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Sailors sort boxes during a mail call aboard the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower in the Arabian Sea. (U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Ryan D. McLearnon)

250 Years of Service: The Postal Service's Enduring Commitment to Connecting Service Members and Loved Ones

The U.S. Mail is essential to military morale

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Postal Service highlights its long and proud history of ensuring a vital connection between American service members and their loved ones back home. From the battlefields of the Revolutionary War to modern-day global operations, the mission to deliver mail to the military has remained a cornerstone of U.S. postal history and a crucial morale booster.

“Ever since George Washington and Benjamin Franklin were appointed to lead the Army and the Post Office, we’ve had a strong partnership built on service to the American people,” said USPS Historian Steve Kochersperger. “When away from home, to get a handwritten card or letter that was in the hands of your loved one just a few days before, maybe it even has a smear of lipstick or a scent of their perfume — no email can do that.”

The tradition of supporting military mail runs deep. During the Civil War, the Post Office Department coordinated with the U.S. Army to organize mail flow, recognizing its immense value in maintaining troop morale. A “Soldier’s Letter” program was introduced that allowed soldiers to send letters without stamps,

with payment collected from the recipient, ensuring communication was not hindered by lack of postage. In addition, postal money orders allowed soldiers to securely send money back home, and absentee ballots allowed them to cast their votes from distant battlefields.

The system evolved dramatically with the scale of global conflicts:

- **World War I** saw the creation of the Military Postal Express Service, the first all-military mail service, which established numerous Army Post Offices across Europe. Between July 1, 1917, and June 30, 1918, the Post Office Department dispatched 35 million letters to the American Expeditionary Forces.
- **World War II** introduced the innovative **V-Mail** (Victory Mail) service. To conserve precious cargo space on transport ships and aircraft, letters were microfilmed, shipped as compact rolls, and then printed at their destination. This process saved approximately 98% of cargo space compared to traditional mail, with more than a billion V-Mail letters delivered between 1942 and 1945.
- In the **Korean and Vietnam wars**, the volume of mail was unprecedented, with up to 11 tons of mail pouring into the Korean theater daily. Innovations continued with services like Space Available Mail and Parcel Airlift to manage the massive volume efficiently.
- The modern **APO/FPO/DPO** system (Army/Air Force Post Office, Fleet Post Office and Diplomatic Post Office) continues this legacy, with the USPS collaborating closely with the Military Postal Service Agency, established in 1980, to ensure reliable delivery across more than 85 countries.

Today, the Postal Service provides specific guidance and resources for families and friends sending care packages to military addresses. Free military shipping kits, addressing tips, and APO/FPO/DPO-specific restrictions are available to help bridge the distance. To learn more about current military mail guidelines and access shipping supplies, visit the [USPS Military & Diplomatic Mail information page](#).

Lastly, from the Revolutionary War through the Afghanistan conflict, the Postal Service has a long history of providing career opportunities to veterans, reservists and their family members. USPS is proud to be one of the [largest civilian employers](#) of America's veterans. Their dedication, discipline and commitment to service enriches our organization and strengthens our connection to the communities we serve.

Postal Products

Customers may purchase stamps and other philatelic products through the [Postal Store](#) at usps.com/shopstamps, by calling 844-737-7826, by mail through [USA Philatelic](#) or at Post Office locations nationwide. For officially licensed stamp products, shop the [USPS Officially Licensed Collection on Amazon](#). Additional information on stamps, first-day-of-issue ceremonies and stamp-inspired products can be found at StampsForever.com.

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Please Note: The United States Postal Service is an independent federal establishment, mandated to be self-financing and to serve every American community through the affordable, reliable and secure delivery of mail and packages to more than 170 million addresses six and often seven days a week. Overseen by a bipartisan Board of Governors, the Postal Service is celebrating its 250th year of service to customers amidst a network modernization plan aimed at restoring long-term financial sustainability, improving service, and maintaining the organization as one of America's most valued and trusted brands.

The Postal Service generally receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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