

## THE STILWELL HIGHWAY

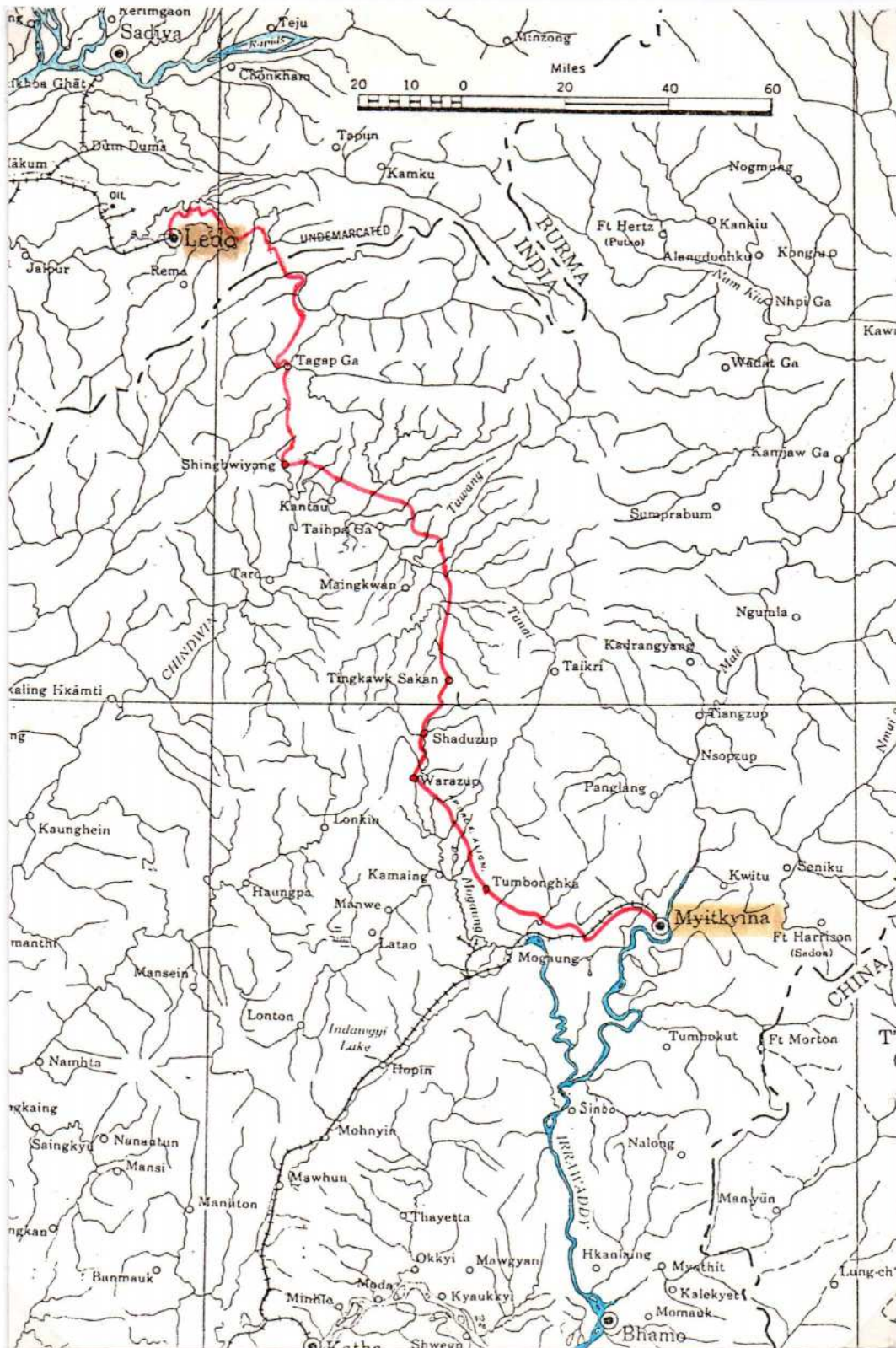
In 1937 as Japan attacked China and closed its ports, the need for a new supply route from China to India became urgent. The Burma Road was opened in 1938 and by 1940 it was graded, gravelled, and bridged to carry ten tons. Bullied by Japan the British (still neutral) responded to Japanese pressures by closing the 117 mile Burma section in July – October 1940. In 1942 Japan conquered Burma, in large part to end the traffic. Enter British General Sir Archibald Wavell the Supreme Commander of the Far Eastern Theatre who agreed with the U.S. General Joseph Stilwell to build the Ledo Road from China to Northern India via the Burmese town Myitkyina (captured in August 1944) which meant the completion of the venture was possible. The Ledo Road was opened on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1945 and the first convoy of vehicles led by General Pick from Ledo reached Kunming in China on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1945, over the next seven months 35,000 tons of supplies in 5,000 vehicles were carried along it. The Ledo Road was renamed the Stilwell Highway in early 1945 at the suggestion of the Chinese Premier Chiang Kai-Shek.



General Joseph Stilwell Commander of the Chinese – American Division after whom the Ledo – Myitkyina Road was called “The Stilwell Highway”.

