

Back Issue of Military Postal History Society 'Bulletin': (Bulletin Jul 2017)

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.

You are encouraged to join the MPHS to realize the additional benefits of membership. See: <http://militaryphs.org/membership>

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GUNNER'S MATE and NAVAL POSTAL CLERK

by Sergio Lugo and Jim Downing

Editor's Note: This is a two part article, written on the eve of Jim Downing's 104th birthday. Jim is the second oldest survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor. On that fateful day, he had been aboard the USS West Virginia for nearly seven years.

The entire article is too lengthy to include in one issue, requiring the detail to be recounted in two parts. Part II is scheduled to be printed in issue # 4, 2017.

Within this first part, a story of the duties of naval postal clerks emerges that has never been recounted as to those duties in the pages of military postal history.

But this prelude in Part I is just the beginning of a life long adventure that took a naval postal clerk into the realm of ship command, atomic bomb testing, tense interaction with a former adversary, and biblical evangelization through an organization known to many as the Navigators. For all of these reasons, you'll come to appreciate that the two parts comprise a leading article for the MPHS Bulletin of not only postal history but of a human interest story.

(continued on page 3)

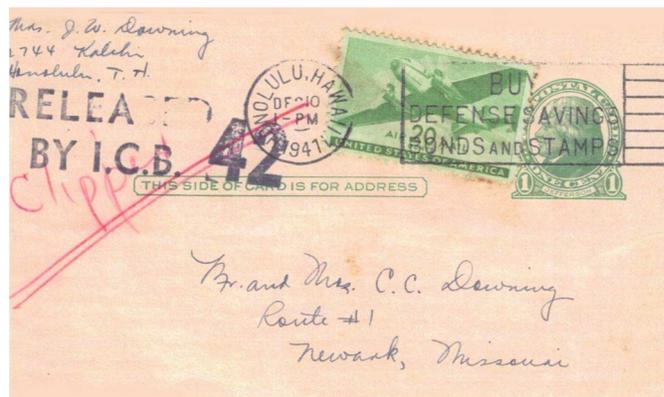


Figure 1: The 1 cent postal card of December 10, 1941 was augmented by 20 cents to pay the airmail fee for carriage by the Pan American Clipper. An interesting side bar to **Figure 1** is the censor marking. It involved censorship of civilian mails carried out by the Office of Censorship. Dann Mayo, in the *Prexy Era*, explained that in the week prior to the creation of the Office of Censorship, the U.S. Army's INFORMATION CONTROL BRANCH (I.C.B.) had come into existence.

PLEASE NOTE: To encourage writers, promote lead articles and touch upon the wide ranging interests of our members, new lead articles will always appear on the cover page, while second parts of prior issue lead articles can be found several pages into an issue.

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Military Postal History Society



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The Military Postal History Society promotes the study of the postal aspects of all wars and military actions of all nations. A non-profit corporation, it was founded in 1937 as the War Cover Club, American Philatelic Society, Unit # 19. Home page: <http://www.militaryPHS.Org>

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RMSS Exhibit Winners & Judge Hoffman (Left to Right): Sergio Lugo (small gold & large silver); Alfred Kugel (two golds); Mel Dick (Large Silver); Hoffman, and Albert Briggs (large gold). For all MPHS exhibitors, see *On the Show Circuit* column, pg. 32 .

Presidents Message

It is with mixed emotions that I sat down to write this column. April and May were good months for the MPHS. We had an article on WWI cover collecting in the April, *American Philatelist* and our expanded spring bulletin marked the 100th anniversary of the U.S. entry into WWI. In May the Military Postal History Seminar, held in conjunction with the Denver Rocky Mountain Stamp Show, was a huge success. However, we also learned of the passing of MPHS board member Thierry Delespesse. Thierry served as the society auction manager, taking his task to heart and improving our Society offerings. I found in working with Thierry he was always eager and willing to promote the interests of the MPHS. We will truly miss his enthusiasm and support.

The highlights of the Denver board meeting are:

- The 2018 convention will be held in conjunction with the APS summer show in Columbus Ohio (August 9-12, 2018).
- Sale of society publications has been slow for the past several years. Alternate venues for book sales were discussed. In particular better use of internet/download sales opportunities will be explored.
- An extensive discussion on expanding the amount of military postal history info on the MPHS web site. More information on submitting material is available at the webmaster's column. The Holiday postcard listings have significantly increased our web traffic. Work is underway to upload all the military postal history seminar presentations.
- Sergio was given permission for an expanded (64 pg.) 2018 fall bulletin to mark the end of WWI. In addition, a video will be created on a fascinating interview with a WWII Pearl Harbor survivor.

This year is an election year. Our goal is to field a slate of officers in the fall bulletin. **We have five positions open; Vice President, Secretary and three directors.** The third director position opened when *Al Kugel decided to retire from the board.* I wish it wasn't so. Al's contributions have been many as an author, long time board member, past President, financial supporter, and wise counsel. **His presence will be missed.** **Your help is needed** to run this Society, please contact me at dubine@comcast.net.

Congratulations to Sergio (to left) on winning the Theo Van Dam best military exhibit award at RMSS for his WWI service organizations exhibit, and Patrick McNally (right) for the best 2016 MPHS bulletin article award for "*Propaganda vs. Postal History in Wartime Mail - The Battles of Tannenberg and the Two Masurian Lakes.*"



7-10/41

Dear Folks,
 Saw Jim yesterday for a couple of hours and he is well and in wonderful spirits. We have much to praise the Lord for — we are all safe. There is certainly great proof that we are "kept by the power of God". It is marvelous how the Lord has kept our hearts peaceful in these trying times. Everything happened so swiftly that everyone was simply dazed. It seemed almost like a nightmare from which we could not awake.

So far as we know our fellows are all safe and hearing a wonderful testimony of the "power that passeth all understanding" which only those who know the Lord Jesus Christ can enjoy.

Forgive the postal but we think it will expedite a message through the air.

3. Span of duties as a naval postal clerk.
4. An Unusual Duty—Assistant Airplane Pilot
5. Part II: December 7, 1941
6. Part II: Reassignment and Reminiscence - post 1943.

Before leaving **Figures 1 and 2**, some explanation is warranted as the two figures are useful postal history in explaining the life and career of Jim Downing. As the caption for **Figure 1** indicates, the card was sent by Mrs. Jim Downing shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor. She was obviously anxious to explain to her in-laws some of the incidents of the prior 3 days, paying the large franking fees of Pan American Airline carriage. The I.C.B. of **Figure 1** and caption was within the Military Intelligence Division (MID) of the U.S. Army looking at civilian mail. The term began being used in Hawaii on a token basis starting December 11–13, 1941. ICB stations were located in New York, San Francisco, San Juan, Balboa, and Honolulu.

Figure 2 (at the left) is the obverse of the card sent by Morena Downing, wife of the central figure of this article. Its spiritual content strongly attests to the Christian faith of its writer and her husband and the unnamed events of the prior days. She explains in her note why she used airmail in writing Jim's parents.

The postal card of **Figures 1 and 2** is, for all practical purposes, of limited historical value/military postal history interest. **Singly**, its (1) a censor release straight-line marking, (2) 21 cents franking, (3) "clipper" crayon addition, (4) December 10th, Honolulu cancellation and (5) message is appealing in and of themselves. But **altogether** they can understandably spark the interest of many collectors, especially when it is realized that the postcard stands as the keystone to an endearing story - filled with poverty, aspiration, mundane duties, courage, earth shattering events, and incredible journeys in search of meaning and spirituality.

All these are focused on a U.S. Navy gunner's mate who rose through the ranks on the American battleship *USS West Virginia*. His life journey did not end with the "WeeVee's" sinking on December 7, 1941. Rather it continued for decades to come, allowing him to far distance himself from his humble origins. The outline of this article is presented below to provide the needed overview into the life of Lt. Jim Downing (our gunner's mate and chief naval clerk).

1. Early Life
2. Early Shipboard life



Figure 3: Jim Downing as a spry 103 year old at his home in Colorado Springs, Colorado in between speaking engagements throughout the nation on his wartime experiences and in the **Navigators**.

1. Early Life:

Jim Downing began life in 1913, settling with his family in Plevna, Missouri, population 100 plus. He recounts his early childhood in his book *"The Other Side of Infamy,"* (see Figure 5) sold through Amazon books.¹

Suffice it to say that that early life was filled by the economic realities of small town life in the 1920s, finally overwhelmed by the economic stagnation wrought by the Great Depression. Fortunately, the Great Depression did not cast its long shadow upon rural America until well after municipalities and their factories were overwhelmed. Nonetheless, the Depression never really permitted the economic prosperity that would have engendered a comfortable family existence.

There came the day when those economic realities hit home in rural America. It came in the form of a navy man, who returned home with a salary of \$90 per month and a spanking new Harley Davidson motorcycle. His father, the bank president and town postmaster earned \$80 per month!! What was wrong with this picture? While the Great Depression's scourge could be dealt with in Plevna, Missouri, its effects could not be forestalled completely by a young, strapping teen.

At the ripe age of 19, Jim realized it might be wise to move on from his roots. After discussions with his father and mother, he applied and was accepted as a recruit and entered naval service at Hannibal, Missouri on September 21, 1932. That decision was made as much out of poverty, as that of seeking a meaningful career, Downing made clear to us in our interview with him on February 14, 2017.

Induction in Hannibal, Missouri was followed by basic training at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center.² After that, cross country travel to San Diego, California brought him to assignment to his shipboard duty station, a heavy weight in the Navy—the *USS West Virginia*. Known within naval circles by its "WeeVee" nickname, she was a Colorado class, 33,000+ ton battleship, manned by 1,400 men. Little would he realize that the "WeeVee" would be his home for the next eleven years. That decade set the stage for changes to his life that were never anticipated in his mind as he holystoned the deck as an ordinary seaman.

2. Early Shipboard Life

Ambition and diligence was in his heart as he sought to raise his seamen's pay from the base pay of \$21 a month. While that meagre amount could help to support himself and divert funds to his family (and later to support a family that grew to include 7 children), that was not the way to escape poverty even in that day. At every opportunity he

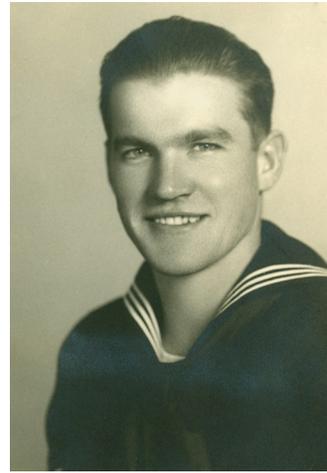


Figure 4: A young Jim Downing as a naval seaman; date unknown.

jumped at the chance to expand his duties, gain further understanding of the service and increase his rating—thereby increasing his salary.

With the natural born intelligence and inquisitiveness of his childhood, and the hard work ethic instilled in him by his parents, he constantly sought opportunities to improve on his duties while aboard ship.

Those opportunities began with his assignment to the gun crew of one of the "WeeVees" main battery turrets—the 16 inch behemoths that could lob a 1 1/2 ton shell miles down range. Fired in anger only in 1944 and 1945, long after he had left the "WeeVee", those guns were used in the last gun-to-gun engagement between surface warships at the Battle of Surigao Strait in October 1944. But, we digress.

