

Back Issue of Military Postal History Society 'Bulletin': (Bulletin Jan 1950)

Back issues of the Military Postal History Society 'Bulletin' are now available. The issues available span the period from 1937 to 2022. The MPHS is a non-profit organization for philatelists and stamp collectors interested in the collecting and studying of the postal aspects of all wars and military actions of all countries, including soldiers' campaign covers, naval mail, occupation and internment covers, patriotics, propaganda, V-mail, censorship and similar related material.

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Fort Custer, Battle Creek, MI

THE BULLETIN

OF THE WAR COVER CLUB

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WHOLE NO. 4

THE Y.M.C.A. IN OUR EARLIER WARS

by C. D. Brenner

In the June, 1949, issue of this Bulletin there was published the description of an illustrated cover picturing a Y.M.C.A. tent, the letter apparently sent from a National Guard camp at the time of the Spanish-American War. In discussing this cover the question of the Y.M.C.A.'s participation in this war was raised. Further information has come to hand which throws light on this cover and on the question raised.

Our fellow member Ernest J. Muzzy reports that he has three covers similar to the one described, all of them postmarked Chautauqua, Pa., and bearing dates in May of 1898. All were sent from the Division Encampment of the National Guard of Pennsylvania at Mt. Gretna, near Chautauqua. Two of Mr. Muzzy's covers are identical with the one described. The third, printed in grey, has the same illustration, but the inscription has been changed. Above the picture are the words "Army Branch", and below it is printed "State Young Men's Christian Association of Pennsylvania."

In a book entitled The Spanish-American War. A History by the War Leaders, Norwich, Conn., 1899, there is a description of a Y.M.C.A. tent which is worth quoting for several reasons.

"When war with Spain became imminent and state camps for soldiers were located and occupied by the National Guard, at once local associations became active. They planted large-sized tents that are more like old-fashioned pavilions than army tents. Let us take for example one such pavilion. You find it equipped with a platform at one end, which carries a desk for the secretary and a cabinet organ, with song books of different kinds and sizes heaped around it; with tables long and short usually covering the entire space of the pavilion, excepting the platform and the room occupied by benches and chairs convenient to the tables, and a few stands devoted to harmless games. On the tables are found an abundance of weekly journals, monthlies and dailies... But the main thing noticeable is the fine arrangement for writing: ink wells, headed paper and patriotic envelopes by the million."

The tent portrayed on the covers is obviously similar to the type just described. It looks as if the tent at the Mt. Gretna camp was first established by a near-by Y.M.C.A. and later taken over by a state organization. The reference to millions of patriotic envelopes will of course excite the interest of collectors.

In Mr. Muzzy's collection is another cover bearing a rather large U. S. flag in color, with the corner card reading: "Young Men's Christian Association/Department of Massachusetts and Rhode Island/in camp." It is postmarked Greenville, S. C., and dated March 9, 1899. In this instance a camp Y.M.C.A. obviously followed its troops when they moved south.

Several members have reported covers of the Spanish-American War period which have in the upper left corner the following inscription: "Army Christian Commission (or Army and Navy Christian Commission)/ of the/International Committee/ Young Men's Christian Associations/ 3 West 29th Street, N. Y. City."

To explain these covers one must begin with the earlier history of the Y.M.C.A. The organization was founded in London in 1844. In 1851, the first American Association was established in Boston. Within a short time other Associations were established in a number of cities and large towns from coast to coast. It is well to bear in mind that these Associations were "independent, but equal and cooperating societies." In 1854, the Y.M.C.A.'s of the U.S. formed a national association and appointed a central or executive committee to direct it. A few years later this committee became the "International Committee" because the Canadian Y.M.C.A. had become associated with it. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, the International Committee at a meeting in New York appointed a U.S. Christian Commission "to enable the Associations to work together for the spiritual good of the soldiers, their intellectual improvement and social and physical comfort." The U.S. Christian Commission was, therefore, a Y.M.C.A. organization. It raised millions of dollars to carry on its work in the military camps and hospitals. The large variety of covers bearing its imprint may be explained by their being locally printed. There was a similar commission working with the troops of the South, but it was less highly organized.

When war threatened with Spain in 1898, the states called their National Guard units into camp as a measure of preparedness. As indicated earlier in this article, local Y.M.C.A.'s very soon started work in the nearby camps. In May, 1898, a few weeks after war had been declared, the International Committee of the Y.M.C.A., following exactly the pattern of 1861, appointed an Army and Navy Christian Commission to perform the same functions as the Civil War Commission. There is evidence that in at least some states the Y.M.C.A.'s formed state organizations to carry on war work. We have seen that one of these state organizations followed its troops south where it must have found the Army and Navy Christian Commission already at work. This war was of such short duration that there probably was not time properly to allocate the efforts of the various welfare organizations. Sometime we hope to learn something of the work of the Catholic Truth Society in certain of the camps of the Spanish-American War.

