

Mike says "British Forces in Egypt - from 1932 to 1951 British Forces were able to send letters to the UK and Ireland at a reduced rate. For this purpose in 1936 the Egyptian postal authorities issued special Army Post stamps bearing King Fouad's portrait. This cover, which I bought quite cheaply at one of the monthly Ripley village hall stamp fairs, shows an unofficial use of the stamps."

BRITISH FORCES IN EGYPT – 1936-1941

Cover of personal letter to US Secretary for War, Henry Stimson

This wartime cover bears four 10 milliemes stamps of 1939 covering the airmail concession rate for mail from service personnel to the Empire. It is addressed to the USA which was not authorized as a destination for the use of Army Post stamps. The addressee is The Hon. Henry L. Stimson (September 21, 1867 – October 20, 1950) who was the United States' Secretary for War from 1940 to 1945. The sender is unknown, but this appears to have contained a personal letter.



The cover bears several marks:

- The stamps have the date stamp of Field Post Office 173 for 11 December 1940 (11 DE 40). FPO 173 served army and Royal Air Force units stationed around Moascar and Ismailia on the Suez Canal.
- Two censor markings: a square PASSED BY UNIT CENSOR 293 handstamp and a smudged Deputy Chief Field Censor round purple handstamp.
- A Cairo circular date stamp. The date is indistinct but appears to be 12 DE 40, one day after the FPO date stamp. From Cairo the cover is likely to have been flown to Singapore by BOAC, then to Sydney by QUANTAS and on to the United States by Pan Am.

The two pale-red vertical stripes at the top of the cover are similar to marks seen on some mail of the period from a chemical applied to reveal invisible ink – maybe associated with the addressee at a time when the USA was not engaged in the war?