

Some paper currency and chits of WWII Allied Bases in the Pacific

by Tony James

THE Second World War was fought on many fronts, Europe, Africa in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. While to the European countries the Pacific was a long way away, the US and Australia were only too well aware of the Japanese advances in South East Asia and, against a different foe, the conflict had different characteristics.

This article is but a brief tour of Allied bases in the Pacific during WWII, and a look at the currency used including some improvisations. It does not claim to be exhaustive but a representative selection of how military formations and civilian populations affected by them adapted to a peculiar situation.

Australia

At the commencement of WWII the headquarters of South West Pacific Command (SWPC) was in Melbourne. From April to July 1942 MacArthur had his General Headquarters at the Hotel Australia in the central business district. Afterwards he moved to Brisbane, because it was the northernmost city in Australia with the necessary communications facilities. The Australian War Cabinet and the Australian forces however remained in Melbourne at their headquarters at Victoria Barracks for the period of the war.

With the Japanese advances in the Pacific Australia assumed greater strategic importance and became the launching pad for many of the Allied attacks.

Melbourne was host to American troops on rest and recreational leave (R&R). It was here that the term originally used in the United Kingdom "over-paid, over-sexed and over here" was commonly applied to the US Marines who stayed in Melbourne after the Guadalcanal campaign in the Solomons.

More than a million American troops passed through Australia during the war and they were paid in Australian currency. This influx meant that the Australian mint could not keep up with the demand for currency and so between 1942 and 1944 the Australian government obtained silver coinage struck at the US mints in Denver and San Francisco. Prisoners of war and internees in camps used vouchers and specially struck coins.

Australian chits at camps and bases

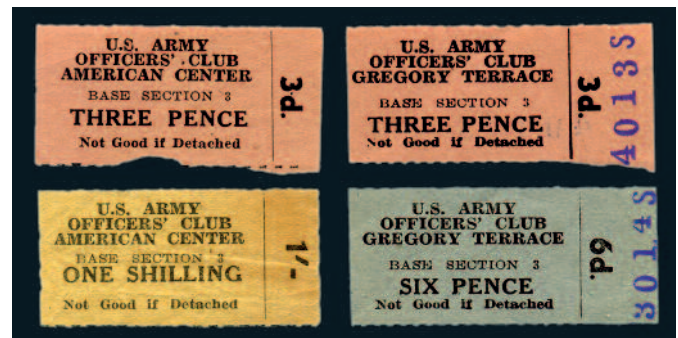
With the movement of the headquarters of SWPC to Brisbane, larger numbers of troops and HQ staff moved north as well, and huge troop camps were set up. One, named Camp

Base Number	Location
Base Section 1	Darwin
Base Section 2	Townsville
Base Section 3	Brisbane
Base Section 4	Melbourne
Base Section 5	Adelaide
Base Section 6	Perth
Base Section 7	Sydney

Doomben, was situated next to Eagle Farm Airfield and another, named Camp Ascot, is now Eagle Farm Racecourse.

Australia was divided into Base Sections by the Americans for distribution of supplies and personnel, and Brisbane was located in what was known as Base Section 3.

The two examples of Officers Club chits produced by the American forces are shown here.



US Army Officers' Club at American Center and Gregory Terrace

The American Center, which I would hazard a guess might be the main officers club and the identified Gregory Terrace Officers' Camp on Gregory Terrace in Spring Hill were using a system of chits that were already established practice in military clubs.

The interesting comparison is with the series in use at the Waterloo Officers' Mess Brisbane. They were on paper as opposed to card, much larger than the American issues, and had a very different design. They were much more like those used in such Australian military installations as POW and internment camps, military convalescent depots, and the RAAF Officers Mess chits for Port Moresby which have been discovered.

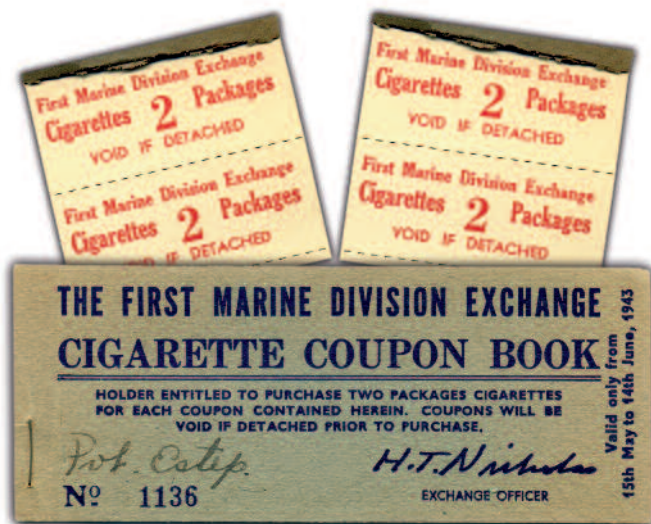
The Waterloo Officers Mess was situated in the Waterloo Hotel, Brisbane, and included an annex that housed the US Navy Bachelor Officers Quarters (BOQ) in Wickham Street.