After the close of this war, the Army and Navy Department of the Y.M.C.A. was made permanent.

Hope you managed to send in on time your bids for wanted lots in the auction to be held January 17 which seems to have some exceedingly interesting items included. Rev. H. K. Robinson, 315 Mulry Lane, Lawrence, N. Y. is again handling this sale.

Mr. Tripp has advised of the passing of WCC member Simon P. Powers, on November 18, 1949. Our loss is great as Mr. Powers was most helpful and cooperative. Our heartfelt sympathy goes to his bereaved family and friends.

The two year period that the present officers have served the Club is drawing to a close. All the present officers feel new blood with new enthusiasms should take over. Any member can make nominations for any office by mailing his slate to the Secretary-Treasurer. Let us have a good election this time with many nominations.

Add to the Membership Roll

224 Ryan, Francis W. 649-9th Ave. N.Y.C. 19, N.Y. APOs W 11
 299 Kershaw, Robert S. 1289 Delia Ave. Akron, Ohio.
 Collects WW11, APO, Naval. Patriotics, Army & Navy posts.

AERIAL PROPAGANDA LEAFLETS

by P. H. Robbs

Stamp collecting is a hobby almost infinite in its variety. One collector will study the whole intimate history of a single stamp utilizing all the resources of modern science to reconstruct its plates and printings; another will collect strictly and systematically according to a specific catalogue listing, whilst a third may branch out into the vast uncharted areas of philatelic history. Here he will find many enthralling prospects and devious paths; possibly his steps will lead him into those most interesting fields relating to War and Campaign Posts. Here he

can wend his way at will and in comfort through all our recent military history, collecting postmarks, covers, and cards from many far-away battle areas and from the innumerable Army and Naval postal establishments which have been set up from time to time by America in her struggle for survival and supremacy. From time to time such a collector would probably come across a type of letter altogether different from the usual correspondence cover, an open leaflet addressed from one belligerent nation to another and disseminated by aircraft flying high in the sky; in fact, he would be looking at what are commonly known as Aerial Propaganda Leaflets. It is the purpose of this article to chart out the field there is available for collectors of these items, which are of great popular interest, and which are receiving continual greater attention.

In War, nothing is more important than morale, and from time immemorial armies have striven by all means in their power to build up their own, and to destroy their opponents. In many notable campaigns of the past two hundred years, kites, balloons, rockets, and all types of aircraft have been used for leaflet dissemination. The collector would be fortunate indeed, however, to come across the early leaflets of the French Revolution, the Franco-German War, and other pre-Twentieth Century events. But the two World Wars of our own time do provide him with an immense ground for study.

WORLD WAR I

Immediately after the outbreak of war in 1914 it was realized in all the countries involved that leaflets and bombs could both be readily dropped from the air by airplanes. On August 31st a certain German, Lt. von Hiddesen, achieved empyrean fame by flying over Paris dropping three bombs and a few little leaflets telling the Parisians that the German Army was at the gates of Paris, and all that the inhabitants could do was to surrender. Shortly afterwards in October of the same year, British aircraft dropped leaflets over German troops denying that the Germans were in Paris, that the French Army was beaten, etc., and in the same month a French aviator dropped leaflets over German occupied Lille advising the civilian population not to work for the Germans.

In October 1915 the French began the widespread dissemination of trench newspapers over German lines. These were entitled in turn "Die Feldpost," "Kriegsblatter fur das Deutsche Volk" (March 1916), and "Das Freie Deutsche Wort" (January 1917). The first two series were very cleverly designed to appear as Germanic as possible in origin, and produced excellent results. The French also published "La Voix du Pays" and later "Lettres a tous les Francais," which were dropped on Alsace-Lorraine and enemy-occupied France. They also dropped on German troops a large photogravure leaflet with pictures of happy German Prisoners of War, and survey maps showing the progress of the Allies.

After their initial effort in 1914, British propaganda was slow to progress but in 1917 small free balloons were used to drop replica Prisoner of War letters. Many of these are exceptionally interesting, and caused considerable alarm to the German High Command. So much so, that Field Marshal Hindenburg issued a special Order warning his troops against them. In 1918, the British newspaper magnate, Lord Northcliffe, was appointed to organize propaganda against Germany, and in the six months prior to the end of the War, millions of leaflets were disseminated over German troops. These leaflets may be divided into three main classes: firstly, the "A.P." series consisting of some ninety odd items inscribed "By Balloon, Durch luftballon." Some of these are in the form of cartoons and photographs, others contain news and articles designed especially to increase Germany's war weariness, to show the terrific scope of American assistance, and to drive home Germany's responsibility for the War. Secondly, are the "Priority" leaflets giving the latest news of Allied successes in all parts of the world. Thirdly, come the miscellaneous items such as the newspaper "Heer and Heimat" and pictorial cards and pamphlets.