# THE STILWELL HIGHWAY

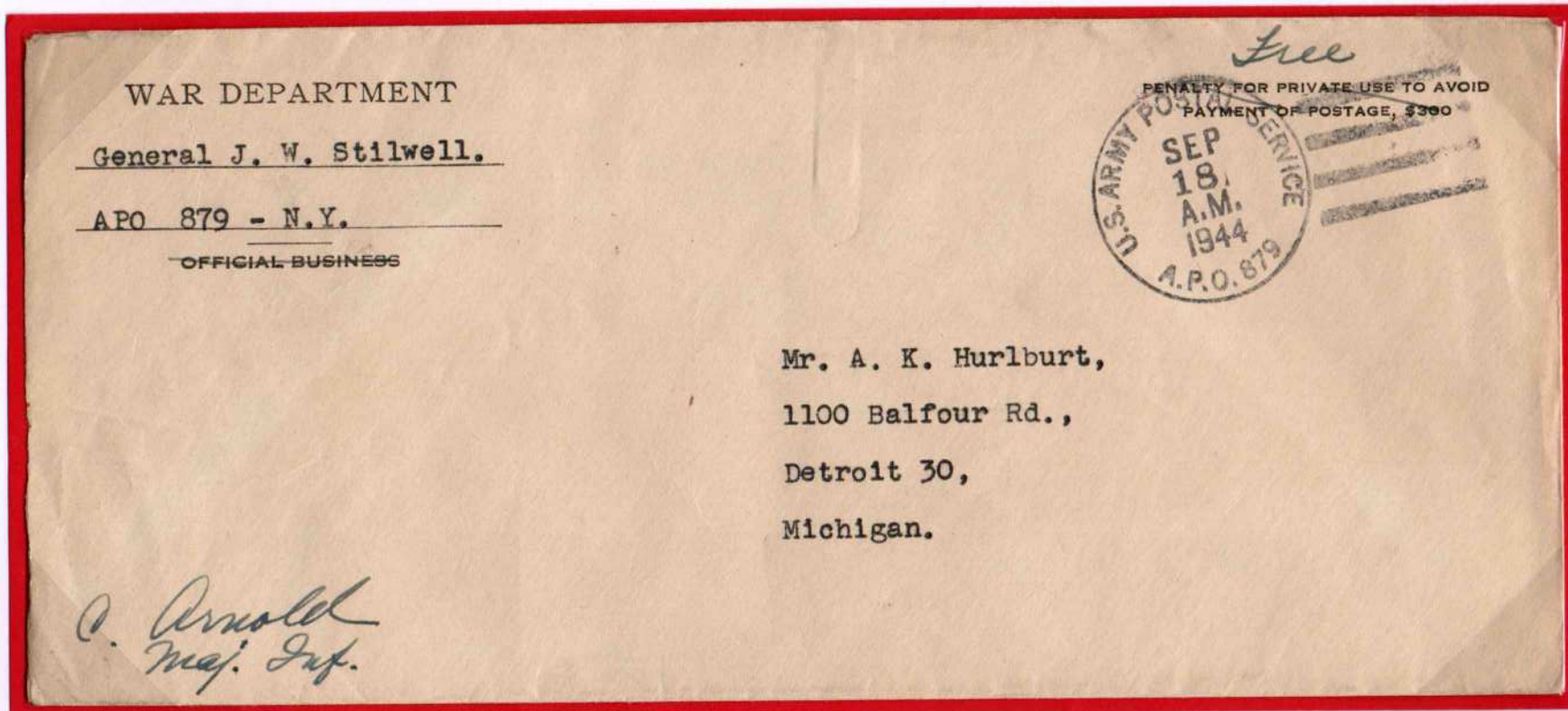
Map showing the Ledo – Myitkyina Road “The Stilwell Highway”



The following is mail from the American Forces which were part of the Chinese – American Division under the command of General Joseph Stilwell which made this venture possible.

THE STILWELL HIGHWAY  
GENERAL JOSEPH STILWELL

At the outbreak of World War II, General Stilwell became General Chiang Kai-Shek's Chief of Staff and was placed in command of the Chinese Fifth and Sixth armies in Burma. Throughout the war he served as Commanding General of all U.S. forces in China, India and Burma, and was Commander of the Chinese - American Division building the Ledo Road an Allied supply route from China to Northern India via the Burmese town of Myitkyina. The Burma Road was renamed the Stilwell Highway in his honour.



War Department cover from General Joseph Stilwell, A.P.O. 879 N.Y. on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1944 to Mr. A. K. Hurlburt. Detroit, one month before he was replaced by General Albert C. Wedemeyer on 19<sup>th</sup> October 1944. Cover signed by C. Arnold, Major. Infantry.

At the request of the Chinese Premier General Chiang Kai-Shek President Roosevelt replaced General Stilwell with General Albert C. Wedemeyer. On 18<sup>th</sup> June 1945 General Joseph Stilwell was appointed Commander of the U.S. Tenth Army in the Pacific Theatre where he received the surrender of more than 100,000 Japanese troops in the Ryukyu Islands.

General Joseph Stilwell died on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1946 [aged 63] in San Francisco, California, following surgery for stomach cancer.

## THE STILWELL HIGHWAY

Identical envelopes from A.P.O. 689 at Ledo  
Showing the badge of the Chinese - American Division  
Of which General Joseph Stilwell was Commander.



As the covers were free of postage they would be sent by surface mail.

**THE STILWELL HIGHWAY**

**Ledo Road, North Burma.**

Ledo Road, North Burma,  
December 12, 1944.