In 1933, seaman Downing was concerned about learning how to operate the 16 inch main guns, protecting his eardrums from being shattered by the gunfire (by inserting cotton into his ears), fire direction and targeting, assuring himself that he had not destroyed or damaged the "WeeVee" from the battery's recoil, and grasping the significance of the accuracy of the battery's gunfire in his first exercises. Integrating all of these aspects of his experiences, he rose in the ranks as a gunner's mate. By 1935, he was ensconced in the turret, running drills, always on alert, instructing others and acquiring the knowledge of big gun logistics, operations and firing. (*Editor's aside:* Following retirement, he learned that he had become deaf due to a lack of ear protection from the battery fire, but was never determined eligible for a disability.)

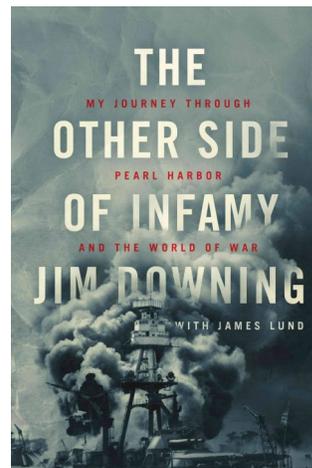


Figure 5: Jim Downing's book, published by the NAVPRESS, 2016.¹



Figure 6: The *USS West Virginia* in the mid 1930s. Courtesy of the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships (DANFS)* ²



Figure 7: Enlargement of **Figure 6**, showing the forward 16 inch two gun turrets of the *USS West Virginia*, the main armament of the Colorado class battleships

Along about this time, two other interests began to intrude on his life aboard ship. As a gunner's mate he could afford to expend the time in those pursuits— one deeply spiritual, the other deeply professional. The spiritual led him to becoming a founding member of a non-denominational Christian missionary activity that became known as the *Navigators*. That spiritual pursuit will be touched upon briefly at the close of this article. The deeply professional pursuit involves his assumption of duties as an assistant naval postal clerk beginning in 1935, and later as the WeeVee's chief naval postal clerk (erroneously often labeled postmaster). That is this article's primary focus—as the story of the work of naval postal clerks has never been recounted in such personal and professional detail.

3. Span of duties as a naval postal clerk..

As circumstances would have it, in 1935, the assistant naval clerk of the 'WeeVee' was transferred. The chief navy clerk liked Downing, and recommended him for the post. Upon learning that assistant naval postal clerks earned a pay increase of \$30 per month, he jumped at the chance to add duties to his daily itinerary as a gunner's mate.

At this juncture, we introduce an article that appeared in *LINN's Stamp News* of Monday, September 10, 1979.³ Found by Paul Albright in his volunteer capacity with the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library (RMPL), the article discusses the unknown commissary steward who laid the

groundwork for today's naval postal system.

Naval postal clerks had existed for some time before 1907. As their counterpart naval vessels grew, so did the duties of the naval postal clerk. In the around-the-world-cruise of the Great White Fleet in 1907-08, 13,000 men staffed the ships. Among the duties that had been increasing for those naval clerks was the transmission of money orders for crewmen. While a simple enough task, no safety or security precautions protected those seamen:

- (1) from inappropriate activities by naval postal clerks,
- (2) when processing funds for such money orders,
- (3) when turning over funds to higher authorities, or
- (4) from robbery/mayhem and violence against those naval postal clerks when handing over funds while ashore.

In 1906, a nameless commissary steward wrote a letter to the enlisted man's magazine, the *Bluejacket*. His letter asked that naval postal clerks be bonded on every ship carrying large numbers of sailors to protect officers and men in their money dealings in shipboard post offices. The recommendation noted that it was probably safe to say that one third of seamen on board ship both sent and received money every month through the mails.

The article was brought to the attention of the U.S. Postmaster, who wrote the Secretary of the Navy. Their combined efforts led to the U.S. Congress enacting a piece of legislation on May 27, 1908. It did not enact a rating of naval postal clerk, but did specify that petty officers among the various naval ratings entrusted with postal duties should be bonded and designated as postal clerks. Those naval postal clerks were authorized to receive and open all pouches and sacks of mail addressed to naval vessels.

The first post office was established on board the battleship *USS Illinois* on July 8, 1908. On August 15, 1908 three chief yeoman were designated as the navy's first naval postal clerks for the *USS Rhode Island*, *USS Prairie*, and the *USS Illinois*. By 1910, 119 vessels had received naval postal clerk designations. These ratings grew, until by September 1945 3,179 offices on vessels, 803 foreign shore stations and 519 domestic shore stations had been authorized, totaling 4,501 at the close of WW II.

Immediately upon the Dec. 7, 1941 outbreak of war, the Navy was confronted with serious problems of mail handling (as also noted by chief naval clerk Downing in Part II). Absence of advanced planning, shortages of transportation and the lack of security were not Downing's worry on December 8th, but became of concern to the hierarchy in the days that followed. Downing's concerns on that date focused on establishing a working post office, locating shipmates, and dealing with the mountains of mail and parcels that had begun streaming in during the pre-Christmas season. As stated in the *LINN's* news article: "Great quantities of mail piled up at San Francisco and

Pearl Harbor without any provision for handling or forwarding.”⁴

With the assistance of U.S. Navy CMDR Chaplain David Thompson, he located a 1949 article published by the Navy in its *All Hands Magazine* on the naval mail system during WW II entitled *The Navy Carries the Mail* (see: <http://www.navypostalclerkassoc.org/NEWSLETTERS/Navy3.pdf>). Further, Chaplain Thompson also brought to the editor’s attention the existence of the Navy Postal Clerks Association which maintains a website containing historical background on naval postal clerks (see: http://navypostalclerkassoc.org/?page_id=2498).

In November 1960 the navy post clerk (PC) was reestablished under the Teleman (TE) rating, with a rating insignia introduced (see **Figure 8**). By the beginning of 1978, the navy had 1,415 military personnel in the PC rating operating 53 shore based post offices, 356 shipboard post offices, seven post offices assigned to Navy Mobile Construction Battalions and seven on naval oceanographic units. At that time, the Marine Corps fielded 364 postal clerks, the Coast Guard had none, but did operate two shore based post offices and six shipboard post offices.

As of 2017, according to the website https://bluejacket.com/usn_ratings.html the rating of PC had been ended in 2010 and converted to LS (Logistics Specialist). (*Editor’s Note: The Linn’s statistics are 40 years old. This editor has no idea as to how to find updated data. Any reader with updated statistics is welcome to forward them for inclusion in the E-Mails to the Editor column.*)

Today the naval postal service is well established and directed by the Navy. U.S. post offices forward mail to Fleet Post Offices (FPO’s). Mail for ships at sea is sent to distribution points for onward dispatch to specific vessels. Mail is then sent to a fleet unit scheduled to rendezvous with the ship at sea. Since the *LINN*’s article, the world of mail forwarding and communications has been revolutionized by the computer and the internet. But such things as bills, warrants, and parcel post still need to be routed through human hands and naval postal clerks.



Figure 8: The U.S. Navy rating insignia for the Naval Postal Clerk was issued in 1959.

Returning to our “WeeVee” seaman, Jim Downing assumed his assistant naval postal clerk duties in 1935 and his chief naval postal clerk duties in 1938. Those duties are described in two locations, specifically in *The Other Side of Infamy*¹. Also, in much, much greater detail, on the *USS West Virginia* website, under the caption Stories,

and specifically “My Story” by Jim Downing, in Chapter 5.⁶ The latter is the origin of much of the information provided below, as well as interviews conducted with Jim in February, 2017.

In the 1930s, ship post offices were branches of the New York City post office—regardless of geographic location of the vessel. Fiscal accountability of all postal clerks was from the chief naval postal clerk to the ship’s Supply Officer to the New York City postmaster. At the close of every day, the navy postal clerk reconciled his books, gathered, and turned over the funds to be given to the Supply Officer, and received a receipt. The Supply Officer, then sent a check to the New York Postmaster.

The chief naval clerk had only one assistant during Downing’s service on the “WeeVee.” As expected, Downing as the assistant naval clerk handled all the menial duties of the ship’s post office - processing mail for 1,500 men, opening the post office, sale of postage stamps, delivering items to various shipmates, handling registered and special delivery mail.

Once appointed chief naval clerk, Downing had to supervise the assistant naval clerk—and he apparently did so with relish. A significant plus was the allocation of a private office, where a naval safe was provided (destroyed in the December 7, 1941 attack - together with \$450 of Downing’s money that he had withdrawn from the bank for his wife Morena’s return to the States). The post office provided room for storage of records, forms, stamps, and ledgers. In his case, Downing kept a cot in the post office so as to regulate his own sleeping hours. He also used the office as a private location to meet with men.

Treatment of the navy postal clerk wholly depended on the receipt of mail. If a sailor received mail, the navy postal clerks were given credit. If they got no mail or bad news, the navy postal clerk was blamed.

Processing of mail aboard ship centered on the division to which men were assigned. Mail for men in those divisions (for example, engineering) would be sorted on a daily basis. The mail was then turned over to couriers from those divisions who brought the mail back to a mail call point for the division. Scheduled times were set for the couriers to arrive at the post office for their divisional mail. Downing recounted how early arrivals would beat on the post office door to get their mail early.

As an assistant naval postal clerk, and later chief naval postal clerk, every man on board ship (1,500) knew Downing by sight and by name. As chief naval postal clerk, he also knew most of the men on board ship by name, and knew their regular correspondents - down to the names of their wives and girl friends. These working conditions, of course, changed after December 7, 1941. Many shipmates had died, with hundreds of others transferred to other ships as the “WeeVee” underwent nearly 18 months of salvage operations before being restored to battle worthiness at Bremerton, Washington in late 1943. One of the luxuries

to disappear from the “WeeVee’s” decks was the assistant naval postal clerk.

A top priority job has already been addressed. Paydays were the 5th and 20th of each month. With 1,500 men on board the “WeeVee” that meant that easily \$10,000 worth of money orders had to be completed in amounts averaging \$25.00, totaling 400 money orders each payday. Here’s where the office proved very handy, as Downing developed a method whereby patrons would pay the money order fee and submit the application in advance. The money orders would be completed at night. On payday all that had to be presented was the number assigned to the seamen for his money order and payment of the amount due in round numbers.

Bonding of the navy postal clerk led to other responsibilities. Transfer from the ship could not be completed for all bonded individuals until all funds were accounted for. Crew members could send telegrams on the ship’s radio system. Fees for the service were placed into a Communications Fund maintained by bonded personnel.

As chief naval postal clerk, Downing described his postal responsibilities as “house cleaning” duties, as he had to maintain his gunner’s mate proficiency. His foremost duty was maintaining that proficiency as a gunner’s mate, a fortuitous event as 1943-1944 was to prove.

Some of those “house cleaning duties” were extraordinarily varied. Downing was always the first off the ship and the last man back on board. This unusual circumstance was due to his duty to get the mail bags into the shore based postal system as rapidly as possible. Likewise, to ensure that all shore based mail destined for the “WeeVee” was loaded as the *West Virginia* set sail.

