

The Suspension of United States Mail to Switzerland 1942 – 1945

With the German occupation of Vichy France in late 1942 the postal relationship between the USA and Switzerland changed drastically. USA Policy was to send no mail through any Axis or Axis occupied territory. Thus, due to the events of November 1942, USA mail to and through France was suspended.

USA Mail to Switzerland was not “officially” suspended. However, USA Mail to Switzerland was an innocent victim of the suspension, because it had to transit either Axis Italy or German occupied France.

At the instant of suspension the USA mail stream for Switzerland stretched from every US post office, through New York and Bermuda to Lisbon. Everything stopped. Mail already in Bermuda was held there pending US instructions. Within the USA, Swiss mail made its way to New York where it was censored and held

This exhibit allows selected covers to demonstrate how the suspension worked and how it finally ended. The story showcases original research, discoveries and publications of the exhibitor.

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The Following Notices Were Issued From the Office of the Postmaster General

FRANK C. WALKER, POSTMASTER GENERAL

SUSPENSION OF MAIL SERVICE TO GERMANY AND ITALY

ORDER No. 16559. December 11, 1941.

Ordered that, until further notice no letters, packages (including parcel post) or other mail matter originating within the United States or its possessions and destined for Germany, or Italy, or addressed to any post office, port, or any place under the control of Germany or Italy, shall be dispatched from the United States, or its possessions, to their respective destinations. All foreign transit mails to and from Germany or to and from Italy or to and from any post office, port, or place under the control of Germany or Italy shall be held at exchange offices. With respect to other foreign transit mails, further instructions will be given exchange offices.

Postmasters at offices of the United States and its possessions are hereby instructed to forward to the appropriate exchange office any mail matter on hand or hereafter received, addressed for delivery in Germany or Italy or to any post office, port, or place under the control of Germany or Italy.

For the present “any post office, port, or place under the control of Germany or Italy” shall be considered as including all of continental Europe except Gibraltar, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and unoccupied France.

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