

Meters "On the ICE"

Postage Meters used at Antarctic Bases



Figure 1. First NZ Scott Base Roneo Neopost Meter



Figure 2. First US South Pole Pitney Bowes Meter Most Readable Known Impression. Used on a Parcel.

The Exhibit

The exhibit presents covers/pieces with prints of each meter unit used "On The Ice" plus those used at the unique APO at Christchurch airport between the 1980's to 2009. Souvenir covers, while plentiful for this period of time, were seldom franked with the station's postage meter. Commercial mail/parcel examples can be quite challenging and the exhibit has seven items generously provided by former Antarctic workers and researchers.

Postage Meter Use In Antarctica

At least 25 countries have maintained research bases on the Antarctic continent and maintained post offices at these bases. Many countries also have produced postage stamps that could be considered postage for these "territories". However, only three bases have ever been known to have postage meters installed at the station post offices. These are the New Zealand Scott Base on Ross Island and US bases at McMurdo (sharing Ross Island) and at the South Pole. Nine postage meter units were used at these bases.

Meter Use at New Zealand Scott Base

New Zealand Post Office maintained an office at Scott Base until 1987. The meter model used at Scott Base was an older Roneo Neopost model dating to about 1954. It is not clear how long that meter resided at Scott. In 1987 the NZ post office closed the office at Scott due to cost considerations and removed that meter. The base canteen obtained a more modern Framatrans meter in 1987 and it was used until 1992 when the PO insisted on inspecting the meter monthly. Impractical due to the distances. Meters may not have been used much at this very small station. Only special event examples from these two meters are published.

Meter Use At US Antarctica Stations

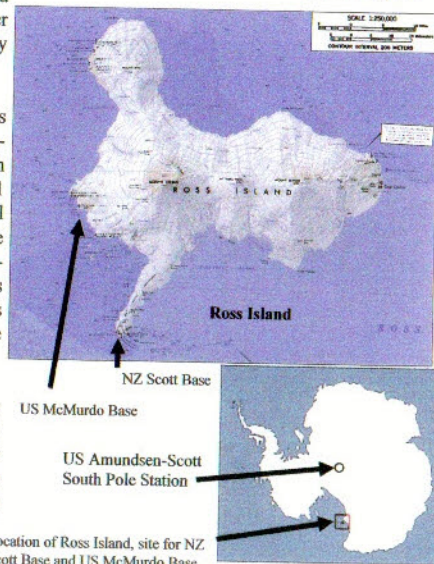
Two Pitney Bowes meters were reportedly introduced at McMurdo and South Pole Stations about 1987. Impressions from the McMurdo meter, if it existed, have never been reported. Impressions from the South Pole meter are known very poorly inked, but a few are good enough to read the meter serial number confirming that it was moved out of South Pole about 1991 and is known at McMurdo from 1995 to 2000 and it was replaced with modern PVI postal equipment in 2000. At South Pole, a succession of four different Pitney Bowes meters were used from 1987 thru 2009. A total of seven postage meter units used at the two bases. Hundreds of stamped collector covers were prepared, but only about 30 metered collector covers known. Early meter use was low at these bases. Now they are small cities. Meter usage has become about 60%, mostly on parcels. Both bases were Navy FPO until 1998 and Air Force APO after 1998. Note that FPO/APO post offices operate largely as if they are on US soil.

Christchurch US Air Force Post Office

The Christchurch airport is the jump off point used for US Air Force Antarctic supply flights. The US Air Force maintains an APO post office inside that airport which is used heavily by travelers to overcome strict flight weight limits. It is the only foreign post office on New Zealand soil and is available only to personnel traveling to and from the US bases and former Antarctic workers settled in New Zealand and processes 240,000 lb of mail per year. This base was Navy FPO until 1998 and Air Force APO since. This post office is included due to its unique mission.

