



Military Corner

Army Air Forces

The Army Air Forces (AAF) came into being on June 20, 1941, six months before Pearl Harbor. As war approached, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson and Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall saw the need for a stronger role for Army aviation. Consequently they created the Army Air Forces with General H. H. (Hap) Arnold as its head.



The Army Air Forces thus replaced the Air Corps as the Army aviation arm and, for practical purposes, became an autonomous service. All World War II Army aviation training and combat units were in the AAF. About 2.4 million men and women served in the AAF. Around 600,000 of these were members of other branches, such as Engineers, Ordnance and Quartermaster. (The official history published after the war is entitled *The Army Air Forces in World War II*.) For those Military collectors really in the AAF branch, there's a list of 1,417 airfields/air bases used by the Army Air Forces, searchable by state, country, territory, and units assigned, at <http://www.armyairforces.com>. Could be very helpful in identifying certain cover locations, etc. Here's a good one for identifying units: <http://www.aafha.org/airforces.html>

Since the switch from Army Air Corps to Army Air Forces occurred just before the US entry into World War II, and because there weren't many Military covers before then anyway, almost all the

Army Air covers are AAF. In fact, since there was an overlapping use of the same logos, it's almost impossible to tell an AAC cover unless it specifically says it on the cover.



The listing, as an aside, categorizes over 900 covers just related to Army Air Fields and another handful related to Army Air Bases, so they're relatively common within the Military category.

.....More comin'!