

## Invalid Use of Government Life Stamps on Overseas Mail - Part 2

Following on from Part 1 on this topic, the Government Life cover illustrated below was sent by airmail to Canada affixed with 2s.4½d. in Government Life stamps. The airmail rate to Canada via British Commonwealth Pacific Airlines was 1s.6d. per half ounce in August 1947.



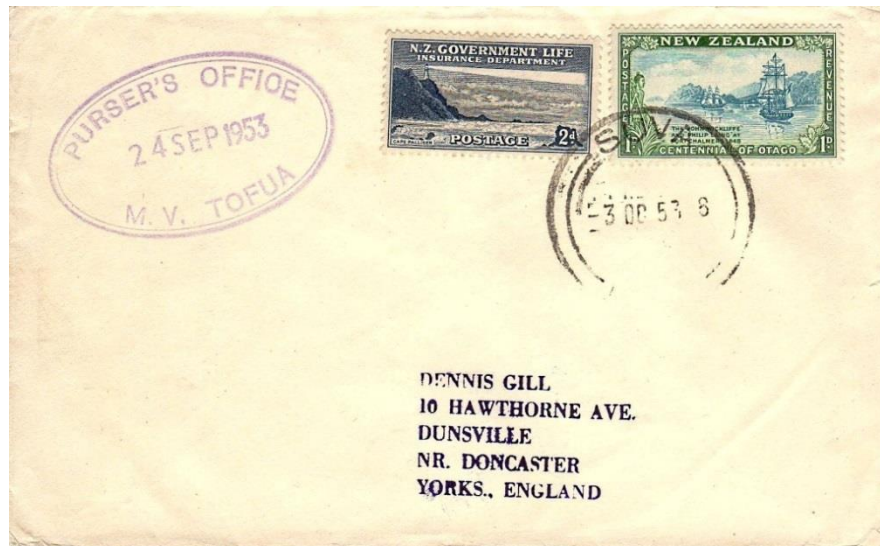
However, the Government Life stamps were invalid for payment of postage for letters sent overseas. This was picked up by postal authorities in Wellington and the letter was rated 1s.6d. short paid which resulted in a tax charge of 360 centimes (18 pence x 2 x 10 centimes per pence) being determined. The reverse side of the cover features an explanatory note that reads “Govt Life Ins stamps not admissible outside NZ” (initiated) “MS”.



The front of the cover has a Toronto Station K receiving postmark dated AUG 18 1947 while the back has 72¢ in Canadian postage due stamps affixed to pay the deficient postage at an exchange rate of 5 centimes per Canadian cent.

Unlike the cover to Olmsted Falls discussed in Part 1, this cover to Toronto shows no evidence it passed through the Returned Letter Office. The Government Life stamps are tied with faint impressions of the Wellington C.1. date stamps, and so, one may conclude that the letter was routed through normal channels to Canada.

The third Government Life cover in my collection forwarded to an overseas destination has a clever twist to it. I suspect the sender knew that Government Life stamps were invalid for letters to overseas destinations so, through subterfuge, he/she arranged to have the letter below posted at sea, specifically on the Union Line's M.V. Tofua en route to Fiji. The cover features a 2d. 1947 Life Stamp together with a single 1d. 1948 Otago Centennial to pay the ruling 3d. surface letter rate to England, is duly postmarked 3 OC 53 in Suva and then forwarded to North Doncaster in Yorkshire. I presume the thinking here is that it would be unlikely that Fijian postal workers would be familiar with the fact the Government Life stamp was invalid for use on letters outside of New Zealand and would process the letter for onward transmission to England in the normal way.



So that's the story of my collection of covers sent overseas with Government Life stamps affixed. Stephen Jones' article in the CAPTAIN COOK February 2015 issue notes that in many cases the postal authorities in overseas destination countries did not bother to affix postage due stamps to Government Life covers despite them having been clearly marked as deficient in postage by New Zealand postal authorities. It may well be that the local receiving post offices were generally unaware that Government Life stamps were invalid for overseas postage and, in light of all the stamps on the cover which would more than pay the letter rate from New Zealand, they may well have thought that the deficient postage mark was mistakenly placed on the cover.

In the case of my two covers where postage due is affixed, the Toronto cover has a very helpful note (likely provided by New Zealand postal authorities) advising the Government Life stamps are invalid while the Olmsted Falls cover described in Part 1 had a standard US Post Office postage due instruction to collect 4¢ thus relieving the Olmsted Falls postmaster of any doubt as to whether he/she should charge the postage due.

In closing, after reading Stephen's article, I consider myself quite fortunate to have acquired the two Government Life covers with postage due stamps affixed and, with luck, who knows, I might be on a hot streak and locate another one or two over the next decade!

I would like to express my appreciation to our Editor, Stephen Jones, for his kind assistance and time taken to respond to my request for further information about the New Rochelle cover. I would also like to thank my colleague, Pat Skinner, for his contributions on matters related to the New Zealand George VI period.

*Stephen F Prest*