America also participated in this paper war, and there are quite a wide variety of pamphlets in existence dropped by American aviators and balloons. These

refer especially to the great scope of United States production and mobilization, and to President Wilson's Peace Aims.

The German Air Force also on occasions dropped leaflets, especially towards the end, when offers of Peace were made. One dropped on October 27th, 1918, reads: "The German People Offers Peace. The will of the People is the highest law...The German people wants quickly to end the slaughter...The German People offers its hand for Peace."

On fronts other than the Western, leaflet propoganda had not been neglected, and quite a wide variety exist from Austria, Russia, Italy, and the Balkans. Leaflet propoganda was largely successful in securing and break-up of the Austro-Hungarian armies, and the general opinion amongst historians is that Victory in November 1918 was certainly hastened by this unprecedented psychological weapon. Readers interested in Great War leaflets can find much to interest them in the history written by Dr. Bruntz, "Allied Propaganda and the Collapse of the German Empire in 1918" (Stanford University, California, 1938). The collector who can include a representative selection of these items in his album has something extremely rare and interesting, and items which constitute wonderful souvenirs of the early days of the Air Age.

With the coming of peace, widespread aerial leaflet dissemination came to a halt, although on occasions it was revived - in 1919 for War Savings Campaigns in Great Britain, in 1930 to quell a revolt in Samoa, in 1933 when the Japanese invaded Manchuria, and in 1937/38 in the Spanish Civil War and the German occupation of, first, Austria and then Sudetenland.

(World War II Propaganda Leaflets to be continued in next issue)

"ONE OF MY FAVORITE COVERS"

From Maurice G. Ainsburg, "One of my favorite covers was mailed in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky, February 10th, 1945, and addressed to Heeklen, Linburg, Holland. It is franked with a 3¢ Win the War and two 1¢ Four Freedoms stamps. It bears a censor sticker on one end and a Post Office Dept. sticker on the face with the following typewritten note: 'Service is restricted to non-illustrated post cards for territory south of the River Scheldt and the cities of Eindhoven, Geldrop, Valkenswaard, Tilburg, Oisterwijk, Boxtel and Schijndel. See Postal Bulletin of Jan. 9, 1945'."

"Another cover is a registered air mail sent to Vienna. Has on the back a New York City registration handstamp dated March 12, 1941. This cover was censored and I believe held by the British Censors. On the face of the cover is written 'No Material Value' and it is handstamped 'Released' with three wavy lines above the word 'Released'. It also bears on the back a (Postant Wein) handstamp dated 28/11/45 and also a New York registration handstamp dated March 26, 1946 and another April 26, 1946. This registered cover was held up from March 12, 1941 until it was delivered to Vienna on November 28, 1945."

FORT CUSTER - BATTLE CREEK, MICH.

by A. J. Tripp

It was at Fort Custer that the 5th Inf. Div. was reactivated in October, 1939. It is interesting to recall that one unit, the 10th Inf. Regt. (reinforced) went to the lend-lease base in Iceland September, 1941 (APO 810, the balance of the Div. being moved to Louisiana for training. APU 5 was active at Baldurshagi, Iceland just before the balance of the Div. reached Iceland early in May of 1942.

There were many types of combat troops located at Fort Custer for periods of special training. Here the 94th Inf. Div. was activated September 15th, 1942, moving to Camp Phillips, Kans. soon after and going overseas July, 1944. When WW I and WW II started, the mail came to the Battle Creek post office. The Army mail clerks made their own distribution at the Fort. Later on as the troops and personnel

increased, both during WW I and II, a military branch was established at the Fort, in a building set apart for this purpose under the jurisdiction of the War Dept. The personnel of the office at these times was recruited from the Battle Creek P.O. and from offices in the neighboring states. As far as the military branch was concerned, it was a separate office but the revenue was credited to the Battle Creek office. When the military branch was fully set up, the mail was routed on trains to Fort Custer and so labeled. It was picked up by the Army trucks and delivered to the Fort without passing through the Battle Creek office. Detailed information as to postmarks used at the military branch is not available, but it is known that type D2x (see WCC Bulletin Sept. 1944) was used as early as February 25, 1941. This is a steel handstamp with Battle Creek, Mich. at the top and Ft. Custer Br. at the bottom of the dial. The grid canceller contains the numeral "1" which perhaps was used as late as 1947 when the branch ceased operating. It hardly seems possible that this type of postmark would be used to expedite the large amount of mail at this base. Thus it may be assumed that a machine canceller of some type was used on a greater part of the mail.

There is also a branch station at the Percy Jones General Hospital which is within the city limits.