Dear Joe,  
Just received your V mail of Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> &  
was quite surprised they sent you over-  
seas so soon. You can see we've moved  
this little pocket of Uncle Sam's is run-

Capt. Charyn O-52089,  
1880<sup>th</sup> Engr. Wn. Bn.,  
APO 689-40 PM - N.Y.



J. H. Spiegelberg S.K.,  
CBDA 610  
F.P.O. San Francisco, Calif.

Charyn

pick the damndest times to come  
over. When they do Mother Earth really  
gets her share of hugging.

That's all for tonight. Drop a line  
when you can.

Regards  
Harold

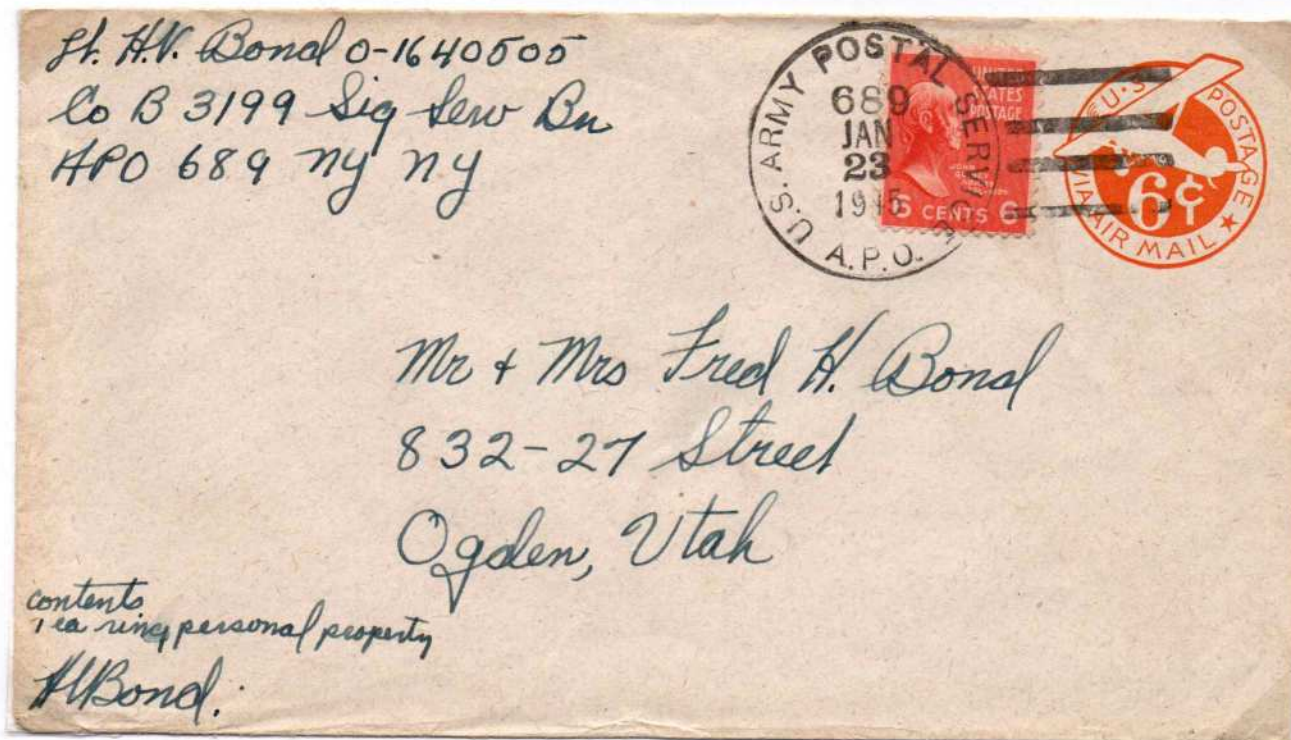
6 cents Air Mail cover with letter headed "Ledo Road, North Burma December 12<sup>th</sup> 1944"  
from Captain Charyn, U.S. Army Engineers Corps with envelope signed by him.  
The cover was posted from A.P.O. 689 on December 14<sup>th</sup> 1944

# THE STILWELL HIGHWAY

A.P.O. 689 Ledo, Western terminus of the Stilwell Highway.



Air Mail standard rate 6 cents. Passed by U.S. Army Examiner.



Double weight Air Mail 12 cents. Contents 1 ring personal property.

# THE STILWELL HIGHWAY

V ---Mail

Exclusively for the American Forces

The sender wrote on the pre - printed form which was then microfilmed to save on air freight. At the destination it was printed photographically one quarter original size and delivered by post to the addressee.

