

WORLD WAR II P.O.W. CAMPS

by
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Over 55 years ago, the United States entered World War II. To most Americans, now, it's something that happened "over there" and is far removed from home. We frequently read books and see movies about our soldiers in Japanese or German prisoner-of-war camps, but few members of the younger generation realize that between 1942 and 1946, the United States held almost 400,000 German, more than 50,000 Italian, and 5,000 Japanese soldiers in P.O.W. camps right here in the United States.



I've been a Military collector ever since I entered the hobby, but my interest was really drawn to P.O.W. camps during a game of bridge a number of years ago. Our opponents, an elderly couple, had actually met and fallen in love in a Japanese P.O.W. camp in the Philippines. Fascinating! And so are P.O.W. camp covers.

There were over 500 such P.O.W. camps in America during the war. One of them was right down the road from here, in Stockton, CA. Not surprisingly, most were located in the western and central states that had wide-open spaces: California, Texas, Idaho, Arizona, Nebraska, Kansas, Wyoming, etc. Although, there were a few in places like Maryland, Wisconsin, and Michigan.

As with most World War II U.S. installations, there are a variety of covers from these P.O.W. camps, although they are definitely scarce compared to the number of camps that existed.

I currently have 6,842 U.S. Military covers, but only know of 9 that actually identify themselves as P.O.W. camps. There are also a number of covers that were issued by such camp locations that don't have any such ID on them, representing, instead, the larger military installation of which the P.O.W. camp was just one portion. For such covers, you'd have to already be aware that those particular locations were P.O.W. centers, and to that end I'm including here a listing of at least the major sites.

As shown here, most of the P.O.W. covers seem to have been 40-strikes. That size was quite common for U.S. military installations during the war, as they doubled as postcards. Whatever the size (and there are some 20-strikes, as well), you could go through your entire collecting career and not see any. Anyone coming across one of these gems would probably be inclined to hang onto it as a curiosity, whether interested in the category or not.

How could you start a collection? First, you have to be a glutton for punishment, because you're probably not going to have much luck...it's going to be s-l-o-w going. I've only seen P.O.W. covers offered once at convention auctions, where just about everything in the hobby goes on the block eventually, and I don't think I've ever seen them offered in club auctions.

Establishing a trading relationship with a Military collector who has considerable trading stock is your best route, but don't be surprised if he wants your first born in return!

Major P.O.W. Camps

Camp Algoma, ID
 Camp Aliceville, AL
 Camp Alva, OK
 Camp Angel Island, CA
 Camp Ashby, VA
 Camp Ashford, WV
 Camp Atlanta, NE
 Camp Atterbury, TN

Camp Como, MS
 Camp Concordia, KS
 Camp Cooke, CA
 Camp Croft, SC
 Camp Crossville, TN
 Camp Crowder, MO
 Camp David, MD
 Camp Dermott, AR
 Camp Douglas, WY
 Camp Edwards, MA
 Camp Ellis, IL
 Camp Evelyn, MI
 Camp Fannin, TX
 Camp Farragut, ID
 Camp Florence, AZ
 Camp Forrest, TN
 Camp Gordon

Johnston, FL
 Camp Frant, IL
 Camp Gruber, OK
 Camp Hale, CO
 Camp Hearne, TX
 Camp Hood, TX
 Camp Houlton, ME
 Camp Howze, TX
 Camp Hulen, TX
 Camp Huntsville, TX
 Camp Indianola, NE
 Camp Jerome, AR
 Camp Lee, VA
 Camp Livingston, LA
 Camp Lordsburg, NM
 Camp McAlester, OK
 Camp McCain, MS
 Camp McCoy, WI
 Camp McLean, TX
 Camp Mackall, NC
 Camp Maxey, TX
 Camp Mexia, TX
 Camp Monticello, AR
 Camp New Cumberland

Camp Beale, CA
 Camp Blanding, FL
 Camp Bowie, TX
 Camp Brady, TX
 Camp Breckinridge, KY
 Camp Butner, NC
 Camp Campbell, KY
 Camp Carson, CO
 Camp Chaffee, AR
 Camp Claiborne, LA
 Camp Clarinda, IA
 Camp Clark, MO
 Camp Clinton, MS

PA
 Camp Ogden, UT
 Camp Opelika, AL
 Camp Papago Park, AZ
 Camp Peary, VA
 Camp Perry, OH



Camp Phillips, KS
 Camp Pickett, VA
 Camp Pima, AZ
 Camp Polk, LA
 Camp Popolopen, NY
 Camp Pryor, OK
 Camp Reynolds, PA
 Camp J.T. Robinson,
 AR
 Camp Roswell, NM
 Camp Rucker, AL
 Camp Rupert, ID
 Camp Ruston, LA
 Camp Scottsbluff, NE
 Camp Shelby, MS
 Camp Sibert, AL
 Camp Somerset, MD
 Camp Stewart, GA
 Camp Stockton, CA
 Camp Sutton, NC
 Camp Swift, TX
 Camp Tonkawa, OK
 Camp Trinidad, CO
 Camp Van Dorn, MS
 Camp Wallace, TX

Camp Wheeler, GA
 Camp White, OR
 Camp Wolters, TX
 Fort Ben. Harrison, IN
 Fort Benning, GA
 Fort Bliss, TX
 Fort Bragg, NC
 Fort Crockett, TX
 Fort Curtis, VA
 Fort Custer, MI
 Fort Devens, MA
 Fort Dix, NJ
 Fort Dupont, DE
 Fort Eustis, VA
 Fort Gordon, GA
 Fort Greely, CO
 Fort Jackson, SC
 Fort Kearny, RI
 Fort Knox, KY
 Fort Leavenworth, KS
 Fort Leonard Wood,
 MS
 Fort Lewis, WA
 Fort McClellan, AL
 Fort Meade, MD

Fort Niagara, NY
 Fort Oglethorpe, GA
 Fort Ord, CA
 Fort Patrick Henry, VA
 Fort Reno, OK
 Fort Riley, KS
 Fort Robinson, NE
 Fort D.A. Russell, TX
 Fort Sam Houston, TX
 Fort Sheridan, IL
 Fort Sill, OK
 Fort F.E. Warren, WY
 Edgewood Arsenal,
 MD
 Elgin AAF, FL
 Glennan General Hosp.
 OK
 Halloran General Hosp.
 NY

Hampton Rds Port of
 Embark., VA
 Holabird Signal Depot,
 MD
 Indiantown Gap Mil.
 Res., PA
 McCloskey General
 Hosp., TX
 Memphis General De-
 pot, TN
 New Orleans Port of
 Embark., LA
 Olmsted Field, PA
 Pine Bluff Arsenal, AR
 Richmond ASF Depot,
 VA
 Tobyhanna Military
 Res., PA

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