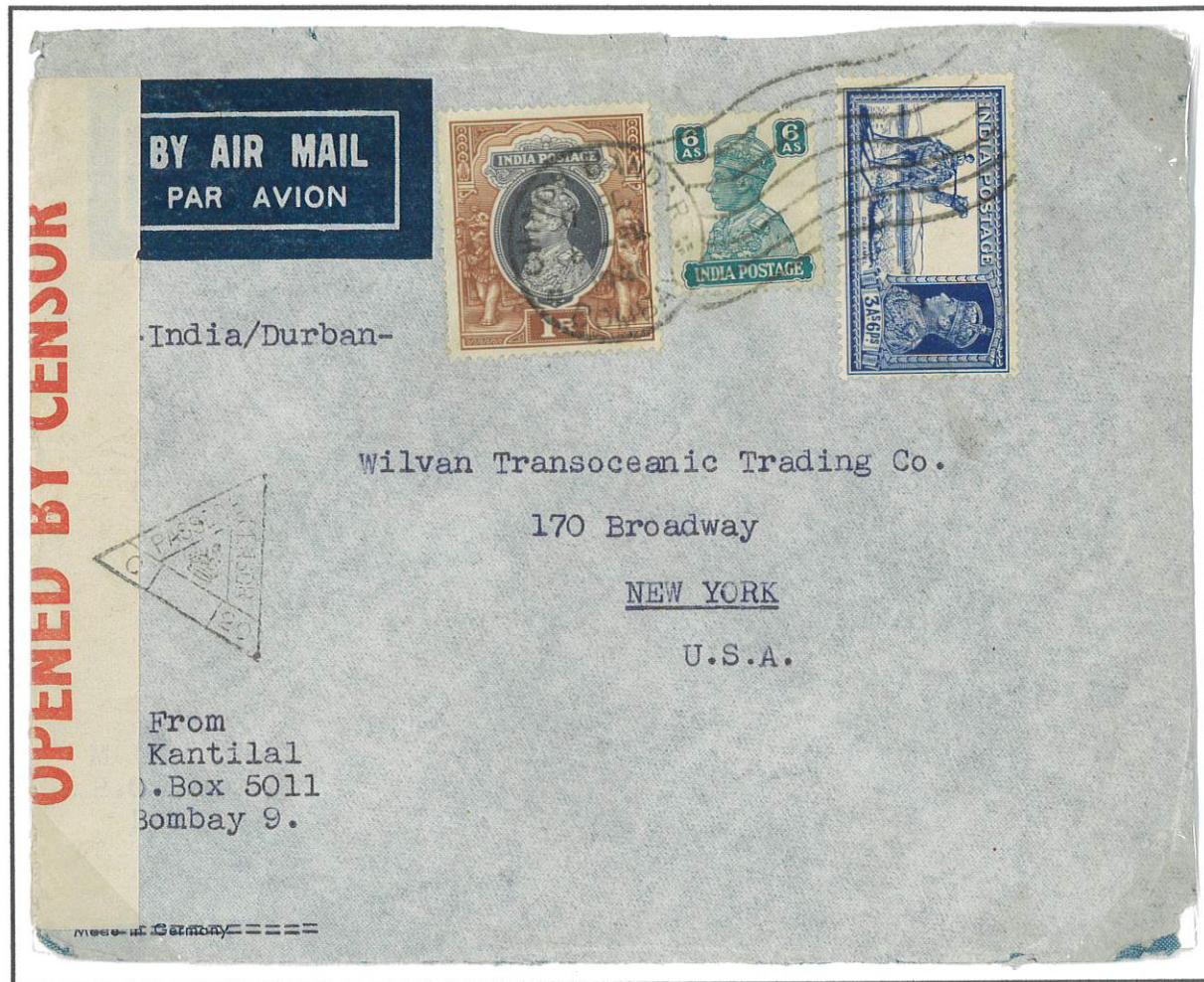
Censor: Opened and re-sealed Bombay. Hexagonal censor stamp introduced March 1942.

Features: Eastbound Pacific route closed by Pearl Harbour attack. Westbound route via Lagos available but not used in this case. No arrival date on cover.
Flight WS172 'Coorong' left Karachi 20th March. Carried through Cairo on 'Coorong' arriving Durban 27th March 1942.



Trans-Atlantic Air mail

India to United States via 'Horseshoe' and Durban Air/Sea route



Route: Bombay-Karachi-Cairo-Khartoum-Durban by BOAC 'Horseshoe'. Durban to New York by sea. Despatch 17th December 1941.