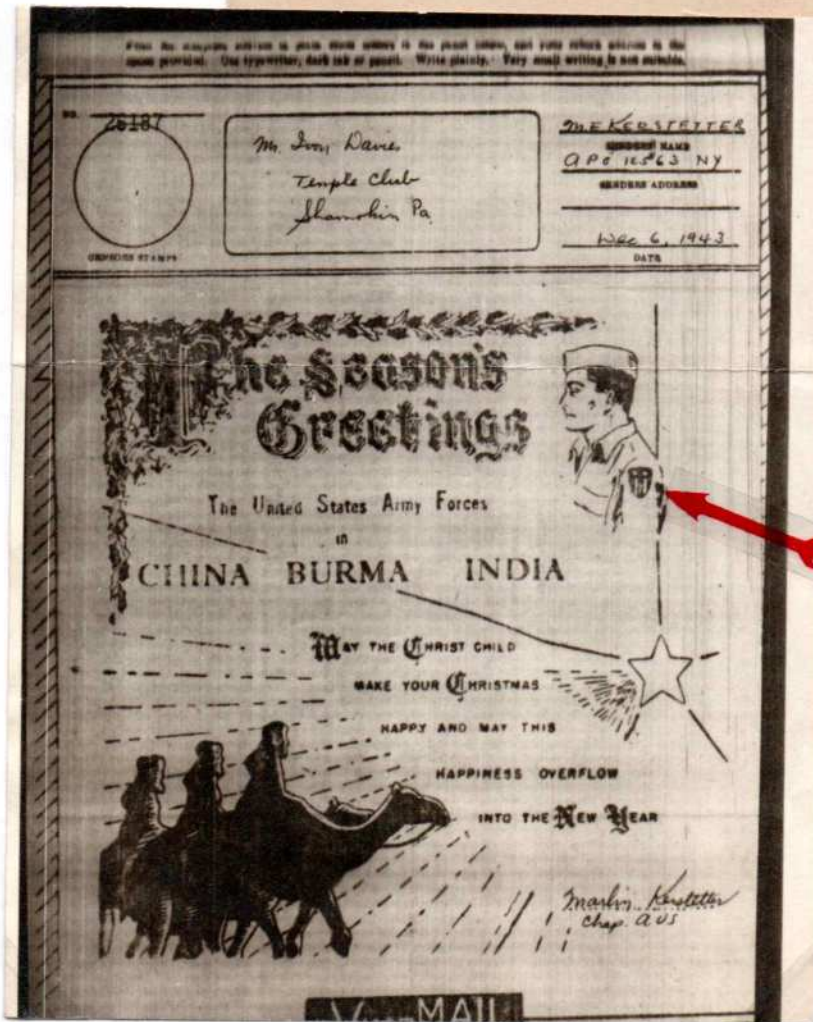
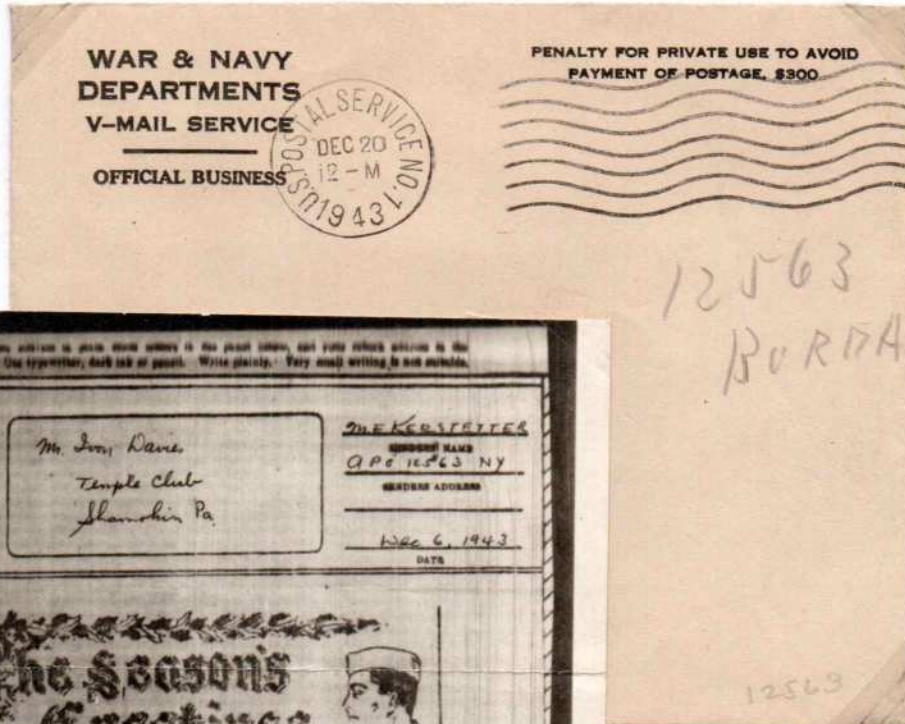


The shield inscribed "CHINA BURMA INDIA" was the badge of the Chinese - American Division commanded by General Joseph Stilwell. In the extreme right hand lower corner in manuscript is the single word BURMA.

# THE STILWELL HIGHWAY

V--Mail

The American equivalent of the British Forces Airgraph  
With original delivery envelope mailed by Chaplain Martin Kerstetter  
On 20<sup>th</sup> December 1943.



Note the "shoulder flash" of the Chinese - American Division  
Commanded by General "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell.

