

BEP HISTORY FACT SHEET



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SPECIAL AND ALLIED MILITARY CURRENCY

During World War II, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) produced two general types of temporary paper currency for use by U.S. and Allied forces in conducting military operations overseas—Special Currency and Allied Military Currency (AMC).

Special Currency was produced for use in U.S. areas under threat of invasion or in enemy-held areas set to be invaded by U.S. forces. Special Currency consisted of regular U.S. Federal Reserve Notes and Silver Certificates, as well as Philippine Treasury Certificates with unique markings added so they could be easily identified and deemed non-legal tender if large amounts fell into enemy hands. Special Currency included Hawaii Notes which were Silver Certificates and Federal Reserve Notes with the word “HAWAII” printed over the face and back of the notes, Yellow Seal Dollars which were Silver Certificates that featured a yellow Treasury seal (rather than the usual blue seal), and Philippine Treasury Certificates that were overprinted with the word “VICTORY” on the face and back of the notes.

AMC was produced to supplement existing local currency and ensure that Allied forces had adequate amounts of money with which to pay for costs associated with invasion, liberation, or occupation of the targeted area. AMC was printed in the monetary units of countries in which Allied military actions were planned: lire, francs, marks, yen, and schillings were produced for use in Italy, France, Germany, Japan, and Austria, respectively.

PRODUCTIONS OF SPECIAL CURRENCY AND AMC

Hawaii Notes and Yellow Seal Dollars, introduced in August and November 1942, respectively, were the first of the temporary currencies to be employed. The concept of AMC was introduced in mid-1942 and in March 1943 the BEP received formal authorization from the Treasury Department to proceed with production of the first order of AMC, Allied Military Lire. This initial order was quickly followed with requests for additional lire as well as multiple orders for francs, marks, yen, and schillings.

Orders for AMC were large and deadlines were tight and such conditions were to prove a challenge to the BEP’s production capacity. Upon completion of the first order of AMC, BEP officials realized they lacked the equipment and manpower to carry out such a massive project within the timeframe specified. Outside help was solicited. The BEP employed Boston printer Forbes Lithographic Manufacturing Company in the production of AMC used in Europe. For Allied Military Yen, the BEP employed Stecher-Traung Lithographic Corporation of San Francisco to do the printing and made arrangements with the State of California Bureau of Printing to carry out the numbering, finishing, and delivery of the notes to the War and Navy Departments. BEP representatives were stationed at the various plants to maintain control over inventories of materials and completed work. For security and protection, U.S. Secret Service agents were stationed at Forbes while Coast Guardsmen were used at Stecher-Traung and the California state printer facility.

Additional Sources

D.L. Kemmerer and T.E. Beattie, *Allied Military Currency in Italy*, 1944.

J. Rutlader, *Allied Military Currency*, 1968.

Raymond S. Toy and Carlton F. Schwan, *World War II Allied Military Currency*, 1974.

**Total Notes Delivered
by Currency Type**Hawaii Notes:
64,138,012Yellow Seal Dollars:
130,872,000Allied Military Lire:
971,662,000Supplemental French
Francs: 686,720,000Allied Military Marks:
532,720,000Philippine Victory Notes:
202,608,000Committee French Francs:
1,645,000,000Military Yen, Type A:
331,690,000Military Yen, Type B:
311,374,000Allied Military Schilling:
529,088,000**DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF SPECIAL CURRENCY AND AMC**

Officials from the U.S. War, Navy, State, and Treasury Departments and representatives of the British Government directed the development and use of Special Currency and AMC. The notes became a legitimate currency in an Allied-controlled territory by declaration of the supreme commander of the area. The U.S. War and Navy Departments distributed the notes in the field through numerous military finance units located throughout the command hierarchy. Special Currency and AMC replaced, supplemented, or were exchanged for local notes and were withdrawn from circulation once an area's financial and economic affairs stabilized and local currency supplies became predictable.

1942 Special Currency Hawaii Notes were used in the territory from 1942 to 1944 due to fears of a Japanese invasion. They were also used in some of the Pacific campaigns. The notes used included \$1 Silver Certificates and \$5, \$10, and \$20 Federal Reserve Notes. With the "Hawaii overprint" and distinctive brown seals and serial numbers, these notes could be easily set apart and declared valueless if they fell into the hands of the enemy.

Yellow Seal Dollars were used by American forces in North Africa from November 1942 until 1944. These notes were overprinted with distinctive yellow Treasury seals to distinguish them from the regular Silver Certificates overprinted with blue seals. Like the Hawaii Notes, the aim of issuing these Yellow Seal Dollars was to prevent them from being of any value if captured by the enemy.

1943 Yellow Seal Dollars were used in the July 1943 Allied invasion of Sicily until the first AMC, Allied Military Lire, was available.

1944 Supplemental French Francs were used in the June 1944 Allied campaigns to free France of German occupation. They were replaced with Committee French Francs after the country was liberated in 1945.

Philippine Victory Notes were used in the October 1944 American-led campaign to free the islands from Japanese occupation and were used until 1949. Philippine Treasury Certificates (in circulation prior to World War II) were overprinted with "VICTORY" on the face and back of the notes.

Allied Military Marks were used in the Allied occupation of Germany, starting in 1944 and lasting until 1948.

1945 Type "A" Military Yen was used in liberated Korea from 1945 until 1946; Type "B" Military Yen was used in Allied occupied Japan from 1945 until 1958.

Allied Military Schillings were used in the Allied occupation of Austria from 1945 until 1947.

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