Rate: 3 1/2 Annas surface. 22 Annas air fee. Total 1 Rupee 9 1/2 Annas.

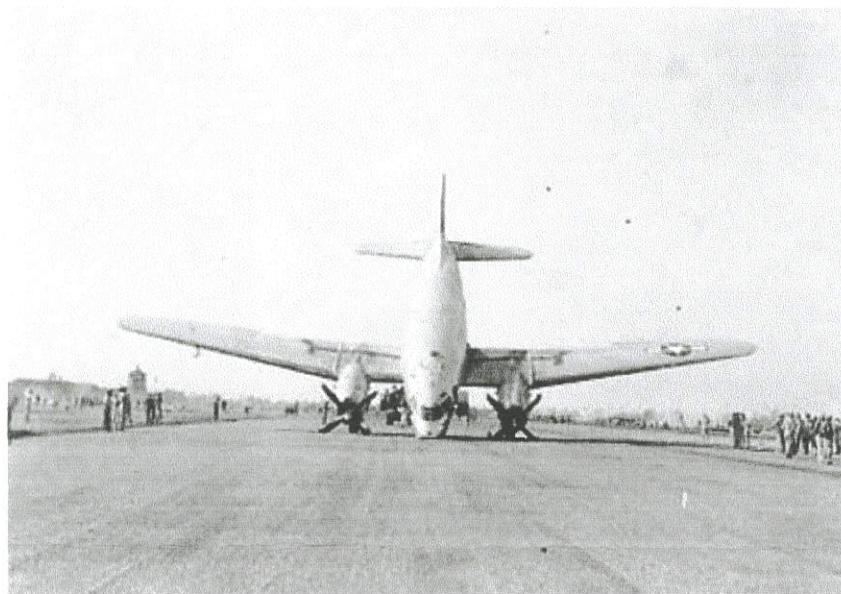
Censor: Opened and re-sealed Bombay. Then by closed bag.

Features: Eastbound Pacific route closed by Pearl Harbour attack. Westbound route via Lagos possibly available but not used in this case. No arrival date on cover.
Flight WS147 'Ceres' left Karachi 19th December. Mail transferred at Cairo to 'Coriolanus', arriving Durban 24th December 1941.

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Information and photographs about Misamari

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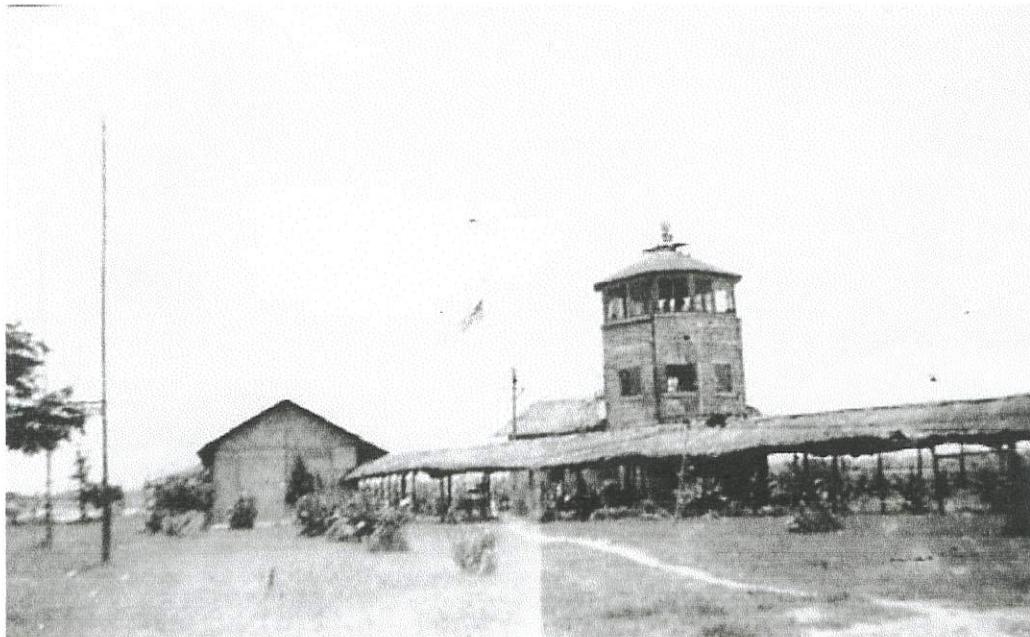


The first photograph is of a C-46 and taken in Misamari, our base. The planes carried drums of gas to China and then brought tungsten back as ballast. In this particular case, for some reason there was no tungsten on the return and the pilot braked too hard. You can see

the results. The props dug into the runway, and the sudden stoppage was not too kind to the engines.