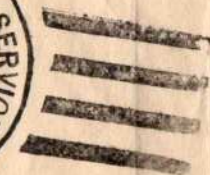
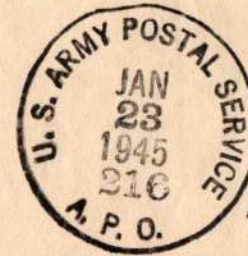
**THE STILWELL HIGHWAY**

**U.S. Army Tenth Air Force Burma.**

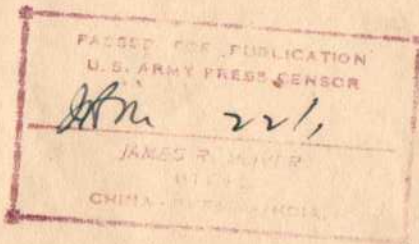
**HEADQUARTERS TENTH AIR FORCE**

PUBLIC RELATIONS SECTION  
APO 465, c/o POSTMASTER,  
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

**OFFICIAL BUSINESS**



**PRESS RELEASE FROM THE 10th U. S. A. A. F. IN INDIA**



*Inquirer  
Bedford, Pa.*

**Posted from  
A.P.O. 216  
also located at  
Myitkyina.**

**Last line of censor's  
in left corner reads:-  
CHINA, BURMA,  
INDIA.**

**Awed Burmese Tribesmen  
Watch the U.S. Army Tenth  
Air Force land with supplies  
For Ground Troops in  
Northern Burma.**

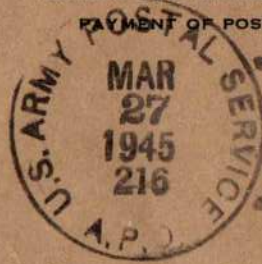


U. S. Army Signal Corps, Official

**Awed Tribesmen Watch C-47's of U. S. Army Tenth Air Force Land with Supplies for Ground Troops in Northern Burma**  
Naga hillsmen receive a reward of 100 rupees in silver for every forced-down American flyer they rescue from the jungle (page 685).

WAR DEPARTMENT  
WAR DEPARTMENT  
C.G. Tenth Air Force

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID  
PAYMENT OF POSTAGE, \$300



OFFICIAL BUSINESS

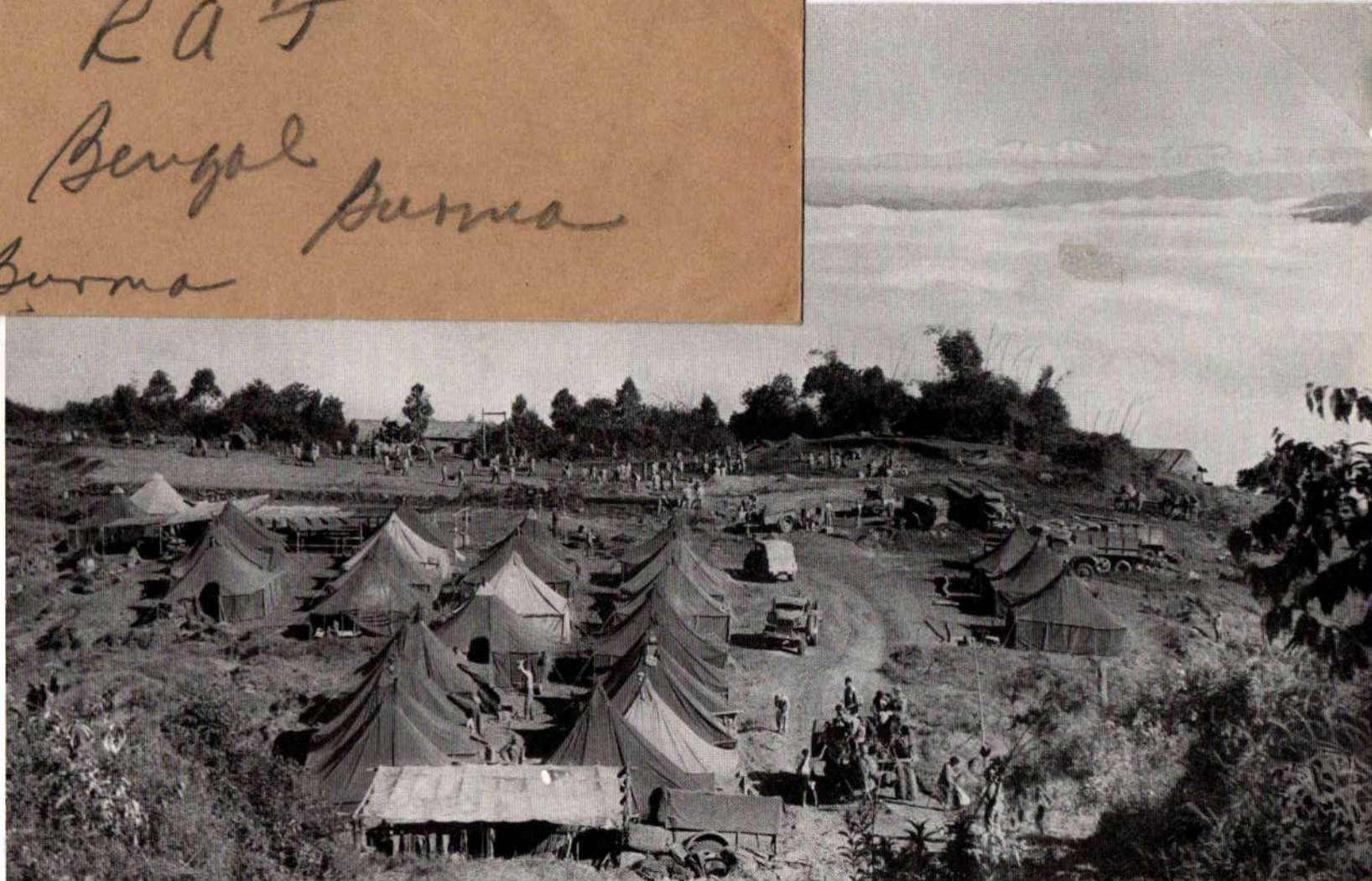
HQ  
RA 7

Bengal  
Burma  
Burma

## THE STILWELL HIGHWAY

U.S. Army Tenth Air Force Burma

War Department official paid cover Posted from A.P.O. 216 on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1945 located at Myitkyina. The U.S. Tenth Army Air Force supplied the air cover during the construction.