The personnel in charge of this branch is from the Battle Creek P.O. This branch takes care of all the mail for the GI patients and personnel and will be maintained as long as there are sufficient people and personnel to warrant maintaining such service. The veterans at this hospital have a very active philatelic club. If any of the WCC members have any philatelic supplies, stamps or covers which they would like to send to these veterans, address the material to Recreation Supervisor, Percy Jones General Hospital, Battle Creek, Mich. This will be appreciated.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS IN THIS ISSUE

- Nos. 1 and 2. Two scarce receiving marks. The first one may be unique. (C.D.B.)
 Nos. 3 and 4. Philippine camp postmarks said to be unrecorded. (E.P. Cummings)
 No. 5. Philippine military postmark not recorded by Goodale. (E.P. Cummings)
 No. 6. Early provisional Philippine military postmark, not recorded by Goodale.
 (E.P. Cummings)
 No. 7. A new post office to be listed under Type A5. (C. D. Brenner)
 No. 8. The owner of the cover bearing this unreported marking says that there is an interesting story behind it. We hope he will let us have it one of these days. (H. N. Sanford)
 No. 9. A variation of Type A 78. (C. D. Brenner)
 No. 10. Dated four days after the declaration of war, this is the earliest recorded U.S. censor mark of World War I. The circular mark beside it cancels two one cent stamps. The owner believes that this may be a ship number and that we have here a naval censor mark. (E.P. Cummings)
 No. 11. Combined frank and censor mark found on a World War I cover inscribed "Soldier's Mail". No other identification on cover.
 No. 12. Censor mark used at Marine Headquarters in camp at St. Nazaire.
 No. 13. Described, but not illustrated, on page 5 of June, 1949, BULLETIN. It is the hurriedly-made stencil cachet of a Kodiak bear cub seated in a plane that was applied to about twenty letters carried on the first flight from Fort Greeley, Kodiak, Alaska, on February 28, 1942. Two of these covers have been reported.
 No. 14. Seems to be an early provisional censor mark of World War I. Found on an unpostmarked cover ms dated April 30, 1917. Military or civilian?
 (W. J. Cipolli)
 Dr. A. E. Perry submits the following description of a Red Cross cover from World War I, not illustrated: "Square, grey paper, looks like French manufacture. In upper left corner is AMERICAN RED CROSS in red. Beneath it is same inscription in Serbian, with imprint of red cross below. Belgrade return address in manuscript.

French 25 centime stamp in upper right corner. Faint postmark has illegible Serbian name at top and what appears to be French name "Marceau" at bottom. Date is August 18, 1919."

HELP WANTED

For the purpose of securing photographs to be used in illustrating the new A.P.O. Type Chart now in preparation, the editors of the Chart would like to borrow covers bearing clear strikes, free from the adhesive stamp, of the following types of A.P.O. postmarks: A33, A50, A51, A53, A54, A56, A60, A64, A66, A67, A68, A71, R50.

Also:

Fig. 9, October 1947 Bulletin
Fig. 10, April 1949 Bulletin
A40 from A.P.O. 601 or 605
A49 from A.P.O. 1051

If you can supply good strikes of any of these types, please communicate with C. D. Brenner, 5 Montrose Road, Berkeley 7, Calif.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

The Editor wishes one and all a very Happy and Prosperous New Year with the added wish for a little more leisure for all in which to enjoy our war cover collecting even more!

With the holiday festivities and distractions but a fond memory now, perhaps some of the readers with interesting and helpful stories and articles, will send them along to me. There has been a gratifying response from quite a number I am happy to say.

Miscellaneous War Cover Markings



1.



2.



3.



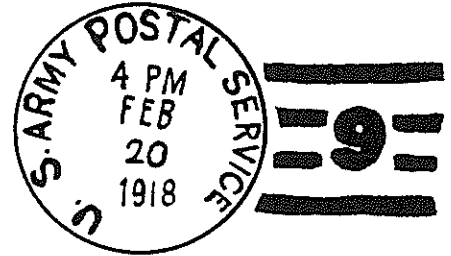
4.



5.

Philippine Postal Service
December 21, 1899,
Zamboanga, Mindanao.

6.



7.

"CENSORED,
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,
U. S. ATTORNEY,
BOSTON
No.

8.

ARMY POST OFFICE NO. 773
AUG. 27, 1918

9.

APR 10 1917
PASSED BY CENSOR

10.



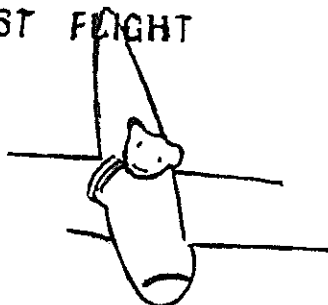
MILITARY MAIL
ON FOREIGN SERVICE
PASSED BY CENSOR

11.

PASSED BY CENSOR
DEC 15 1917

12.

FIRST FLIGHT



13.

CENSORED
A. C. B.

14.