To clarify: they were referred to as storks, e.g. Stork #209. When they landed in China they would report back that way as their identification. I am sure that the Japanese knew all about this.

The other snap is of our



base: one runway and a small tower. We all had to take turns running a switchboard in the tower. I imagine it was for the radio, but none of us were in

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Walt Newman shares some memories

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I was stationed at Misamari, India....this was in Assam where there were a few airfields from which the ATC (Air Transport Command) operated. I was in the first batch to arrive - and in the last to leave. It was my job to burn the records. It was a reverse lend lease base...built by the British, with a very small British contingent of maintenance personnel - but then when we came in, it was brought up to American standards. I was not a pilot, nor part of the flying crew....I was the NCO in charge of Operations; although I did fly the hump as an "observer".

As I recall, the pilots hated the C-46's. When we arrived, we were a group of about 2,000...including flying and other staff. We had 20 (if I remember correctly) C-47's....(DC-3's). Elephants would load barrels of gas onto the planes and they would take off, over the hump, to various fields in China. Usually to Yunannig or Kunming. Then, several months after arriving, we got our first C-46, and eventually all the C-47's were replaced. . I recall the pilots being unhappy with the C-46's because, whereas the 47 could fly with one engine, that was not the case with the C-46...they would go down, if one conked out. . And since they flew over Burma, held by the Japanese - this was a real no-no. As I recall, we lost 90 crewmen during the time we were there. Further, again as I recall, the C-46 had the Curtis electric propeller....and with various icing problems, plus the cargo of highly volatile gasoline in drums (leaking etc.) - they were very unhappy with this electrical function (sparks etc). They flew a part of the trip with oxygen masks; I recall one pilot in particular who had a mask made for his dog, which always accompanied him. He was one who was lost.

The British had an excellent system of getting intelligence throughout that entire region....and they paid natives and others for information about downed pilots. Quite often they managed to retrieve parachutes of downed crewmen....and thereby establishing identities. We had a large status board in the operations office...as the ship left (identified as Stork and the number), we noted it on the board and as it passed over several landmarks, would call in and we could trace its progress. when it arrived in China, we gave a sigh of relief. There were no beacons for them to follow. Over Burma was very dangerous as the Japanese had a patrol of planes flying north-south up to a point identified as Fort Hertz....our pilots, flying east-west were always alerted to stay north of Fort Hertz....but weather conditions often forced them to divert.

Of course I have many memories - and look back on those years with much affection for those with whom I lived for 2 years, and several friends who never returned. Incidentally, another base in Assam was Chabua...these were all close to the Bramaputra River - near the foothills of the Himalayas. When the Dalai Lama escaped from Tibet, I understand he was put up temporarily at the old Misamari airfield. Assam is closed to visitors, and I heard from a local tea planter who I had befriended, that after we abandoned the airfield there (which was just

actual touch with the pilots. I believe only trained personnel did that.

The offices and barracks (or bashas as we called them) were of teak frame, infilled with straw and plaster of some sort. Back in October of 1943 we had a very heavy earthquake with lots of damage in neighboring communities; it was my first and I recall heavy noise as the earth rumbled and the office building where I was on duty just shook all over - hanging lamps swung widely and we all jumped through the windows and out onto the runway. Luckily for us, we had no window glass—just wooden shutters which we closed at times that the dust storms came—but these are other stories.

I am curious as to whether you have had contact from any other CBI'ers. Again, if you have any questions, I will be only too happy to oblige.

[editor's note: an earthquake rocked Assam, India about 11 p.m. on October 23, 1943].



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Contact "The Bicycling Guitarist"

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World War 2 Airmail

Nepal to United States 1944

Cover from APO 489 located at Misamari, Nepal to Albany, despatched 28th November 1944. Misamari was the base from which the US Air Transport Command flew "over the hump" into China, carrying mail and supplies to and from Free China. No additional censorship applied en route and cover probably carried by BOAC and/or Air Transport Command via the Middle East and West Africa to reach New York. Cover contains a locally printed Christmas card depicting Kanchenjunga and endorsed "India-China Division of Air Transport Command."

Rate paid: Carried Free.