Exhibit Outline

	Dates of Use
New Zealand Scott Base	
Roneo Neopost Frankmaster 305	197?-Sept 1987
Framatrans	Sept 1987-1992
Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station	
Pitney Bowes 5300 serial 3345117	1987 thru 1991
Pitney Bowes 5300 serial 3345249	1998/1999 season
Pitney Bowes 6900 serial 5407172	1999 thru 2005
Pitney Bowes DM 100	2005/2006 season
Pitney Bowes Personal Post	2006 thru 2009
McMurdo Station	
Pitney Bowes 5300 serial 3345117	1995 thru 2000
PVI	2000 thru present
Christchurch Air Force Post Office	
Pitney Bowes 5300	19?? Thru 2000
PVI	2000 thru present



New Zealand Scott Base

Before 1987



Roneo Neopost Meter at Scott



Scott Base 25th Anniversary

Date: 20 January 1982 Scott Base

Franked with Roneo Neopost Frankmaster 305 and canceled with special anniversary cachet, Meter serial number 108.



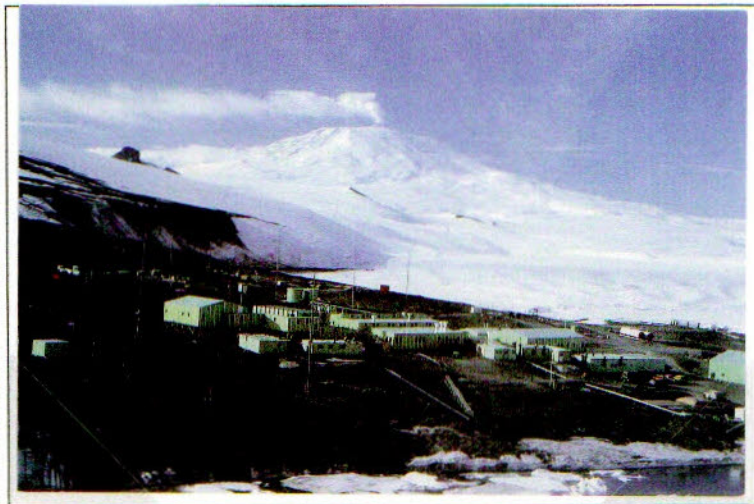
Roneo Neopost Model Frankmaster 305.

Roneo Neopost Serial 305 at Scott Base before 1987

New Zealand Scott Base was built in 1957 on Ross Island near the existing US McMurdo "Operation Deep Freeze" base. Ross Island is the volcanic island occupied by the active volcano Mt. Erebus. A post office was always maintained as part of the base. A Roneo Neopost Frankmaster 305 serial number 108 was used at the base. This model dates back to 1954 but it is not clear when this unit was actually installed. It may have always been part of the post office but apparently seldom used. The only published examples are collector covers prepared for the Scott Base 25th anniversary.

The New Zealand Post Office closed the Scott Base Post Office for financial reasons in September 1987 and removed this postage meter.

Postcard showing New Zealand Scott Base with active volcano Mount Erebus in the distance



New Zealand Scott Base

1987 thru 1991



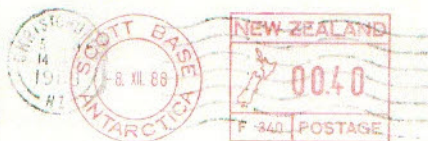
Frama Meter at Scott 1987-1991



New Zealand Scott Base

When the Scott Base Post Office closed in 1987 the station Canteen Council bought a newer Frama postage meter and which was placed in the canteen. In 1992 the NZ post office insisted on inspecting the meter monthly rather than at the end of the season. A logistical impracticality. The Canteen Council returned the postage meter in 1992.

Mail from Scott base was entered into the NZ mail stream like any mail bag from a corporate mailer and canceled at Christchurch.



Canterbury
Museum

ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION
SOUTH VICTORIA LAND. 1988/1989
K221

TAINUI
Box 16-385
Hornby
NEW ZEALAND

Addressed collectors cover

Date: 8 December 1988 Scott Base

14 December 1988 Christchurch

Franked at Scott Base using the Frama postage meter number F340. Canceled at Christchurch as it enters mail-stream. Canterbury Museum, a natural history museum, conducts projects in Antarctica.