In one instance, this duty proved to be both a boon and a burden. Engaged to Morena at the time, Downing tried repeatedly to reach her by phone in Los Angeles while ashore dropping off the mail pouches. After a half hour he got through for a brief conversation. But the WeeVee’s Captain had set sail, and Downing had to catch up with her in a shore barge at 3 to 4 knots and be hoisted aboard while running alongside.

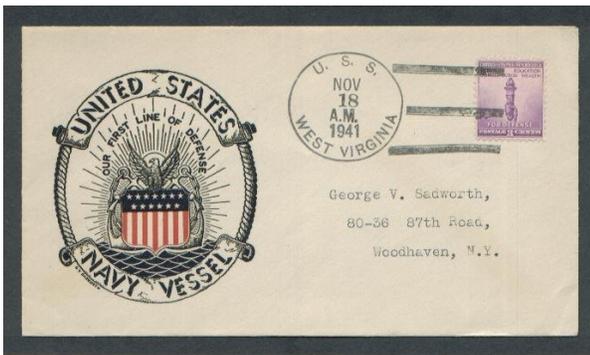


Figure 9: Commemorative cachet of the *USS West Virginia*, canceled three weeks before December 7, 1941. Courtesy of <http://www.navsource.org/archives/features/pearlpostal/postal.htm>

One activity that chief naval postal clerk Downing could not recall was the cancelling of commemorative cachets as shown by **Figure 9**. A popular pastime of ship cover collectors of the 1930s, promoted by the U.S. Ship Cancellation Society, was the forwarding of covers such as **Figure 9** to specific ships for cancellation by the ship’s postal crew. All franking was pre-applied, and all that was required was the application of the postmark and placement of the cover back in the mail stream to the sender.

In other instances, Admirals aboard would entrust Downing with messages for their girl friends. On his last trip ashore before the attack, he was given some change and a written Western Union Telegram for use from a pay phone. The Admiral trusted Downing not to reveal some of his most intimate secrets. The messages given to the operator over the phone would have made Downing blush, he stated, if the operator thought he was the composer.

Contact with all the men on board ship afforded Downing the opportunity to engage in the spiritual development that had begun in 1934-1935. The “WeeVee” became the incubation ground for the worldwide organization that has since become the *Navigators*. The biblical, gospel inspired message was spread by word of mouth to any seamen willing to engage in bible study and strengthen his belief in Jesus Christ. That missionary work was not foisted upon any sailor. Realistically, however, as he became more familiar with all of the crew as assistant and chief navy postal clerk, he became a sort of sounding board for men dealing with news from home, family, wives and girlfriends that sundered ties and convictions. That set the groundwork for the introduction of the Bible to provide them with the restorative healing to help them cope with those issues.

Usually bible study was conducted in the mess room galleys of the ship, after supper ended (roughly 1750) and in the intervening hour (to 1900) provided most crew members for rest and relaxation.

4. An Unusual Duty: Auxiliary Pilot

The “heavy’s” of the 1930’s U.S. Navy were its battle-ships and battle cruisers. Aboard those ships beginning in the 1920s had been placed catapult aircraft, intended for long range reconnaissance. Typically, three catapults were placed at the stern of the ship - two frequently on the 16 inch gun turrets. Other duties had devolved upon those aircraft over the course of time involving training of crews. In the instance of the *West Virginia*, one of the planes carried mail to shore. Once or twice a week when the “WeeVee” was within 200 to 300 miles of land, a mail run would be made. As the naval postal clerk, Downing took on the role of assistant pilot for one of those planes—and the attendant salary boost of \$40 per month.

Lest our readers misunderstand, these flights were training missions - with mail carriage serving the ancillary purpose of delivering mail more quickly. Carrying the

mail was never the main mission. Each time the catapult planes were launched (SOC 3 (S = Scouting; O = Observation; C = Curtiss manufacturing firm, 3 = model number)), they were engaged in missions searching for submarines, practicing the dropping of depth charges, and engaged in dive bombing drills.



Figure 10: Catapult configuration on a U.S. battleship in 1940.

Figure 11: Catapult and aircraft of the *USS West Virginia*, circa 1935 from **Figure 6**.



The three planes of the battleship's "air force" were launched at almost the same time. In a battleship division of three ships, nine planes were involved. According to Downing, when battle cruiser aircraft were added, the scout plane air fleet could number considerably more than 9 aircraft. Planes were launched using a gun powder fired catapult. Using a ladder to get into the rear cockpit, the canvas covered SOC 3 of turret # 3 was Downing's plane. It was a seaplane with a main float and two wing floats. Once aboard, wearing life jackets and parachute, he fastened the shoulder harness safety belts. The engine was tested by revving it up to full speed, with the plane kept in place by a steel band called a "breaking strip." It kept the plane in its car, breaking only as the car reached the end of the catapult. The noise and vibration of the airplane was indescribable.

Once harnessed in, the auxiliary pilot assumed a crash position with neck aligned with the body and arms hanging loosely at the sides. The catapult officer unlocked the car from the catapult and the plane eased forward against the "breaking strip." The pilot locked the throttle at full speed. With the catapult pointed into the wind, the catapult officer waited for the ship to reach the maximum uproll (pointing into the air), and ordered "Fire." The cables to the catapult

car had a six to one leverage, with the plane reaching 60 miles per hour in 60 feet—the catapult's length.

When clear of the turret, the body was as flat as a pancake. What later became known as G forces pinned arms to the back of the seat, and no amount of effort could budge one's arms until the passage of a few seconds restored blood circulation to normal. Generally, Downing rode with the pilot of the third plane. Once the plane reached an altitude of 1,000 feet—the pilot would turn the plane over to Downing and take a nap.

At that point, Downing stuck his control stick into an auxiliary pilot control hole. With a bayonet like latch at one end and a rubber tip on the other it was housed in a rack on the side of the cockpit. When inserted into the hole, it reached the top of one's knees, requiring Downing to lean forward to fly the plane. Once the stick was engaged, Downing wiggled the plane to shake it and alert the pilot that he had control.



Figure 12: SOC 1 scout plane. Note the lack of visibility between the auxiliary pilot and the pilot.

Downing only had three instruments to fly by. A compass to keep on course. A bubble level (similar to a carpenter's level) to keep the plane's attitude at the right angle in the vertical plane. And a similar bubble to keep the wings level in the horizontal plane. He had no throttle or forward visibility.

In prop planes, the torque of the propeller tended to cause the plane to spin in the opposite direction. Keeping the plane level proved to be hard work. The short stick caused soreness in one's back (Downing stood 6 feet tall) and the consequent tendency to lean backward, causing the unconscious pulling of the stick towards the rear. The plane would then tend to climb. Aircraft were to fly in formation, but there was no voice communication with the radioman and aircraft mechanic flying the other two "WeeVee" aircraft, or with the aircraft from other battleships. They had the same problem, but none had throttles to keep the planes flying the most common altitude. The plane keeping the most constant altitude would get ahead. When about to lose sight of each other, the pilot would be

woken up to get the planes back in formation.

Once the planes landed, they would taxi up to a ramp. Swimmers would swim out and attach a line to the plane. Then a Ford tractor would pull the plane to shallow water, and the swimmers would place a cradle with wheels under the float. The plane would then be pulled onto the ramp. To return to their ships, the process was reversed. Planes would not linger in port for long. Just sufficient time to refuel the aircraft and assure that mail bags had been properly disposed of with shore based postal services. Mail was not carried on board the airplane on return flights. Repairs to the airplanes could delay return flights.

In the late thirties the SOC 3's were replaced with metal monoplanes capable of vertical power dives. Those return trips were memorable, as power dives to mimic dive bombing were practiced on their respective ships. At an altitude of 12,000 feet the pilot nosed the plane over and put on full throttle. Within seconds the plane was speeding towards the ships in a vertical dive of 90 degrees at hundreds of miles per hour. Downing was always sure that the plane would crash into the ships, but on the first such dive, the pilot had pulled out from the dive and was flying away from the *USS West Virginia* when Downing opened his eyes. He had not realized that the SOC 3 had been pulled out of its dive. Downing learned that the "G" forces subjected his body to dissipation of the sensation of falling while the plane was actually climbing while leveling out. So much for body sensations.

The nearest disastrous experience while flying occurred due to a mechanic's error. The rear seat rotated 360 degrees to allow the firing of the rear cockpit mounted machine gun. For take off and landings, a pin locked the seat in place facing forward. In this instance, the mechanic had failed to engage the pin. When the plane was catapulted,



Figure 13: Same catapult, different aircraft of the wrecked *USS West Virginia*, post December 7, 1941.

the seat spun round and the mail bags under Downing's seat were ejected, hitting his head on the way into the ocean. The mail bags were recovered, but their outgoing mail was delayed until the next trip. As the seat spun, the

tabs on his life jacket were pulled and the life jacket inflated. While his parachute harness and life belt were securely around him, there was no room in the rear cockpit for the inflated life jacket—he was so squeezed he only breathed with difficulty. The seat managed to lock itself in place to the rear with his face down at a 45 degree angle. Downing found the CO2 bottle release and deflated the life jacket. Unable, however, to reach the pin, he remained in this uncomfortable position until landing. He always checked the lock pin thereafter!

Getting back aboard ship was another experience. On approach, the battleships made a 180 degree turn. Their powerful engines caused the ships to slide sideways as they turned, creating choppy water and rough seas until calm was restored in their wake. The planes landed one by one and taxied up to a sled being towed by a boat boom perpendicular to the ship. The plane was then hoisted aboard. Downing generally flew with the pilot in the third plane. By the time his plane landed, the sea had begun to get rough again. With little to no fuel left, there was no alternative but to land in the churning sea. To slow the plane's speed for landing, the wing flaps were lowered. Upon touching down, the strain on the plane's frame caused it to vibrate - sounding like a sack of tin cans. The pilot had to raise the flaps so the plane could taxi while the "WeeVee" was moving at a speed of eight to ten knots.

The mechanical device for raising the flaps was similar to the sprocket wheel and chain of a bicycle, operated manually. As soon as the plane hit the water, Downing's job was to raise the flaps. But if the plane hit the churning water too hard it would knock the breath out of Downing and he had to resume breathing before being able to move the flaps.

When the plane had taxied to a position over the sled, a hook on the plane's float engaged the sled and the plane was hoisted aboard. All of the battleships recovered their planes simultaneously. Once committed to a landing there was no turning back. In a churning sea, if a wave caught a wing float, that float would break off, causing the other float to sink into the sea and flipping the plane over. This happened so frequently that plane crews could slide down the wing, wrap themselves around the wing and end up on the upside down float without getting wet. That float had a hook on it, allowing boats to tow the plane to the ship to be hoisted. Mechanics would remove the engine, dry the plane out, replace the lost wing float and the plane would be ready for the next flight! Fortunately, Downing's plane never suffered the loss of a wing float, but he witnessed this happen on several occasions.