U. S. Army Air Forces, Official

### Chinese Coolies Transform Burmese Wilderness into a Hand-built Airstrip above the Clouds

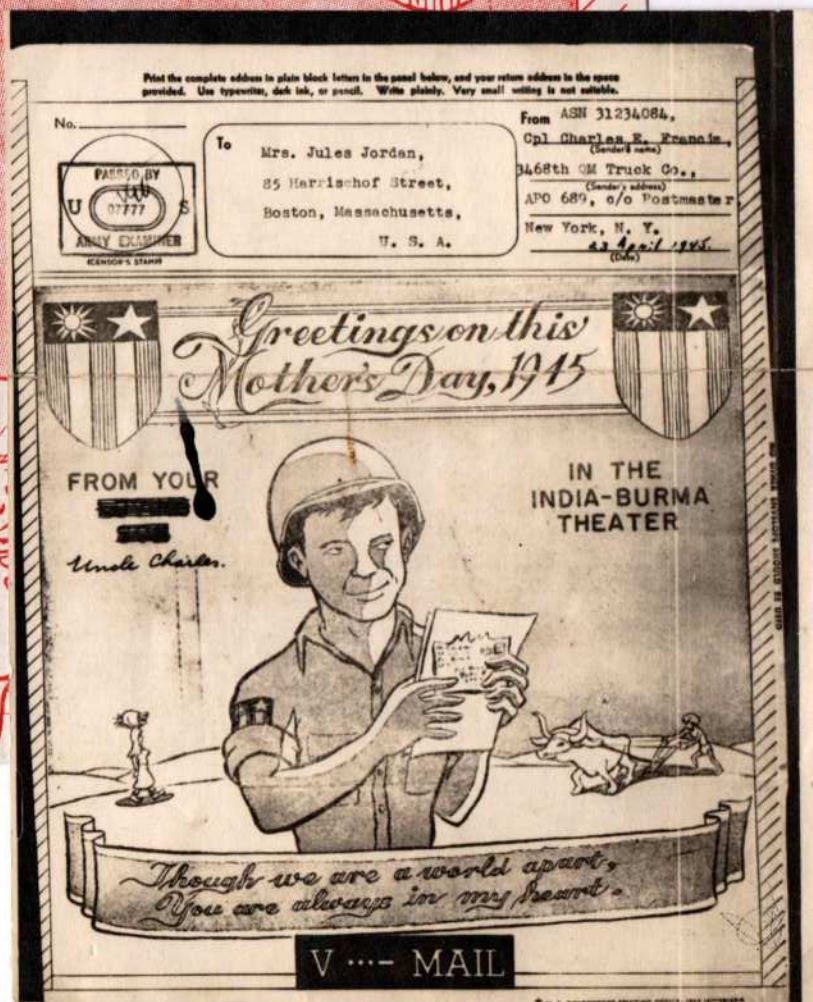
They carry baskets of earth from the hillock at right to fill in the strip at extreme left. U. S. Army Engineers make themselves at home in the tent village. One, center, chops wood for the cookstove. Today, transport planes stop at this field to refuel as they wing between China and India.

THE STILWELL HIGHWAY

Special V – Mail Greetings Form for Mother's Day 1945  
For use by the American Forces of the Chinese – American Division.