New Hebrides

Examples of chits from the American Naval Officers Club on the island of Espiritu Santo illustrate the sophistication of some of the island bases. The build up that occurred with the



Naval Officers Club Espiritu Santo New Hebrides 5 & 10 cents



Cigarette coupons for US Marine Corps 1st Division R&R in Melbourne

advance of the American forces and their ancillary support services brought logistical systems not seen before in warfare.

Gilbert and Ellice Islands (Kiribati & Tuvalu)

The islands comprised Gilbert, Ellice, Ocean, Fanning, Washington, Christmas and Phoenix. The phosphate plant on Ocean Island was bombed by the Japanese and with the threat of invasion the acting resident commissioner was required to make annuity payments for native inhabitants without any funds from Australia. He therefore instigated production of currency by a mimeograph process on different coloured paper. A recent discovery of some of these notes has revealed that there were 1/-, 2/-, 5/-, 10/- and £1 notes on un-watermarked paper, with the embossed seal of the High Commissioner for Western Pacific. The notes are signed by the Acting Resident Commissioner R.H.Garvey and an unidentified treasurer.

The Pound comes in two types-Type I with lines above and below the ONE POUND value, (references SCWPM5 and Schwan/Boling 1533a) and Type II has lines below the ONE POUND value only (SB 1533b). A total of £5,000 is reported to have been created and numbered with a rotary hand stamp.

The islands were later invaded by the Japanese and the workers evacuated by the French. The receipts were redeemed and holders reimbursed in Sydney with Australian currency.

Fanning Island

The Fanning Island emergency issue of £1 notes produced by the manager of the Fanning Island Plantations Limited were printed in Hawaii with R. G. Garrett's signature and used to pay local labour. Complete notes are very scarce and it is thought that after the war, the notes were cut in half and used as theatre tickets since bisected notes have been found with 1/- in blue crayon and 2/- written in red crayon. There was a garrison of New Zealand troops on the island during the war.

Fiji

The history of Fiji paper currency during WWII would fill a book (see *Paper Money of Fiji* by Rogers & Cantrell IBNS 1989). The US and New Zealand troops stationed there soon caused a desperate shortage of coinage and thus an emergency issue of 1d, 1/- and 2/- notes. New Zealand 10/- and £1 notes were also overprinted. When a shipment of coins from the US failed to arrive the US authorities were forced to make an issue of coupons and the local businesses issued their own small change tokens. These were all possibly printed by the same



Grand Pacific Hotel Token issue 1d, 3d and 6d values

printer as the similarity of styles would indicate.

Other issuers were the Garrick Hotel, Lilac Theatre, Morris Hedstrom Ltd and B.P. (S.S.) Co. Ltd (Burns Philp South Seas Co Ltd) as well as the Defence Club, Lautoka Hotel, McDonald Hotel and Melbourne Hotel

Japan and Korea

The Allied Invasion currency for Japan was prepared in the USA and troops carried these notes upon landing on the Japanese mainland. The whole design, printing and issue of Allied Military yen currency was codenamed Operation Toy Horse. The same notes were used for Korea, the only difference being that those used in Korea bore the A underprint while the



One Yen ticket type canteen chit, Australian Army Canteens Service, British Commonwealth Occupation Forces, Japan

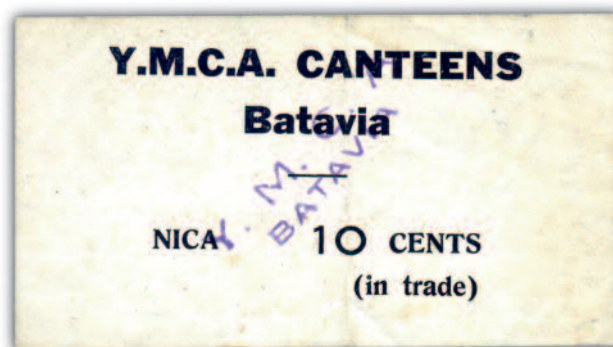
B underprint was intended for use in Japan and the Ryukyu Islands. The issue was used from 1945 until 1948 in Japan and until 1958 in the Ryukyu Islands.