Shortly before December 7, 1941, the "WeeVee" had installed a radar with a bed spring type antenna. By this time, voice communications had been installed on the plane. Downing was involved in the first radar test. The experience was weird in the most practical of senses. Previously, when out of sight of the ship the plane was beyond

anyone's observation. In the test, a ship's officer directed them to fly various courses and altitudes while tracking the plane with the radar. He then had the plane maneuver at will. Every time course or altitude was changed, he confirmed the accurate tracking of their maneuvers!!

A new age had begun for naval warfare. Despite its limitations while in port or near land when placed on ships, radar opened the horizons of air crews and warship complements limited in knowledge to what could be physically observed while at sea. The achievements of the new technology was not accepted by old salts in the Navy until after Guadalcanal (when the results of radar observations were ignored to the detriment of the U.S. Navy), but quickly appreciated after those engagements to the extreme discomfort of the Japanese.

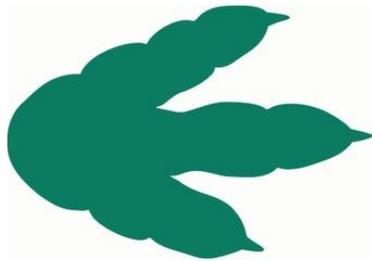
(Continued in Part II, Issue # 4, 2017)

IT NEWS

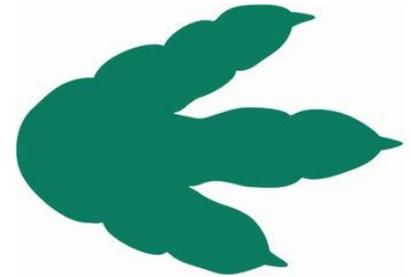
Bob Swanson

We need members of the Society to update their respective e-mail addresses. Each time we send out a blast message to the membership, 20 or more emails are found to be incorrect. What is worse, several members who have paid for the digital version of the Bulletin, are not receiving the notices of new Bulletins because their e-mail addresses are incorrect, or non-existent.. Please e-mail me with corrections to bobswansong@gmail.com.

Second, many new features are on the MPHS website, including a new set of presentations, some from the recent ROMPEX Stamp Show MPHS Annual Convention. We had a great turnout for the show, and the exhibits and presentations were top notch. Check the website for these new items being added as I write. See below..



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Quakers in the Spanish Civil War

by James E. Byrne

Wars inevitably create humanitarian crises which extend far beyond the military missions of the combatants. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, non-governmental humanitarian service organizations have moved into the void to alleviate at least to some extent the suffering of the victims of armed conflict whose governments are either unable or unwilling to help.

With the historical focus on the political and military aspects of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the humanitarian crisis and the response of groups like the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) unfortunately have become obscured. What makes the work of the AFSC unusual and worthy of historical attention in this civil war is the group's service to both sides in the conflict. It could be argued that terror and deliberately inflicted suffering on the civilian population was an essential strategy for political and military combatants.

To the AFSC, it was people who mattered, and because of this, if for no other reason, the response of Quaker humanitarians in this war deserves more attention than it receives.



Approximate boundaries of Spanish Civil War factions in May 1938. ⁽¹⁾

By the time of the Spanish Civil War, the Society of Friends had established its reputation as a humanitarian organization with expertise in relief work with refugees. The work of the British Friends War Victims Relief Committee (FWVRC; later renamed Friends Relief Service) in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1873) and during the Boer War (1899-1902) provided a solid foundation for relief work in World War I through the continuing work of the FWVRC and Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU). In the 1920s, the British Friends Service Council (FSC) took over foreign relief work in humanitarian crises other than

those caused by war ⁽²⁾.

The AFSC was formed when the United States entered World War I in April 1917 to find ways in which Quakers who opposed conscription could make constructive contributions in the international crisis through alternative service. The emerging organization became the leading group through which recognized religious conscientious objectors in the United States – Quakers, Mennonites, Brethren, and others – could respond to the needs of the war wounded and refugees. In addition to training people to work in war zones in Europe, the AFSC collected relief supplies for shipment to Europe to help civilians displaced by the war.⁽²⁾ Following WW I the AFSC continued its international humanitarian work with victims of war, famine, and political and social injustice and established a profile of humanitarian neutrality which made its presence acceptable in highly charged political crises like the Spanish Civil War.



Friends (Quaker) Logo [Detail Cropped from Cover]

The decision by the AFSC to provide humanitarian relief to refugees and especially to orphaned children in both Republican and Nationalist Spain was not easily reached or without extended controversy. John Reich, the AFSC chairman of the Committee on Spain, stated the Quaker position succinctly: “Our fixed policy has been, and remains, to divide our supplies between both sides *according to need*. Or to put it in a more Quakerly manner, we will endeavor to render aid to the Spanish people wherever they may be in need, *regardless of sides*. This we believe to be true impartiality.”⁽³⁾

However, in a climate as politically charged as the Spanish Civil War, even pacifism, humanitarianism, and political neutrality had political implications, and both Quakers and the donors who supported them had personal political opinions. There were many more refugees in Republican territory than in Nationalist-controlled areas. This created a situation in which need-based assistance might appear to favor one side in the war, and any aid to refugees could be construed as *de facto* aid to one government or the other. Food, shelter, and money provided for refugee relief by the Quakers freed Republican or Nationalist funds for military purposes. Instead of helping to beat swords into plowshares, Quaker grain could be turned into artillery shells.⁽⁴⁾

Initially, the AFSC established the Committee on Spain to work with refugees in Republican territory through headquarters in Murcia and to work closely with the British Friends Service Council based in Barcelona. Service in the Nationalist zone developed later. The operation at Murcia was directed by Esther Farquhar, a trained social worker who was fluent in Spanish and experienced

enough to work with local officials and medical personnel to build both trust and programs. By providing housing, food, and medical services for children, she avoided many of the potential political problems associated with providing service to adult refugees with diverse political affiliations and to serve a large number of the civilians fleeing the Nationalist military advance.



AFCS cover to Grace Rhoads from Murcia. Censored in April 1939, as evidenced by marking and tape.

The facilities set up by the Quakers were much more than simply orphanages or refugee camps for displaced children. Called *Colonias Infantiles*, these “Children’s Colonies” were residential schools in which the teachers and foster parents lived with the children to provide a supportive extended family with a comprehensive approach to working with traumatized juvenile refugees. Even Dorothy Parker, a writer known for her caustic wit, reported positively on the *Colonias Infantiles*: “I have seen some of the

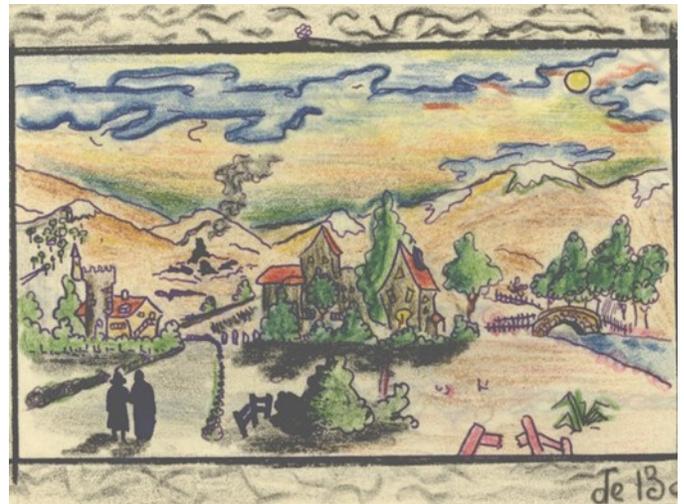


Children in southern Spain., circa 1937 - 1940

Colonies. There is no dreadful orphan asylum quality about them. I never saw finer children –free and growing

and happy.”⁽⁵⁾ Although perhaps an exaggeration, Parker’s endorsement was the sort of positive, apolitical support that the AFSC needed to successfully solicit support for its work in Spain.

One of the innovative features of the *Colonias Infantiles* was the use of art therapy to help the children cope with trauma. Indeed, it is believed that this was the first systematic use of art therapy with refugee children during wartime. Children were asked to draw pictures of their personal or families’ experiences in the period since the beginning of the civil war. Thousands of these drawings were produced, and they became powerful expressions of the life left behind, the violence of the war, and the hopes for the future. In December 1938, the journalist Martha Gellhorn, whose dispatches appeared in *Collier’s* and the *New Yorker*, commented about them to her personal and family friend Eleanor Roosevelt: “They also draw pictures, because with some food in them (that’s all the food they have in them) they feel very lively and happy: so they make wonderful pictures of the Quakers – who distribute the food – in their home.”⁽⁶⁾



Child’s Drawing in color - circa 1937 - 1940

In addition to helping the children deal with their feelings, these pictures became an evocative medium for raising money for the AFSC. These colorful drawings which were mounted in exhibitions presented in Valencia, Great Britain, and the United States provided an emotional dimension to the plight of Spanish children that even the best news photography could not. Even today, the online exhibits of the children’s drawings are powerful affective historical statements.⁽⁷⁾ The Spanish Child Welfare Association published sixty of the drawings in black and white in a volume to raise money for the AFSC and commissioned the British writer Aldus Huxley to write the introduction. *They Still Draw Pictures* sold for \$1.00 and contained a donation form with which readers could make additional contributions in response to the visual appeal to the

consciousness of the reader. Today, this volume is easily accessed online.⁽⁸⁾



Plate 5

Martín Alonso Aleznar, 8 years old of the School Colony of Tortosa. Note the very primitive way of drawing houses and planes, whereas stroked cars are quite realistic.

The cover illustrated with this article is an artifact of the AFSC operation in Murcia, Spain, and was mailed at an especially critical time in the war and for Quaker relief operations in Republican Spain. In February 1938, the Nationalists regained control of Teruel, thus reversing a victory which had given the Republicans a significant morale boost. In March, the Nationalists began an intensive drive to reach the Mediterranean coast, and the Italians began bombing Barcelona daily. When Nationalist forces reached the coast on 15 April 1938, Republican Spain and Quaker relief operations in it were divided with enemy territory separating Barcelona from Valencia and Murcia. Moving relief supplies and refugees was increasingly difficult for the Quaker mission.



Plate 20

The printed envelope bears the name of the AFSC in English and Spanish (*Servicio Internacional de los Amigos Cuaqueros*) and the addresses of the headquarters in Philadelphia (20 South 12th Street) and Murcia (*Calle de Manresa, 4*). The stamps of the Spanish Republic are cancelled with hexagonal air mail postmarks from Valencia

dated April 1938 with the numeral for the day too lightly struck to be legible. The rectangular “CENSURA/VALENCIA” censor mark (72 mm x 15 mm) ties to the cover the paper tape resealing the envelope after opening for inspection and is appropriate for that period of use.

The star device printed on the cover with its vivid red is the logo of the Society of Friends. It denotes its relief operations and workers, not just for the AFSC and its work. It was adopted during the Franco-Prussian War to distinguish the Quaker noncombatants from the military of each side. It also was a useful nonverbal image for use in distinguishing Quaker relief supplies from war materiel being shipped from Great Britain and the U.S. to points of distribution in regions in crisis in which English was not spoken. The symbol is a black star imposed over a red one with a stylized dove of peace in the center.⁽⁹⁾ Like the symbol of the International Red Cross, the Quaker star became an international symbol of apolitical assistance to people in need.