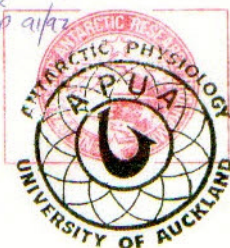
Meter Used as Cancellor

Scott Base often seems to have used the Frama meter as a canceller for stamped mail.

Addressed cover to USA

Date: 10 December 1991 Scott Base

Not canceled at Christchurch



JANICE HARVIS
P.O. Box 2103
Cinnaminson, NJ 08077 USA

Addressed cover to UK.

May Have Carried a Letter.

Date: 5 February 1989 Scott Base

7 February 1989 Christchurch

Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station

FPO AP 96692/APO AP 96598



PB5300 Models at South Pole
Serial 3345117 used 1987-1991
Serial 3345249 used 1998/1999

Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station

The station has been continuously occupied and operated by the US Navy since 1956 in 'under ice' buildings on top of 9300 ft ice layer. Larger building with Dome started in 1975 but eventually damaged by moving ice. Navy Zipcode FPO AP 96692 (1991 to 1998). Used Air Force Zipcode APO AP 96598 after 1998. New base built 1999 to 2007 under authority of United States Antarctic Program.



Pitney Bowes Meter Tape used on Parcel
Date: 18 November 1989 South Pole
Rate: \$4.05 Domestic Parcel 4 lbs Zone 7.

Unaddressed Operation Deep Freeze Cachet

Date: 22 January 1991

Rate: 25 cents first oz + 20 cents incremental
45 cents for two oz

Paid \$0.20 Meter plus \$0.25 Postal Envelope

Pitney Bowes Model 5300 Serial 3345177.

One of the very few examples with readable serial number. This Pitney Bowes Model 5300 unit installed about 1987 and used until 1991. Moved to McMurdo about 1995.



Air Polarogramme—NSF Chalet at McMurdo

Date: 20 January 1999 South Pole

21 January 1999 South Pole

21 January 1999 South Pole Backstamp

9 February 1999 South Pole

16 February 1999 McMurdo Backstamp

Rate: \$0.33 Domestic First Class Letter

Manuscript "First Day of the Reissue of the Meter Postage at South Pole."

Pitney Bowes Model 5300 Serial 3345249

After 8 years without a postage meter this meter was installed and used just one season 1998/1999. APO AP 96958 used after 1998.



Amundsen-Scott South Pole

APO 96598



PB Model 6900
at South Pole

Pitney Bowes Model 6900 Serial 5407172

This postage meter was used from January 2000 thru January 2004. The South Pole Post Office in 2000 shows the PB Model 6900 on the counter. www.south-pole.com.



Postcard—FPO AP 96598 In Error

Date: 13 February 2000 FPO AP 96598

Rate: \$0.20 Domestic Postcard

The meter was delivered using the old Navy FPO designation in the townmark. An error. This was replaced the next season with the proper Air Force APO designation.



**SOUTH POLE,
ANTARCTICA**



POLE STATION

"I am hopeful that Antarctica in its symbolic robe of white will show forth as a continent of peace as nations working together there in the cause of science set an example of international co-operation."

Admiral Byrd



Historic flight to the South Pole, Antarctica 70 years ago,
18th / 29th November 1929
by Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd



Scott F. Smith
South Pole Station
PSC 488 Box 400
APO AP 96598-5400

Air Force APO AP 96598 Correction in 2000/2001 Season

Date: 4 December 2000 South Pole

Rate: \$0.33 Domestic First Class Letter

The meter's townmark was corrected from the erroneous Navy FPO error. This cover commemorates the Admiral Byrd flight in 1929.

Amundsen-Scott South Pole APO 96598



PB Model 6900
at South Pole



Chilean Expedition traverse from Chilean Base Punta Arenas to the South Pole.
Date: 5 December 2004 South Pole
Rate: \$0.70 International Airmail Letter (IMM 29)
The Chilean exploration team traveled from their Punta Arenas base to the South Pole and then returned during the 2004/2005 season.

