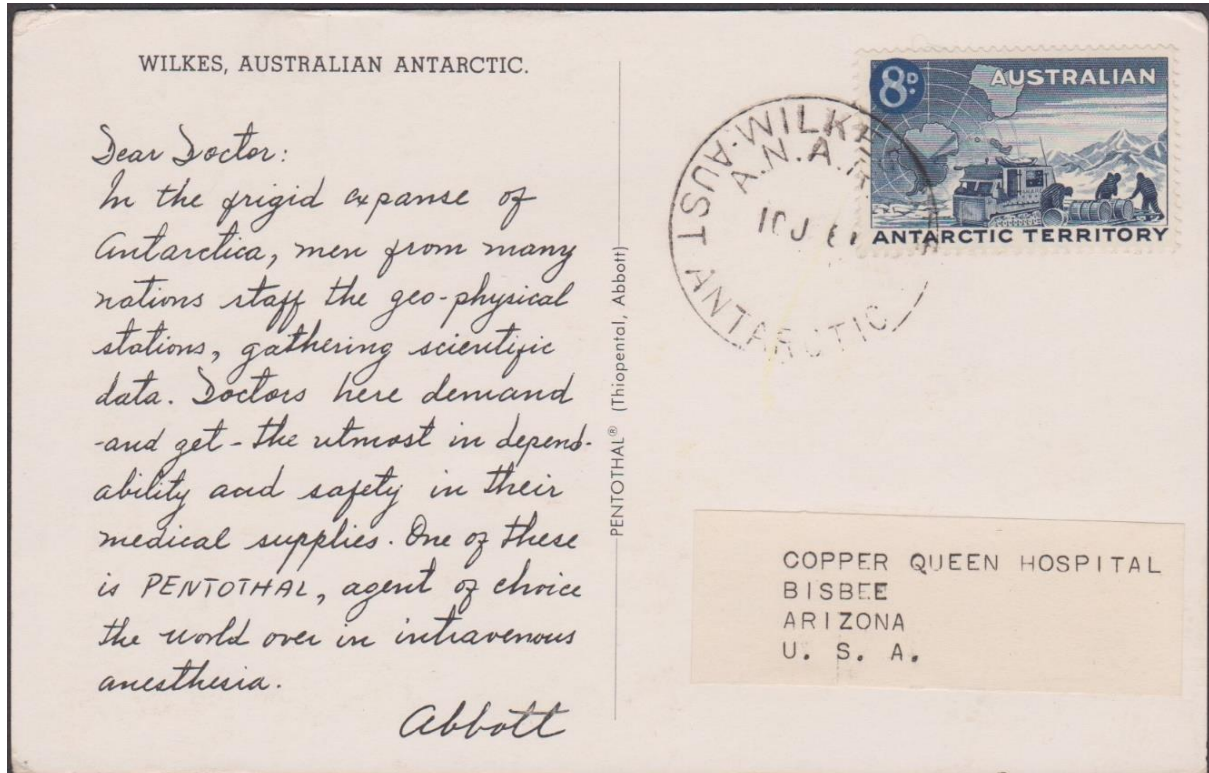


“Dear Doctor” From the Australian Antarctic Territory

By Patrick Crosby

I just got this cover and before I put things away, I research them first, which is a good time to write an article.

Talk about a DPO (discontinued post office) – Wilkes Station in the Australian Antarctic Territory, was evacuated in 1969 since it was a fire hazard with its discarded chemicals, explosives, hydrogen gas cylinders, oil drums and leaking fuel. The facility moved across Newcomb Bay to Casey Repstat (replacement station), or simply Casey. Every 4 or 5 years when a big thaw occurs a visitor can view the usually buried Wilkes Station through the ice, frozen in time.



The featured postcard from c.1961 is postmarked Wilkes, Australian Antarctic Territory, which was a research center established by the United States in 1957. Planned for just two years of use, the station was taken over by Australia in 1959, closing in 1969.

From the mid 1950's to the early 1960's the U.S. based, multinational health care company Abbott Laboratories employed a marketing campaign using picture postcards mailed from around the world with colorful postage stamps sent to doctors in the United States and Canada (perhaps other countries, too). The printed "handwritten" message promotes a drug, oftentimes Pentothal, and begins with "Dear Doctor", then signed "Abbott". A French chemical and pharmaceutical company, Rhône-Polenc, was promoting their drugs in the same way (in English), signing "Polenc".

The Abbott "Dear Doctor" cards were mailed from places like Portugal, Jamaica, Greenland, Mauritius, St. Pierre & Miquelon, and Thailand. But the most remote place of mailing has got to be Wilkes Station in Antarctica. Yes, this is a philatelic item. In fact, Abbott Laboratories was actively encouraging stamp collecting. This is also a legitimately used advertising cover.



**Australian Antarctic Territory Scott L2.
The "7d" can barely be seen under the "8d"**

The postage stamp shows workers, a loading weasel (snow truck), and oil drums. It is Australian Antarctic Territory Scott L2 from the then still current first issues of 1957-1959. The stamp was printed with a 7d (pence) value but never issued that way. Instead, it was surcharged with a negative "8D" in dark blue, which paid the Australian international surface letter rate. Since Australia claimed such a large amount of Antarctica (since 1933, over 2.2 million square miles) and other countries were vying for their own slices

(literally - check the stamp's map), the postage stamps were a reminder that Australia was serious about their claims in Antarctica. Emphasizing this idea, the stamps were sold and valid for use throughout Australia and its territories.

References:

- To view some other "Dear Doctor" postcards go to <http://www.HipPostcard.com> and visit Pauline's Postcards store, search "Doctor."
- Kenneth A. Wood, *This Is Philately*, (Albany, OR, Van Dahl Publications, 1982).
- www.En.wikipedia.org (Wilkes Station; Australian Antarctic Territory).
- *Scott 1989 Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue, Volume 1*, (Sidney, OH, Amos Press Inc., 1988).

Patrick Crosby is a member of the Nevada Stamp Study Society and collects U.S. postal stationery, stamps, and postcards with an emphasis on postal history.