Plate 8

The cover is addressed to Grace E. [Evans] Rhoads of Moorstown [Moorestown], New Jersey, a member of a family with strong Quaker roots which had become affluent through manufacturing. Grace (3 July 1900 – 8 July 1991) received a Ph.D. at Bryn Mawr in 1933, frequently traveled internationally, was very active in the AFSC, even serving as an AFSC field secretary, and was involved with other pacifist organizations, notably the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the WILPF Committee on Conscientious Objectors, and the Women's Committee to Oppose Conscription. Although the cover has no contents indicating her association with the AFSC work in Spain in April 1938, given the limited details of her biography it is probable that her special interest was in the welfare of Republican refugees, especially in children who were orphans.⁽¹⁰⁾

On 5 July 1938, the Nationalist campaign against Valencia began. As it progressed, as many Spanish refugees as were able sought sanctuary in France, and Quaker relief workers accompanied them, still following the philosophy of trying “to render aid to the Spanish people wherever they may be in need.” Valencia fell to the Nationalists on 30 March 1939 and Murcia on 31 March. On the following day, Francisco Franco declared the war to be over. Although Quakers tried to maintain their humanitarian

efforts in Spain after that date, the autocratic government's policy of solidifying control by imprisoning and executing people suspected of Republican sentiments reduced the refugee population, and restrictions on the importation and distribution of Quaker supplies made relief work increasingly difficult. By early 1940, the AFSC humanitarian relief mission in Spain ended, but its service to Spanish refugees, especially to orphans, continued. However, the Quakers soon were forced to redefine how they could deliver humanitarian aid in a world at war

ENDNOTES:

- (1) "A Selection of Maps"
- (2) "Quakers in Action." Various pages online.
- (3) Sutters, Jack. "Origins of the AFSC"
- (4) Readers interested in details about the Quaker's complex relief efforts are directed to the studies by Maul and Mendlesohn in the bibliography.
- (5) "They Still Draw Pictures: Children's Drawings of the Spanish Civil War"
- (6) Idem.
- (7) "Children's Drawings of the Spanish Civil War." *Columbia University Libraries*.
- (8) *They Still Draw Pictures*. New York: The Spanish Child Welfare Association for the AFSC, 1938.
- (9) Jack Sutters. "The Red and Black Star."
- (10) Peter Mommsen. *Homage to a Broken Man: The Life of J. Heinrich Arnold*.

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Introduction to The Military Postal System of the North Vietnam Army and the Viet Cong

Part Four: Secret and Expedited Markings

By Daniel M. Telep

This fourth of four parts on the military postal system of the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong is intended to introduce the reader to their use of secret codes and other markings for mail expediting. Part I which appeared in the Fall of 2015, introduced my collecting interest triggered by the capture of an NVA mail pouch in the DMZ during my deployment in 1967. Part Two in the Winter of 2016, examined the subjects of rarity, a continuing discussion among collectors of classic vs. 20th Century philately. In that article we illustrated exotic decorative, adversity, and patriotic examples, so similar to my former collection from the Confederate Postal operation between 1861 and 1865. Part Three in the Fall of 2016 featured correspondence to or from NVA or VC military headquarters carrying sensitive content in the southern theater, titled "Command Center Usages."

This fourth part concludes the series with a look at the 13 types of "K" secret markings used to safeguard designations. This area of these secret markings is the valued correspondence, as well as the auxiliary "Lettered"

most complicated to understand, let alone describe in an article like this. Different groups of initials were manually added to mail in the military system to identify secret or sensitive content, significant urgency for delivery, and perhaps routing or carrier instructions. Some initials were applied in manuscript, often in different ink color or handwriting, as if added by another handler. Some were more sophisticated with crude hand stamps, and one was actually a pre-prepared adhesive label.

First, let's look at the secret "K" markings, of which 13 different types have been identified, below in **Table 1**. The "K" letter probably stands for a shortened version of the word 'Kinh' meaning "Secret/Confidential." Mail from one Unit's officer to another's bore this secret marking as a precaution since the marking was used only in the South. **Figure 1 (next page)** displays a cover, made of a folded form, with an adhesive **Type XIII 'K'** label, one of only four recorded examples. This cover has a staple where the U.S. Intelligence captor summarized the contents, dated July 30, 1968. Both the U.S. report and the original contents have been since separated from the cover, unfortunately.

Figures 2 and 3 (see next page) also show 'K' markings, first a handstamp **Type II** and, secondly, a manuscript **Type III**.

Table I:
Types of Secret "K" Markings
1960 - April 1975
Munshower Research & Telep Additions/Clarifications

Type	Color	Size (mm)	Usage	NVA / VC	"K" Letter Description
I	Red	12x14	Handstamped	VC	Boxed
II	Blue	10x11	Manuscript	VC	Boxed
III	Blue	17x9	Manuscript	NVA	Partial Boxed
IV	Blue	10	Manuscript	VC	Circled
V	Red	7	Manuscript	VC	Circled
VI	Red	16	Handstamped	VC	Circled
VII	Red	14	Handstamped	VC	Circled
VIII	Red	21	Handstamped	VC	Circled
IX	Red	14	Handstamped	VC	Circled
X	Blue	15	Handstamped	VC	Circled
XI	Blue	11	Handstamped	VC	Circled
XII	Red	19x20	Manuscript	VC	Twice Boxed
XIII	Red	19x20	Adhesive	VC	Circled

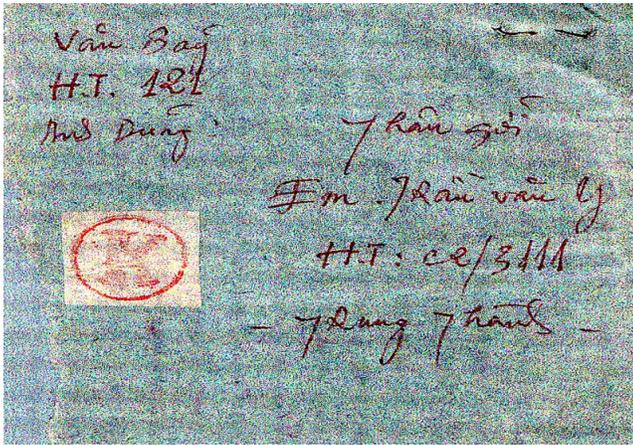


Figure 1: TYPE XIII Marking - The 'K' Adhesive Label: Both the sending unit HT 121 VC Officer and the receiving Unit HT C2/3111 were operating in the Southern area. Corner staple on the folded form envelope held U.S. intelligence summary of the contents, dated July 30, 1968. However, now both separated from this cover. One of four recorded usages.

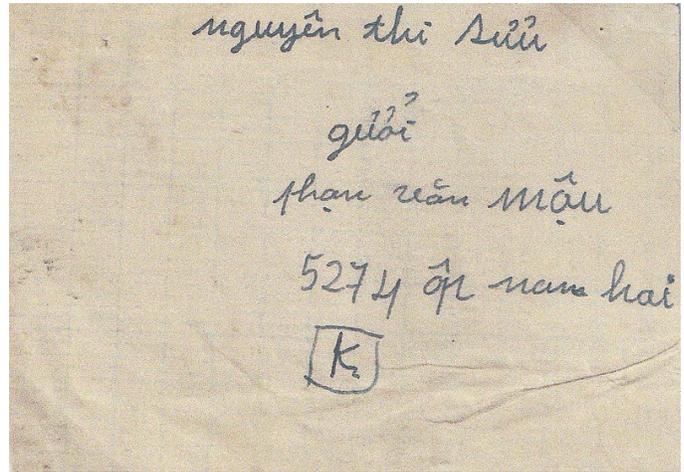


Figure 3: Type III—Boxed “K” manuscript marking in blue ink. On V.C. military letter to a political leader at Ap Nam Hai, near Saigon.

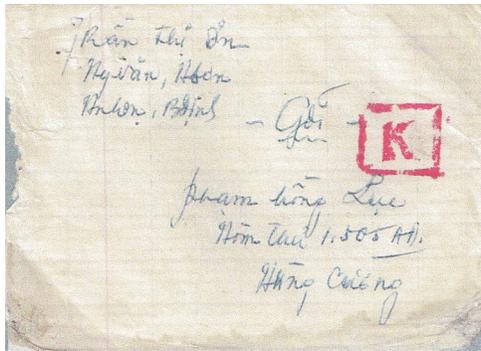


Figure 2: TYPE II Boxed ‘K’ red handstamp on V.C. cover to Hung Chong, 1966

Now let’s talk about “Lettered” designations used as auxiliary markings to direct mail, provide security or secrecy, and expedite delivery, mostly from higher ranking officials. The COSVN (Central Office for South Viet Nam) Command Center inside Cambodia served as a mail sorting and transfer station where such markings may have been applied.

Table 2, below, summarizes the nine examples recorded to date. The initials “DTG” stand for ‘Send Immediately.’ “GGK” stands for ‘Urgent-Hand Over,’ “DTK” for ‘Very Urgent-Top Secret.’

Figure 4 (next page) shows **Type III** on a Provisional Revolutionary Government invitation for a celebration of the anniversary of the National Liberation Front (12/20/60 to 12/20/74) to be held at the location listed by

Table 2: Table of Auxiliary Markings

TYPE	Color	Initials	Usage	Size/Description
I	Red	DTG	Manuscript	Underlined
II	Red	DTG	Manuscript	Boxed
III	Red	DTG GGK	Manuscript	Boxed
IV	Red	GGK DTG	Handstamp	Boxed
V	Red	DTG	Handstamp	Boxed
VI	Red	GGK	Manuscript	Boxed
VII	Red	DTK	Manuscript	Diamond
VIII	Blue	BGY	Manuscript	Boxed
IX	Red	DTK	Manuscript	Triangle

its code F.8039 – BS.28, dated December 16, 1974. The VC military mail system not only carried military communications quickly and securely, but also political and government mail. This second type of mail is more difficult to find than military mail, as 99% was destroyed immediately after reading.

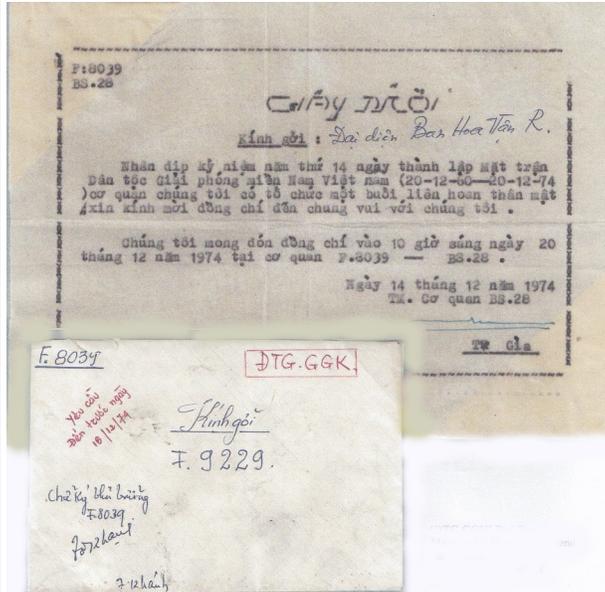


Figure 4: “DTG.GGK” Red boxed manuscript urgent mail. “Send immediately”.
Kinh Gol manuscript – “Please forward.”