The British Commonwealth Brigade Occupation Forces also used the first series of British Armed Forces Special Vouchers in its postwar occupation of Japan. Australia, as the longest serving and commanding headquarters of the British Brigade also had its own ½, 1 and 2 yen ticket type canteen chits issued by the Australian Army Canteens Service. The recent discovery of another Allied Military Occupation Currency in Yen currency, designed but not produced by the Australian government, has emphasized the contribution that Australians made in the post war occupation of Japan.

Netherlands East Indies

The Japanese invasion of the former Dutch colony of the Netherlands East Indies meant that the 1943 government-in-exile currency was not used until liberation in 1945. This Netherlands Indies Civil Administration currency is referred to in this interesting canteen chit issued by the YMCA Batavia.

The liberated country was unusual in that it continued to use the Japanese invasion money even after the surrender of the Japanese forces. This was due to the independence movement and conflict that commenced as soon as the war ended and the need for the economy to maintain a viable currency for the population.



YMCA canteen chit for 10 cents expressed in Netherlands Indies Civil Administration currency.

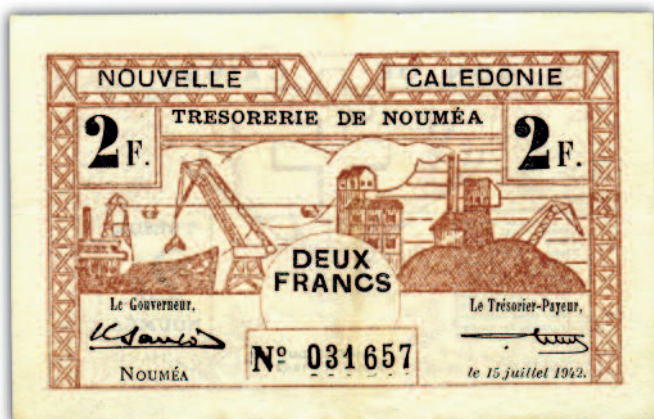
New Zealand

New Zealand Forces were deployed in the Pacific as well as with Australian troops in Europe. New Zealand issued local chits issued for its military camps in New Zealand as well as coinage and tokens for its POW camps. The M.S.Sobieski troop ship sailed from New Zealand to Egypt several times and ship's currency chits appear from time to time on the market in 1d and 3d denominations.

Individual New Zealand military units, such as the 39th Battalion while in Koumac in New Caledonia, the 2nd New



Hawaii Overprints on \$1, \$10 and \$20 dollar notes of 1934/35



New Caledonia 2 franc Issue 1942

Zealand Convalescent depot canteen and the 3rd New Zealand Division Signals regiment, all of which were situated in Noumea, issued several kinds of chit.

The Banque l'Indochine was the note-issuer for New Caledonia, French Oceania, and New Hebrides. There were also some Treasury issues and Bon de Caisse issues in Oceania and Noumea.

France could not guarantee its own supply of notes and so it placed orders with the Commonwealth Note Printer, Melbourne, Australia and the American Banknote Company in the US.

Philippines

The Japanese invading forces brought their own currency to the Philippines and the Philippines guerilla forces used their own currency during their resistance. Some of this was utilized at the end of the war, while the emergency currency brought by the US forces added to the mix. When MacArthur



Philippines One Peso Victory issue SCWPM 44

returned to Leyte Island on October 20 1944 he also brought the Philippines Victory issue.

USA

As can be seen, with the arrival of the US forces in Australia, there was an established procedure in their military administration. Once a rear echelon base was established and troop and officer facilities built, a currency system was put in place. The first emergency currency produced by and for the US was the Hawaiian overprint. This series of \$1, \$5, \$10 and \$20 notes were produced as an economic defence measure in July 1942 in case of Japanese invasion. The large overprint on the back and smaller bold print on the front were printed on the 1934 issue of Federal Reserve Notes (\$5, \$10, \$20) and 1935 Silver Certificate notes (\$1)

Post-war, the US Forces were stationed in China, Hong Kong, Korea and Japan. Mess chits were issued for the Marine Corps in North China, at Tsingtao (also in northern China) and a multi-nation naval base and for the US in Shanghai.

Motive for use

The use of mess and canteen chits played a valuable role in controlling currency, to control usage by qualified personnel and also to ensure security of funds where national personnel were employed in the facilities. They helped keep theft and improper use to a minimum, since accounting for chits at the end of a shift was safer than counting cash in the local or hard currency, and it discouraged black marketeering. In addition the sudden influx of large numbers of troops to a small island or city was a drain on local supplies of currency and during wartime it was often difficult to obtain extra amounts of cash.

The study and collecting of emergency and military currency notes is a lesson in fiscal, economic and historical significance.

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5c, 25c, & 50c mess chits, U.S. Marine Corps Officers' Club, North China