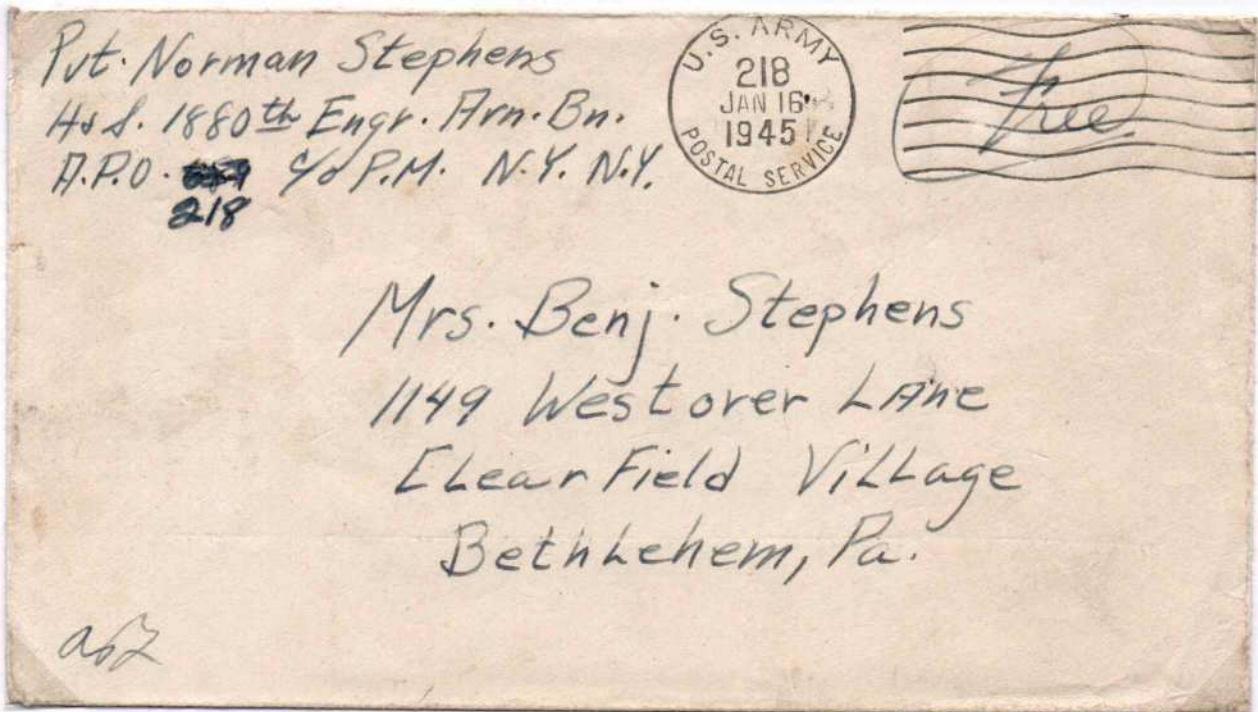


1945 Mother's Day V – mail from Corporal Charles Francis, A.P.O. 689 Ledo, to Mrs Jules Jordan, Boston, Mass. U.S.A.



THE STILWELL HIGHWAY

A.P.O. 218 Myitkyina, Eastern terminus of the Stilwell Highway.

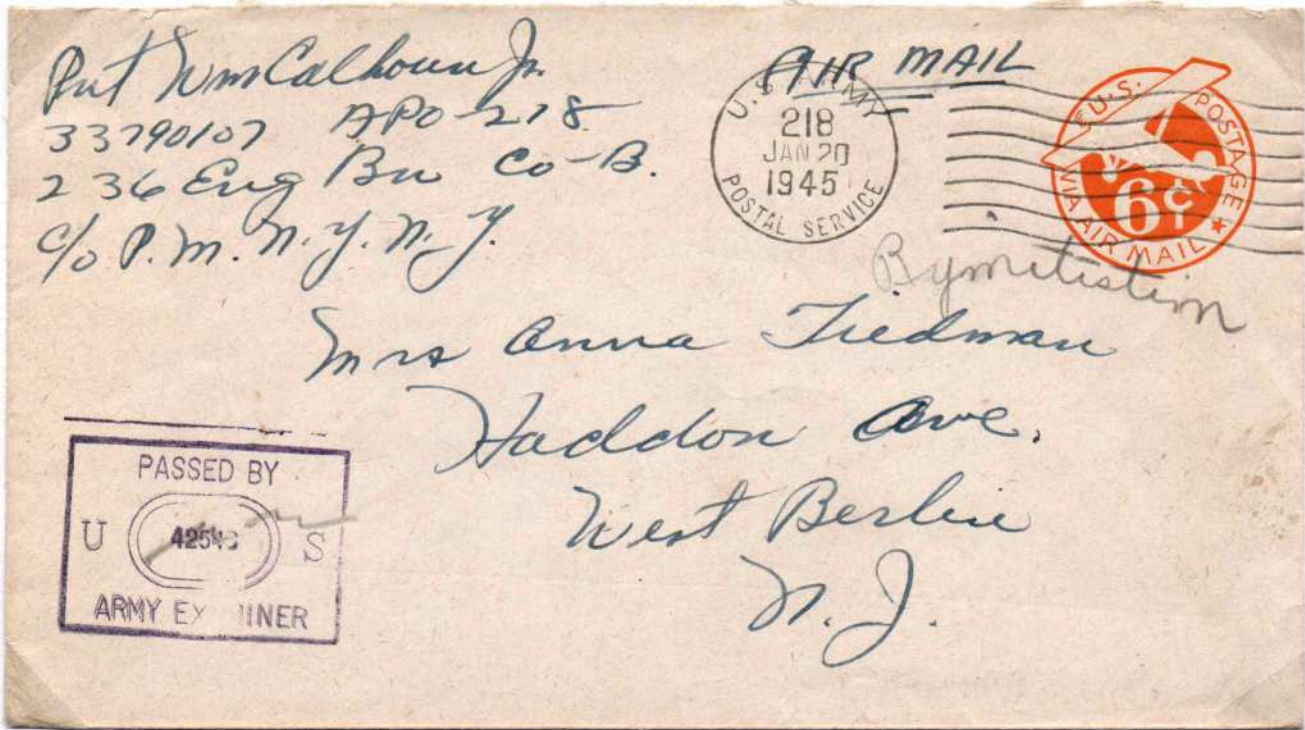


Note the sender's address A.P.O. 689, (Ledo) is crossed out and A.P.O. 218 (Myitkyina) has been substituted where it was then posted on Jan 16<sup>th</sup> 1945.



By 1945 it was in order to include the location in the address – Bhamo, Burma, A.P.O. 218, but the letter posted from A.P.O. 689 at Ledo on Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> 1945 after the surrender of Japanese forces and the end of the war in the Far East.