Chilean cachets on reverse of postcard.



Postcard-First Polar Helicopter Landing
Date: 17 December 2003
Rate: \$0.23 Domestic Postcard
Postcard commemorates rescue landing.
Aircraft subsequently crashed requiring further evacuations.

New and Old Stations Postcard (Reverse)

The old under the ice South Pole Station (Dome) built it 1975 was damaged by moving ice. Replaced by new base started in 1999. Postcard shows new station (yellow building) half finished as of 2003.



Helicopter on return trip crashed 193 km north of Patriot Hills
Injuries to both explorers required medivac to Punta Arenas.

**SOUTH POLE,
ANTARCTICA**

FLYING TO EXTREMES
POLAR FIRST

POLAR FIRST at SOUTH POLE



100th Anniversary of flight special helicopter flight to South Pole by Colin Bodill & Jennifer Murray



Scott F Smith,
South Pole Station
PSC 468, BOX 400
APO AP 96598-5400
USA

Amundsen-Scott South Pole APO 96598



PB Model 6900
at South Pole

Package Piece from South Pole

Date: 4 December 2003 APO 96598

Rate: \$13.24 Total

\$11.55 Parcel Select 51lb Zone 4

\$1.70 Parcel Air (DMM58 10Aug03)

An Antarctic worker sends personal items home perhaps for Christmas. The station store had a few gift items in stock by this time.

The Pitney Bowes model 6900 limits postage to \$9.99, requiring two meter tapes.

Pitney Bowes DM100 Postage Meter

Date: 1 January 2006 South Pole

Rate: \$0.80 International First Class Letter

Semi Official USPS Cover.



PB DM100 at South Pole
Used 2005/2006 season.



Pitney Bowes DM100 at South Pole

The semi digital PB Model 6900 had to be replaced as part of the Meter Migration Mandate. The fully digital model DM100 was installed in September 2005. However, this model requires full telephone support. South Pole only has telephone support for a few hours a day. The unit was removed in February 2006.



Pitney Bowes Model DM100
Postage Meter

John Howell
2 Browns Road
Kingston, Tas, 7050
AUSTRALIA

Amundsen-Scott South Pole
APO 96598



Pitney Bowes Personal Post

This model is not so demanding on resources but became obsolete January 2009 as part of the US "Meter Migration Mandate".



Pitney Bowes Personal
Post Postage Meter



Station Dedication Cover

Date: 21 December 2006
Rate: \$0.84 International First Class Letter
Construction of new "above the ice" station completed in 2006/2007 season.

Parcel Front From the South Pole Station

Date: 3 November 2008
Rate: \$17.67 Domestic Parcel 12lb Zone 8 (DMM300 12May08)
SAM. Military "Space Available Mail" by air overseas.
Parcel of belongings sent home. Recovered from box in the attic.

E. HAN DYER NJ 07936



From:
Bill Spindler, RPSC
South Pole Station
PSC 468 Box 400
APO AP 96598

SAM

U.S. MAIL
PS LABEL 136
FEB. 1971



DESTINATION

SFO
SAN FRANCISCO
CALIFORNIA (USA)

WEIGHT

5.4

VIA

United States Postal Service Customs Declaration May be opened officially		CN 22 See Instructions on Reverse	
Do not duplicate without USPS approval			
Cut		Cut	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gift <input type="checkbox"/> Documents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other		<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial sample	
Quantity and detailed description of contents (1)	Weight (2) lb. oz.	Value (3) (US \$)	
7-341-125 40810 HEADPHONES FIRST AID KIT 2nd AID KIT + RPOWERS	11 7	2.0 2.0 2.0 2.5	
For commercial items only If known, HS tariff number (4) and country of origin of goods (5)	Total Weight (6) lb. oz.	Total Value (7) (US \$)	
	11 7		
I, the undersigned, whose name and address are given on the item, certify that the particulars given in this declaration are correct and that this item does not contain any dangerous article or articles prohibited by legislation or by postal or customs regulations. Date and sender's signature (8) 3 NOV 08 [Signature]			