Figure 5 shows **Type VI** on a cover to F.9229, a VC Command Center in the South. Note the additional “R” marking indicating registration and censorship. The document, not shown, contained sensitive instructions for an all-out mobilization of forces due to increased attacks from ARVN forces, circa 1974 or 1975.

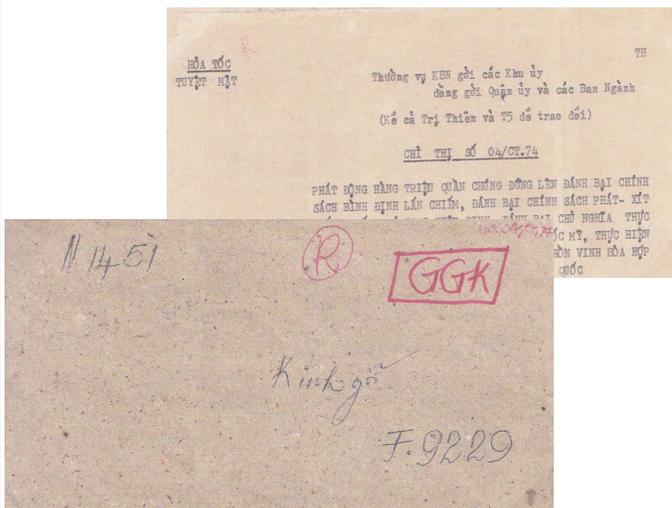


Figure 5: **GGK:** “Urgent Hand Over” red marker large boxed manuscript; **R** “Censored Already” red pen circled manuscript; “**King Gol**” “Please forward”

Figure 6 shows **Type VII** again addressed to F.9229 and dated July 8, 1973. In the letter, not shown, two Communist Party members and VC soldiers request permission to marry, listing the birth date of 1940 and the Party acceptance years of 1971 and 1972. The added phrase “Kinh Goi” translates something like ‘Dear Sirs’ ‘Please Forward.’

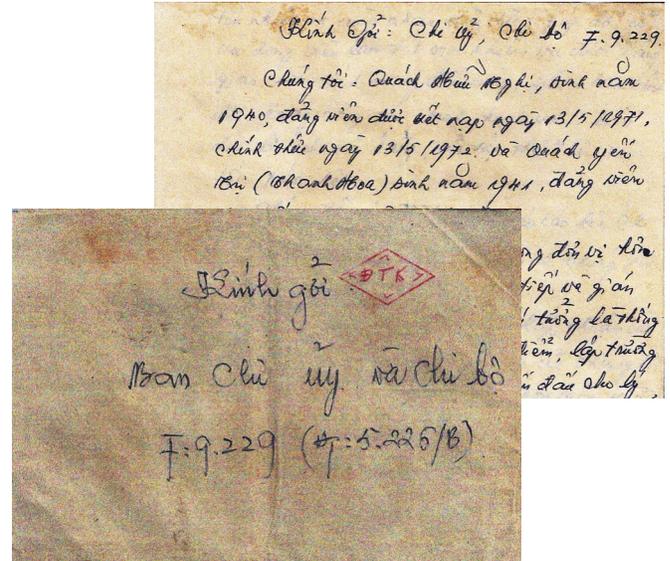


Figure 6: “DTK” “Very Urgent” top secret manuscript in red thin decorated diamond. Seldom seen marking. “**Kinh Goi**” “Please forward”. July 8, 973

In my study of this area of military postal history, such examples have definitely put a human face on my former enemies. I can identify with their war time experiences and with their paper shortages and resultant creativity. In some little way, the NVA/VC Forces remain vibrant through their writings, mail systems, and secret codes. Join me in appreciating their side of a long, harsh period of military conflict.

Dan Telep

Editor’s Note: Dan’s detailed article provides the most comprehensive study of NVA/VC correspondence during the Vietnam War. His exhibit provides further details and examples of that correspondence. His presentation in May 2017 at the Collectors Club of NY was videoed and is expected to be up and available shortly. Dan welcomes additions of other examples and explanations of that correspondence from any of our readers.

OUR MEMBERS ELSEWHERE

This past April, Roland Austin of Oklahoma was awarded *LaPosta’s* Charles Fricke Award for the best Small Bites article in its 2016 issues — for his “A Not-So-Special Looking Special Rate.” Congratulations, Roland.

THE 1916 BRUSILOV CAMPAIGN

and Its World Wide Impact - Part II

(continued from # 1, 2017)

by Sergio Lugo

Along the Russian South West Front, the situation had stabilized for the Austro-Hungarians and Germans, as their forces continued to hold firm at the northern flanks of Linsingen's Army. The group of German soldiers pictured in **Figure 18** was taken on August 8, 1916 at Turyjsk in front of the military railroad station. Turyjsk is east of Lublin and north of Lvov by approximately 40 miles. Opposite of the West Front forces of General Evert, their army was not heavily pressured by any Evert assaults.



Figure 18: Real photo postcard of German forces in the sector in front of Russian general Evert.

Figures 19 (top) & 20 (below): Kovel real photo postcard of August 22, 1916 through the Austrian Feldpost system under the authority of the Austrian High Command (A.O.K.) and posted from the "Bug" Army.

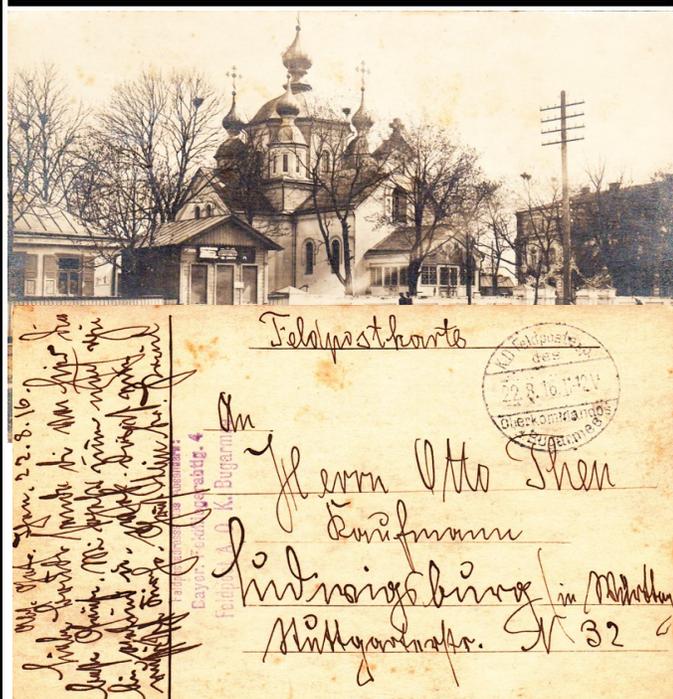


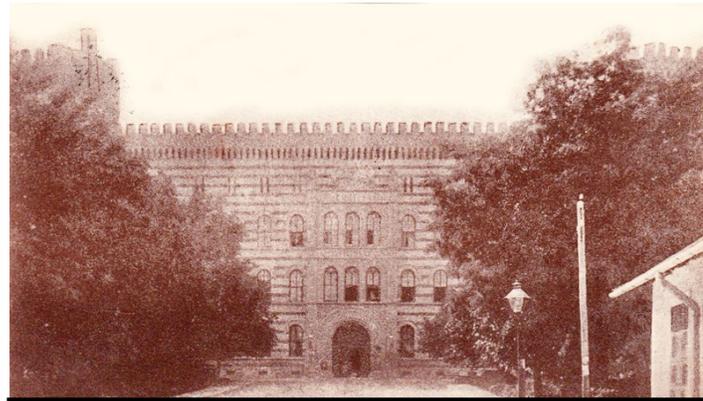
Table II: Army Level Orders of Battle—July 1916^{20, 27} (June 1916 vs. July 1916 Russian strength)

<u>Austro-Hungarian & Germany</u> (Army; Commander, Divisions)	<u>Russian²²</u> (Army, Commander, Divisions)
German General Linsingen (in the sector north of 4th Army, holding off the West Front of Russian General Evert. Linsinger counterattacked Brusilov's 8th Army in the early June Advance and continued fighting the northern wing of Brusilov's South West Front through September 1916). (199,000 troops) OB = ppg. 628 - 632	3rd Army: Letsch 3 1/2 Infantry; 7 Calvary ²⁴ (troop total combined with 8th Army) ²³
4th Army: von Tersztyansky (by this point under Linsingen) (19,000 troops) OB = ppg. 630	8th Army: Kaledin 8 Infantry, 3 Calvary ²⁴ (247,000 vs. 114,000) ²³ OB = ppg. 427 - 428
2nd Army: Bohm-Ermolli (79,000 troops) OB = ppg. 627 - 628	11th Army: Sakharov 12 1/2 Infantry; 3 Calvary ²⁴ (163,000 vs. 131,000) ²³ OB = ppg. 428—429
German South Army: Von Bothmer: (131,000 troops) OB = ppg. 626—627	7th Army: Shcherbatchev 15 Infantry; 2 Calvary ²⁴ (157,000 vs. 87,000) ²³ OB = pg. 429
7th Army—Pflanzer -Baltin (103,000) OB = ppg. 624—626	9th Army: Letschitzky 12 Infantry; 5 Calvary ²⁴ (144,000 vs. 89,000) ²³ OB = ppg. 429—430
Totals:	
• with Linsingen = 531,000 (loss of 245,000 since June 4th)	
• Without Linsingen = 332,000 (loss of 236,000 since June 4th)	
• Listed in <i>Last War</i> = 528,000 ²¹ (loss of 108,000 since June 4th)	711,000 vs. 431,000 ²³ (loss of 280,000)

On the other hand, as indicated by **Figures 19 & 20**, the military mail of the Austrian field army was still being routed through Kovel—a key objective of the June Advance, that was to remain so throughout the Brusilov offensive. In this case, the mail was being forwarded from the "Bug Army," one of the Alliance Armies situated north of Linsingen, also opposite Evert's West Front. "Bug" in

this case refers to a river running in the area, separating the Ukraine and Poland.

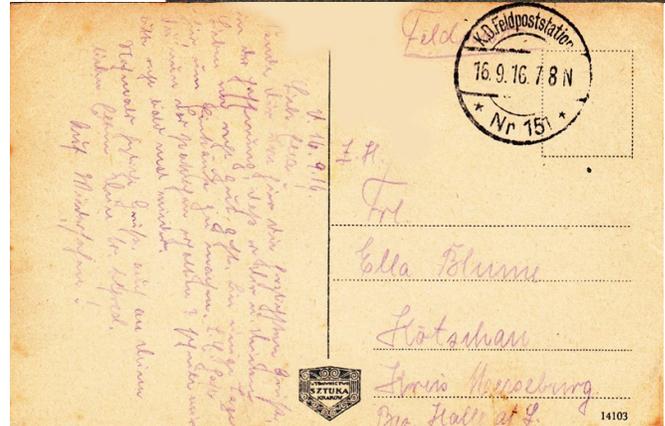
On July 24, von Linsingen counterattacked the Russian 8th Army south of Kovel and temporarily checked their advance. On July 28 Brusilov resumed his own offensive. Although his armies were short on supplies, his southern wing of the 9th Army reached the Carpathian Mountains by September 20.