THE STILWELL HIGHWAY



From A.P.O. 218 (The Myitkyina end of the road)  
Both charged at the 6 cents normal rate.

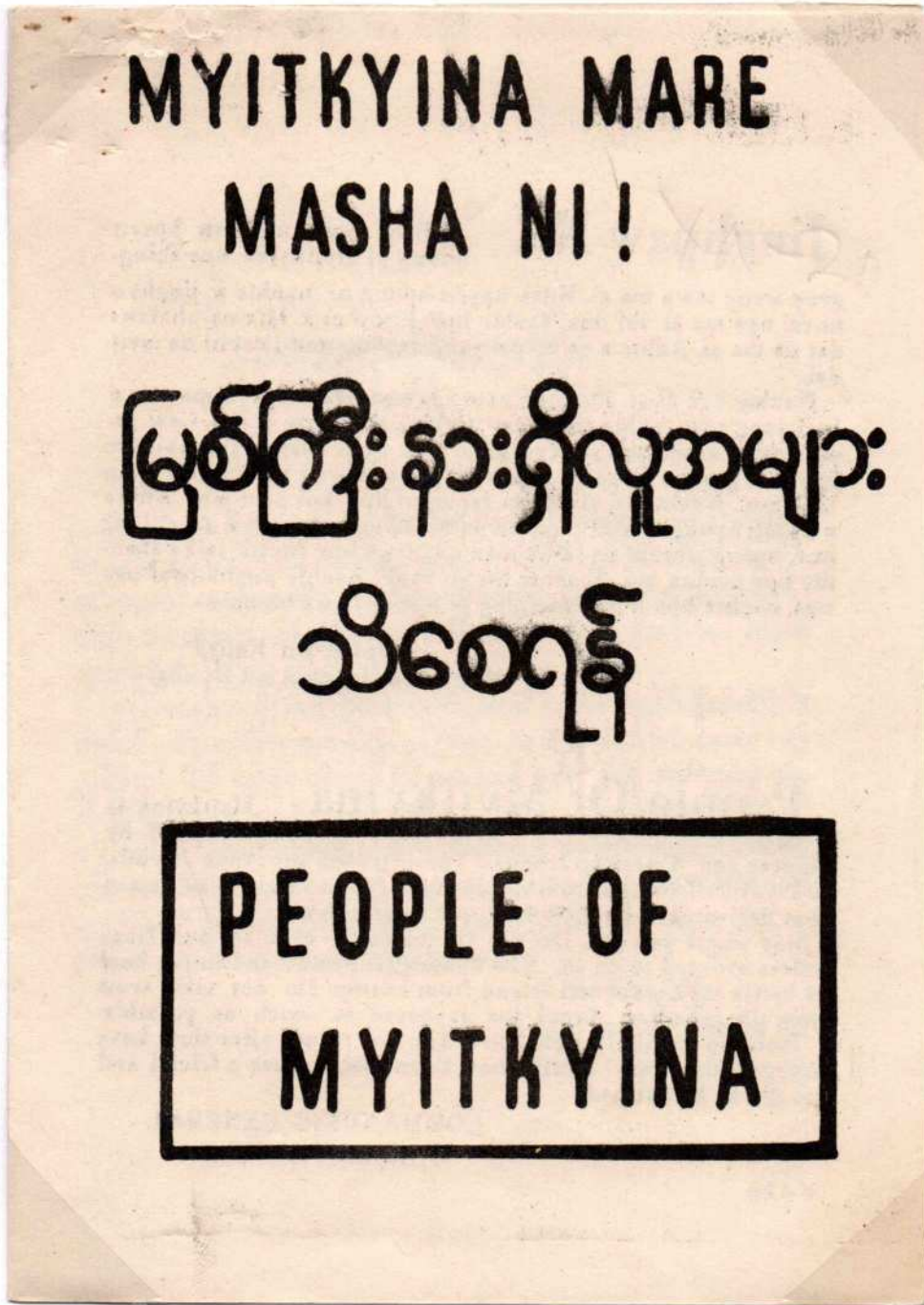


THE STILWELL HIGHWAY

DROP LEAFLET

U.S. Office of War Information, Psychological Warfare Team drop leaflet for the  
People of Myitkyina.

BURMA



AMERICAN TROOPS

The bearer of this leaflet is a Myitkyina refugee. Do not  
harm him. Turn him over to the proper authorities.

COMMANDING GENERAL

Myitkyina Task force

## THE STILWELL HIGHWAY

**Brig. Gen. Lewis A. Pick** builder of the Ledo section of the “Stilwell Highway” which his troops dubbed “Pick’s Pike” sits beside the driver of the lead jeep of the first convoy to cross the Burma – China border.



**When the convoy reached the frontier town of Wanting on 28<sup>th</sup> January 1945 T.V. Soong brother of Mee Chiang Kai – Shek cut a tape across the road and the trucks passed onto Chinese soil.**

**When the Ledo – Myitkyina Road opened it replaced the old Burma Road from Lashio – Chunking closed in 1940 to appease Japan which was China’s lifeline to the arms factories of Britain and America.**

## THE STILWELL HIGHWAY



**Ambulances, Jeeps and mobile Artillery are all in the first  
Full scale overland convoy from the Ledo Railhead into  
China for 2½ years**