PS Form 2976, January 2004

To:
Bill Spindler
c/o Kathy Spindler
511 Hiscock St
Ann Arbor MI 48103

McMurdo Station

APO AP 96599



PB Model 5300 Serial 3345117

A. Rowell
c/o OPP
McMurdo, Antarctica

HAPPY HOLIDAYS 15:10 12/19/95



Earliest Known Season With Postage Meter

Date: 7 December 1995

Postage: \$0.32 Domestic First Class Rate

Postage Meter impression from the first season that meter number 3345117 is known to be used at McMurdo.

Postage

Second Season

Date: 20 October 1996

Postage Meter impression from meter number 3345117 during its second season at McMurdo.

Dr. F. ERNEST E. ANGINO

Dr. G. Druschhoff
Dept. Geology, Univ. Kansas
Lawrence, KS. 66045



Prof. E. Angino
Water Resources Center
Geology Hall 1039
Univ. Kansas
Lawrence, KS. 66045
USA



Pitney Bowes Model 5300 moves to US McMurdo Base

The McMurdo post office was operated by the US Navy from 1957 with a complex zip code history. From 1991 to 1998 used FPO 96599. After 1998 the Air Force took over using the zip code APO AP 96599.

The Pitney Bowes Model 5300 serial 3345117 that had been used at South Pole Station from 1987 was moved to McMurdo and is known to have been used there from 24 August 1995 to 17 October 2000.

This meter was replaced with modern PVI postal meters as mechanical meters became obsolete in 2000.

Reportedly another PB Model 5300 meter was present at McMurdo from 1987 but impressions from that unit have never been published.



Pitney Bowes Model 5300 Postage Meter, a mechanical unit.

McMurdo Station APO 96599



PB Model 5300 Serial 3345117

Scott F Smith
P.O. Box 24833
Denver CO 80224



**South Pole
Antarctica**

Gary Pierson
P.O. Box 978
LaConner WA
98257-0978

Postcard. World Flags at South Pole

Date: 21 October 1999 McMurdo

Rate: \$0.33 Domestic First Class Letter Rate

Posted at McMurdo using the Model 5300 postage meter.

Postcard of McMurdo Station as seen from Observation Hill. Known as Mac Town, it houses about 1100 scientists and support personnel during the Austral Summer. About 200 during winter.



South Pole
ANTARCTICA



**PAR AVION
AIR MAIL**

Scott F Smith,
South Pole Station
PSC 468, BOX 400
APO AP 96598-6400
USA

Elaborate McMurdo Cover

Dates: 17 October 2000 McMurdo

18 October 2000 McMurdo

Rate: \$0.33 Domestic First Class Letter

Elaborate cover prepared in October 2000

using McMurdo meter 3345117. Reverse

(shown below) contains note that delivery

was delayed one year due to illness of a

clerk.

USAP (US Antarctic Program) operates the bases as shown in circular sticker.

Cachet also depicts a USAF KC-10 Tanker refueling a C-141 cargo aircraft, an essential support operation for many round trip supply flights.

THIS LETTER DELAYED FOR 1 YEAR BECAUSE
OF A PHYSICAL AILMENT AFFECTED UPON
THE PHILATELIC CLERK.



McMurdo Station Post Office dated 2000. PVI screen shows at left. Photo by Scott Smith.

McMurdo Station APO 96599



USPS PVI Meters at McMurdo

What is a PVI?

Since the late 1990's the US Post Offices have used postage meters made by MOS/Unisys. These units include keyboard, touch screen, scale and printer. Generally known as a Postage Validation Indicia (PVI) Pinter.

PVI Imprint McMurdo Post Office.

An Opened Letter.

Date: 28 December 2006

Rate: \$0.39 Domestic First Class Letter

Package Piece with PVI imprint McMurdo Post Office Zip Code 96599

Date: 27 August 2009

Rate: \$29.88 24 lb 11 oz Parcel Post.