Figures 21 & 22: Lemberg/Lvov/Lwow/Lviv real photo postcard of the Invalid Hospital (Sanitarium) in that city of various names sent on June 25, 1916 by Wilhelm R. Nolte (not a patient) shortly after the onset of the Brusilov offense. He was a member of the 41st reserve corps writing to Heinrich Buch that “Yesterday, I got your card, and greetings to everyone.” The OB in early June, 1916 shows no 41st Reserve Korps, but notes the 41st Hungarian Division in a reserve capacity in II Corps of Linsingen’s 4th Army. The 41st Division was still in the OB in late September, but its strength had been whittled down from 15,000 in June to 10,000.



Separated by six weeks, immediately noticeable in the armed strength shown in Tables I and II is the decimation of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army (in the north at Lutsk and Kovel), and to a lesser extent the 7th Army (in the south at the Carpathian mountains and the approaches into Hungary. Massive reinforcements (particularly of the German South Army) lessened the severity of the losses experienced by the Central Powers.



Figures 23 & 24: A view of Lemberg/Lvov/Lwow/Lviv in more prosperous days. The card was mailed on September 16, 1916 shortly before Brusilov’s exhausted forces ended the offensive. Ella Blume was the object of the writer’s attention, whose card was sent through # 15 Feldpost station.

Nonetheless, the influx of replacements could not disguise the reduction in strength from between 108,000 to 245,000 men in the field. Total Austro-Hungarian forces under arms had dropped from 3.577 million to 3.171 million, with the vital infantrymen dropping from 1.158 million to 927 thousand. Austrian War records show the loss in the June and July battles fending off the assaulting Russians to have amounted to 477,138 soldiers. Among those reinforcements were the calvary corps of General Bugarmeem, one of whose members (Wilhelm R. Nolte) wrote the postcard shown in **Figures 21 & 22**.

Figures 23 & 24 show one of the key objectives of the Brusilov offensive, namely the key city of Lvov (Russian), Lwow (Polish), Lvov (Ukrainian), and Lemberg (German). From early in the offensive to its very end, Brusilov’s forces (Sakharov’s 11th Army) were opposed by the combined Austro-Hungarian/German armies of von Bothmer (the German South Army) and Bohn-Ermoli (the Austro-Hungarian Second Army). The city remained under Austro-Hungarian control as evidenced by the post marks of both cards, with **Figures 21 & 22** dated 6/25/16 while **Figures 23 & 24** date to September 16, 1916, virtually the termination of the campaign.

The Russian high command had started transferring troops from Evert's front in a belated attempt to reinforce the northern wing of the South West Front armies involved in the assault against Lemberg. Brusilov had opposed such transfers, believing that the dilatory effect of the presence of more Russian Army divisions (1) would clutter his front, (2) impede the advance of his four armies, (3) with German intelligence identifying the shift of Evert's divisions south, and (4) would shift German reinforcements using their superior railroads to confront the South West Front armies faster than the Russian reinforcements could become a factor on the battlefield.¹⁸ This is what happened. Brusilov now found that he was facing battle hardened German troops, in place of the beleaguered Austro-Hungarians. The spectacular advances west that Brusilov had made ground to a halt¹⁹ and by August 10th his offensive had halted, with the loss of nearly 500,000 Russians.

Russian reinforcements had bolstered the unit strengths of all the South West Front armies, adding the Russian 3rd Army to Brusilov's northern flank. Despite the loss of 1/2 million men, Russian losses had been made up (and augmented) by the transfer of North West and West Front troops and heretofore unused Siberian divisions. The primary beneficiaries of the unit increments were the 8th and 9th Armies, fighting at the extremities (Lutsk/Kovel and the Carpathian Mountains).

At the beginning of August, 1916 Grand Duke Alexeiev and the Stavka had decided to focus all Russian offensive actions along the South West Front's borders. By then, the South West Front was the largest of all Russian fronts, surpassing the North West and West fronts protecting St. Petersburg and the central heartland of Russia. That size growth recognized the simple fact that the two other Russian front's were basically being led lethargically, and that Brusilov appeared to be the only front commander willing to engage the enemy in full force.

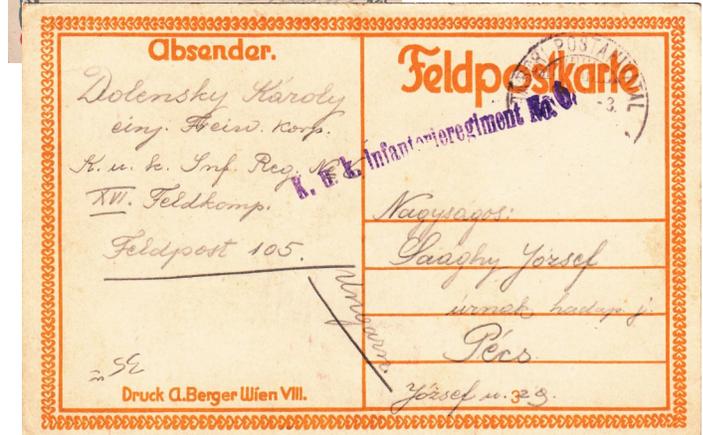
But new realities now faced the Russians. The Hindenburg Front had been created by the Alliance Powers. That move considerably strengthened the northern half of the Eastern Front by the force and personality of the men and personnel surrounding the august Field Marshall. Secondly, anticipating Russian 8th and 3rd Army thrusts against Kovel, Linsingen's army and adjacent forces had been reinforced for the inevitable Russian blow.

The result of these battlefield maneuverings was that the Austro-Hungarians and Germans held their ground against assaulting Russian armies seeking to once again recapture Kovel. Among these defending units were included the 6th Infantry Regiment illustrated by the card shown in **Figures 25 & 26**. Written by Dolesky Karoly on August 1, 1916 from Galicia, he was a member of the Hungarian Royal Imperial 6th Infantry Regiment, 16th Field Company, Volunteer Corps. Written in Hungarian on the front but German on the reverse, the card was being sent to Pecs, Hungary via feldpost # 105.

Their stubborn resistance blunted Brusilov's attacks, forcing a halt to the Russian attacks towards Kovel. At this point, the Stavka, decided that the best course of action would be to shift Brusilov's attack once again towards the South, with Evert's West Front forces continuing the attack to capture Kovel. In this, as in previous instances, Evert's forces were not up to the task, while the



Figures 25 & 26: The regiment was part of the 59th Infantry Division, in the VIII Corps (von Benigni) in von Kovess' Third Army (from *Last War*, Vol. 5, ppg 142 Order of Battle). The postmark reads "Taboris Poste Hivatal" (feldpost), with the cross hatching above the bridge of the postmark indicating its Hungarian origin. Klaus was the artist of the postcard.



South West Front continued its successful assaults down the line to the Carpathians. But the Russian foot soldier had paid a heavy price for the failure to adopt and follow Brusilov's innovative initial tactics of June 4, 1916 well into the campaign, reverting to the obsolete tried but flawed tactics that had decimated Russian assault forces.

In early September through the end of the month, the offensives of the South West front were renewed. However, the new realities of stubborn resistance, the new requirements of reinforcing the Romanians, the mixed strategic objectives from the Stavka, and the continuing failure of the West Front to again coordinate or strongly pursue common objectives^{x28, x29} worked in favor of the Central Powers. By the end of September the heady days of summer were giving way to the reality of fall weather and the exhaustion of men and materiale in the face of the increasingly effective Central Powers defenses.

The offensive finally died down in late September and ended as Russian troops had to be transferred to help the Allies new-found partner, Romania. Romania had been sitting on the sidelines as a neutral in the Great War, but had become inspired to join the Allied cause by the initial success¹⁶ of the Brusilov offensive and the Allied promises of post war territorial gains. But the addition of 500,000 Romanian troops proved to be a short-lived benefit as those troops proved inadequate to withstand Austro-Hungarian, German and Bulgarian attacks, thereby opening a new front as the enemy drew nearer to Russia.

The Immediate and Long Term Consequences of the Brusilov Offensive:

Brusilov's operation achieved its original goals of recapturing lost Russian cities, forcing Germany to weaken and then halt its attack on Verdun^{x25} and transferring considerable Alliance forces to the East.^{x26} It coincidentally broke the back of the Austro-Hungarian army, with the eventual loss of 1.5 million men. Thereafter, the Austro-Hungarians increasingly relied on the support of the German army for any of its military successes. On the other hand, the German army did not experience the disabling morale losses of its ally and retained most of its offensive prowess and cohesiveness.

The early success of the offensive, as we have seen, convinced Romania to enter the war on the side of the Entente. That success, however, proved fleeting as Russian forces had to be diverted from the Eastern front to deal with the Romanian debacle.

Russian casualties proved to be daunting, numbering up to one million. That damage proved to be far more wide ranging than the frontlines, extending to the psyche of the Russian people and the individual Russian soldier. The Brusilov Offensive was Russia's high point during World War I. It was a manifestation of good leadership and planning on the part of limited sectors of the Imperial Russian Army. The innovative battlefield techniques introduced by Brusilov to blow open holes for massed formations to tear through had their ultimate vindication by German adoption of those same tactics on the Western Front. These were a remarkable departure from the human wave attacks that had dominated the strategy of the major armies until that point during World War I. After the first weeks, however, the Russian army reverted to the conventional tactics that had always proven costly.

But the perceived wastage of Russia's sons proved calamitous to the Imperial army on top of the casualties of 1914 and 1915. After the Brusilov offensive, the Army became a shadow of its once formidable self and could no longer launch another offensive on the same scale. Many historians contend that the added mass casualties contributed to the Imperial Army's collapse within a few short months of the close of the June Advance.

Dubbed "The Iron General" and respected and beloved by his troops, Brusilov relied on absolute preparedness for battle and on the execution of even the most minute detail of his orders. The June 4 attacks began a string of crushing defeats for the Austro-Hungarian army. In order to bail out their hapless ally, Germany had to abandon plans for their own 1916 offensive in France — even as they confronted a new British offensive at the Somme in July. However, the capture of Kovel became Brusilov's obsession, prompting him to forego innovative battle tactics and alternative strategems for the old standbys. By September 20, 1916 the Brusilov Offensive was shut down.

By then, Austro-Hungarian losses had proven staggering - 1.5 million men lost and 25,000 square kilometers of territory. The offensive permanently secured more enemy territory than any other Allied offensive on either front. But for the failure of Alexei Evert to timely join the attack against German forces on his West front in the north, the overall success of the Brusilov Offensive might have been very different.

That success, ironically, was lost to the Russian general public, as the miasma of turmoil, civil unrest, fractured military allegiance, loyalty to the Romanoff dynasty and revolution shattered Russia in late 1916 and into 1917, disintegrating its army and leading to its subsequent exit from the war. A permanently debilitated Austria-Hungary never again played a significant role in the war (despite the Battle of Caporetto), as its army was reduced to holding trenches against the emboldened, but nonetheless weaker Italians. Germany was left to fight virtually alone for the final two years of the world war.

