

# U.S. Resumption of Postcard and Letter Mail Service to Europe, 1944-1948

**Purpose:** To show U.S. generated mail sent to Europe upon resumption of postal service, from 1944-1948.

**Scope and coverage:** This exhibit shows examples of postcard and letter mail generated in the U.S. and the Western Hemisphere and dispatched to European countries upon their liberation from German control. It focuses on UPU mail and airmail passing through the New York exchange post office, including registered and special delivery mail. It also includes mail not yet authorized for dispatch that was returned to senders.

**Exhibit plan:** Countries appear in the exhibit in the order that resumption of mail service (usually non-illustrated postcards) was first authorized. Within each country, examples of mail appear in chronological order as additional postal services resumed.

**Background:** During World War II the U.S. maintained postal relations with only ten Allied and neutral nations in Europe. Resumption of mail service to countries under German control began only with the liberation of nations or regions within, beginning in 1944. This process took more than four years to complete.

The decision to resume postal relations to individual nations came from the commander of the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force, General Eisenhower. Postcard mail with personal messages in English or the native language usually came first in order to minimize the burden on censors and transatlantic shipping. Letter mail, airmail, registered, and special delivery gradually followed, usually in that order.

Instructions to local postmasters regarding the nations and types of mail authorized were many, and came often. Because these directives were poorly publicized, many postal patrons remained confused on the type of mail permitted, resulting in significant amounts of mail being returned.

With resumption of special delivery service to Germany on 23 August 1948, the disruption of international service to Europe and the world caused by World War II came to an end.

**Importance:** This exhibit provides new information on the chronology of the resumption of postcard and letter mail to Europe that took place between 1944 and 1948. Personal study drives this presentation.

## ***Postal Cards Now Going To France Once Again***

By The Associated Press.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 4—The United States resumed at least limited postal service to northern French provinces today after an interruption caused by Nazi occupation.

Postmaster General Walker said that non-illustrated postcards in English or French, on personal or family matters, will be accepted for delivery to civilians in these places. (The Army takes care of delivering to its own personnel):

Detail of a *New York Times* (Sept. 5, 1944) article outlining resumed postal service to the Normandy region of France.