SAM Space Available Mail air cargo.

Note that package senders from Antarctica usually use their home address in the US for the return address and not the base address.

R.D. HALC

McMURDO STATION
PSC 469 BOX 700
APO AP 96599



0000

66045

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
APO, AP
96599
DEC 28, 06
AMOUNT

\$0.39

00020845-01

U.S. MAIL

PS LABEL 136, February 1971
PSN 7690-05-000-4406

DESTINATION

SFO
SAN FRANCISCO
CALIFORNIA (USA)

WEIGHT

11.3

VIA

SYD UA9587
SFO UA870



LC4430407605

United States Postal Service Customs Declaration

May be opened officially

See Instructions on Reverse

CN 22

Do not duplicate without USPS approval

Contents (1) ☒ Gift ☐ Commercial sample ☐ Documents ☐ Other

Quantity and detailed description of contents (1)	Weight (2) lb. oz.	Value (3) (US \$)
Gifts shoes mugs shirts		40

For commercial items only
If known, PSN number (4) and country of origin of goods (5)

Total Weight (6)
(US \$)

40

I, the undersigned, whose name and address are given on the front, certify that the particulars given in this declaration are correct and that this does not contain any merchandise or articles prohibited by regulation or by postal or customs restrictions.

Date and sender's signature (8)

8/27/09 Clair VonHande
PS Form 2976, January 2004



0003

41014

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
APO, AP
96599
AUG 27, 09
AMOUNT

\$29.88

00020845-02



420 410140000 99 3100

SAM

Clair VonHande

USAF Post Office at Christchurch

APO AP 96531

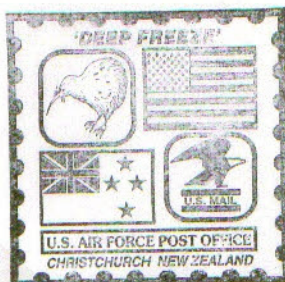


PB5300 at Christchurch



USPS PVI Meters at Christchurch

Scott F Smith
P.O. Box 24833
Denver CO 80224
USA



Air Polarogramme showing LC-130 Hercules

at McMurdo Station

Date: 17 October 2000 USAF APO 96531

19 October 2000 USAF APO 96531

25 October 2000 McMurdo

Rate: \$0.33 Domestic or \$0.60 International

Paid \$0.50

Air Polarogrammes are printed by a number of companies with Antarctic themes and are often sold at tourist counters.



PVI Mail Label from Christchurch to Denver

Date: 07 February 2008

Rate: \$7.02 Domestic Parcel Post 3lb to Zone 5

(DMM300 14May07)

Antarctic worker returns to Christchurch, mails personal materials home.

The Air Force Post Office at Christchurch installed the PVI units in 2000 as all US post offices made this change.



S. McLACHLAN
54 Shades Arcade

AIR POLAROGRAMME
BY AIR MAIL PAR AVION

**United States Antarctic
Research Program**



STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE
SCOTIA, NY 1-800-524-5070



Irma Hale RPSC,
McMurdo Station,
PSC 469 - Box 700,
APO AP 96599-5700

US Air Force Post Office at Christchurch
Pitney Bowes 5300 then the USPS PVI

The Christchurch airport is the jump off point for US and NZ Antarctic bases as well as bases of other countries. The US Air Force maintains a post office at the Christchurch airport for use by personnel travelling to and from Antarctica. Handles about 240,000 pounds of mail a year supporting the continuing US Operation Deep Freeze.

Used Pitney Bowes model 5300 meters until 2000 when Post Office PVI units were installed.

Pitney Bowes model 5300 postage meter.

Date: 9 November 1999 USAF APO 96531

Rate: \$0.33 Domestic (To NZ should be \$0.60 International)

Probably meant to be a round trip cover through McMurdo but directed to NZ postal system for delivery in Christchurch.

**New Zealand
to Antarctica
through
Christchurch**