The Russians themselves did not recognize the effectiveness of the innovativeness of the initial tactics introduced by Brusilov, and were not to repeat their use during the remainder of the Great War. Similar tactics were beginning to be used on the Western Front by the French and Germans - where "storm troopers" were used to great effect in the closing 1918 offensives. Shock tactics were later to play a huge role in the early German blitzkrieg offensives of World War II and the 1943 to 1945 offensives by the Soviet Union, and the British and American armies that put an end to Nazi aspirations.

While the results of the Brusilov Advance were astonishing in light of the previous two years of military futility, what concerns the remainder of this article is the political consequences. These were even more astonishing as the prism of hindsight is brought to bear. More than any other action, the Brusilov Offensive brought the Hapsburg Empire to its knees and led to its ultimate dissolution two years later without an effective army to counter emerging nation states. Simultaneously, the Brusilov offensive set the stage for the collapse of the Romanov dynasty by contributing to the conditions for revolution within the Empire, as well as in the Imperial Army

The only campaign in World War One named after an individual commander – the Brusilov Offensive ultimately has to be deemed a failure in the sense that it did not fully achieve its objectives, namely (1) the recapture of even more of Galicia and the Carpathian Mountain passes together with (2) the transfer of sufficient German troops from the Western Front to facilitate Allied



Figures 27 & 28: The last gasp of the Brusilov offensive in September and the faint hearted attacks of General Evert's West Front could not dislodge Alliance forces from the strategic town of Kovel—as indicated by this Austrian soldier on October 12, 1916. Written in Sudelin German, the postcard was routed through expeditionary feld post # 8 of the 19th Infantry Division. Written by Haause C_et to Frau Bergmann, he was on the staff of the 1st Detachment. The card was censored by a member of Field Artillery Regiment # 26.



success at Verdun or the Somme. Its failure was not the result of the lack of vision by Brusilov. Unfortunately, – his aggressive military thinking stood in stark contrast to the sterile defensive mind set of much of the Stavka, Grand Duke Alexi, Evert, and ultimately the Tsar and the Tsarina. If Evert had seriously prepared and committed his men to an all out attack on his Front, Ludendorff would have been unable to transfer his men south and Brusilov would have most likely faced only the Austro-Hungarian forces. In all probability, the campaign in the

east would have been far different in its outcome and impact on both the war and on world history if Evert had forcefully acted. The impact this might have had on the Somme and Imperial Russia is open to speculation, and, ultimately, can be viewed as irrelevant since it could not happen with Evert in command.

Brusilov was urged by St. Petersburg to continue his summer gains even though the Russians had suffered horrible casualties after their initial successes. The Advance continued, but without the same strategic and tactical innovations or elan employed earlier. As the losses of experienced officers, NCOs and enlisted men mounted, discipline within the ranks began to dissolve. The Russian populace began demanding change (of whatever kind one might add) given the experience of the massive losses of friends and loved ones.

Russian industry proved unable to continue manufacturing new equipment in sufficient quantities to replace the staggering losses of the Brusilov Offensive, especially in small arms and ammunition. All of this may have been moot since the armies of several nations involved in the fight began to suffer almost simultaneously from mutinies by disillusioned troops faced with the prospect of more profligate loss of life at the battle lines. As the bad news from the fronts as well as at home mounted, Russia slowly edged toward industrial unrest, open revolt and revolutionary ferment against dynastic ambition, intrigue and control.

By 1917, the Imperial Russian Army's officer corps was increasingly demoralized. Though grossly outnumbered, the Germans had proven to be erstwhile opponents. The Russian royal family's interventions in affairs of state did not improve matters. The repeated catastrophes suffered by Russian field armies squelched the flaming patriotism of August 1914, with the 300+ years of Romanoff traditions of dynastic rule and governance increasingly undermined at every turn by the grim news eroding public confidence.

By March 1917, Army units began ignoring orders, as growing Socialist, Menshevik and Bolshevik factions exaggerated reports of minor events and inflamed public rallies. The Tsar's abdication in the face of the growing unrest, led to a provisional government followed by Kerensky's short lived (9 month) provisional government. He made aborted attempts to uphold Allied obligations by putting General Brusilov in command of another offensive against the German Southern Army in Galicia. But despite his best efforts, Brusilov's 1917 offensive only cleared a few mutinous Austrian formations out of the way before running into the brick wall of German general's Hoffman and Hutier, who first stopped, then counter-attacked the hesitant Russians. By then the Imperial Russian Army virtually disintegrated as open civil war swept like a wave across Russia between

“White” and “Red” factions of the once formidable Russian people.

As the power of the Bolshevik soviets accelerated in 1918, both sides of the nascent civil war continued sporadic negotiations with Germany. The Germans, who continued making territorial gains against disintegrating Russian formations, eventually began aiding the pro-Tsarist White Russian forces, attempting to squelch the very revolt they had helped to incite by the release and transport of Vladimir Lenin. However the damage to Russian social cohesiveness was too great, with the "White" Russians eventually forced from power by the "Reds." While the civil war was going on, the Bolshevik government concluded the treaty of Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918, stripping Russia of all provinces west of the Ukraine, ending Russia's involvement in the fighting and setting in train the Allied military actions in Russia in Murmansk/Archangel and the Vladivostok regions.

The treaty was basically annulled by the November 11th Armistice and, in turn, the Imperial German Army's disintegration. The emerging Bolshevik dictatorship was able to reclaim most of Russia's lost territories. Ironically, one of the lasting Bolshevik actions was the attempted suborning of German prisoners-of-war. Upon release by the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, many went home to Germany and Austria-Hungary to be transferred to the Western Front which exploded in the final British, French, Italian and American fury of the war in the last half of 1918. Many of these ex POWs proved useless as repatriated soldiers. Upon the war's cessation, they were released in Germany and Austria, joining the post-war revolutionary ferment then tearing at Germany's social fabric. The discontented nationalists (in the form of the Nazis), eventually gained control by 1933 with the demise of the Weimar Republic, adding further fateful chapters to history, while the Russian Communists and their policies emerged triumphant in post-war Europe and Asia, remaining so for another five decades.

REFERENCES:

Austria-Hungary's Last War, 1914—18, Vol. 4. Edited by the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Army and War Archives, Edmund Glasse-Horsternau, Translated by Stan Hanna; Vienna, Austria, Vol. 4, 1916. **In particular, pages 394 to 780.**
<http://www.comroestudios.com/StanHanna/Vol4.pdf>
Austria-Hungary's Last War, 1914—18, Vol. 5. In particular, pages 150 to 420.

Rossica Society webpage contains its Virtual Exhibits online. Among others it features the 160 page exhibit of David M. Skimpton entitled *MILITARY CENSORSHIP IN IMPERIAL RUSSIA 1904 to 1917* at http://www.rossica.org/v_gallery/

The internet proved surprisingly useful in fleshing out details, particularly:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleksei_Brusilov
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brusilov_Offensive

- <http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/world-war-one/battles-of-world-war-one/the-brusilov-offensive/>
- <http://russiapedia.rt.com/prominent-russians/military/aleksey-brusilov/>

ENDNOTES:

- 1 *Last War, Vol. 4*, ppg. 307 & 308. Italy's dire straits at this time is well described by their Austrian opponent.
- 2 Ibid, ppg. 411 to 426.
- 3 Ibid., ppg. 426
- 4 Ibid., ppg. 430
- 5 Ibid., pg. 409—410. The significance of the advancing Russian trenching operations to the Austrians warranted two pages of discussion in *Last War*.
- 6 Ibid., ppg. 570—572
- 7 Ibid. ppg. 539
- 8 Ibid. pg. 484
- 9 Ibid., ppg. 577—578
- 10 Ibid., ppg. 531
- 11 Ibid., ppg. 490—491
- 12 Ibid., ppg. 540 to 542
- 13 Ibid., ppg. 573
- 14 Ibid., pg. 578
- 15 Ibid., ppg. 636—634
- 16 Ibid, ppg. 688-692. According to the Austrian War archives in *Last War*, by mid July, the Russian High command and Stavka had given up on the efficacy of any offensive actions by the North Western (Kuropatkin) or West (Evert) Fronts despite a 3 to 1 superiority in manpower over the Germans. All offensive actions after mid July focused on the one aggressive commander of the three - Brusilov.
- 17 Ibid., pg. 574
- 18 Ibid., pg. 575
- 19 Ibid., ppg 707-708
- 20 Ibid., ppg. 624—633
- 21 Ibid., ppg. 632
- 22 Ibid., ppg. 633 - 634
- 23 Ibid., ppg. 708. Relative troop strengths based on a July 1916 Russian staff estimate recorded in the Austrian war archives (1st number = Russian vs. estimate for Alliance troops). The Russian estimate underestimated Austro-Hungarian/Germany troop strength as illustrated.
- 24 *Last War, Vol. 5: Infantry & cavalry division data from the Austrian War Department OB for Russian forces at the end of July 1916*, as shown in Table II. The OB for all forces at the end of July is found on ppg. 135 to 154 (Austrian/German forces) and ppg. 155 to 159 for Russian forces.
 The archives note that the forces arrayed along the Southwest Front amounted to 62 Divisions for the Allies, and 69 Divisions for Brusilov. However, a significant caveat by the Austrians is found on pg. 160 noting the differences in Battalion composition. Namely, an Austro-Hungarian division averaged 9 to 12 battalions, while a Russian Division averaged 16 battalions.
- 25 op. cit.: pg. 577
- 26 Ibid., ppg. 634 - 636
- 27 *Last War, Vol. 5: Troop strengths in the OB at the end of July 1916* differ in Vol. 5 from those presented in Vol. 4 for

Austrian-Hungarian/German forces. Those of Vol. 5 and the OB can be found in ppg. 135 to 154.

- 28 Ibid, ppg. 375 to 420. The seeming chaotic lack of Russian vision and their resort to mass human wave attacks to force a decision on the issue in the face of strong Central Power resistance permeates the Austrian war archive analysis of the battle lines between mid August through the end of September. By this time the Russian Chief of Staff (Aleviev) and the Stavka had given up their hope that the South West Front would prove the decisive sector in inflicting a catastrophic defeat on the Alliance powers.
- 29 Ibid, ppg. 33, 367 and 379. The remarkable refusal of West Front Commander Evert to engage his forces, exhaust time to avoid battle and, finally, not engage in coordinated actions to defeat the enemy are noted in the Austrian archives in the last gasps of the Brusilov campaign.

Editor's Notes

by Sergio Lugo

Manuscripts/illustrations for publication are welcome. A **writer's guide** to article content, format and preferred layout is available by contacting me directly. Thanks for your consideration and please take up the challenge. You are the lifeblood of the MPHS *Bulletin*, as readers and authors. Won't you consider writing an article on subjects of interest to you in the postal history arena. You'll be encouraged at the reception you will receive. Please submit your article to my home address by the dates shown below to Sergio Lugo, 1190 S. Grape, Denver, CO. 80246. Phone: 303-552-8897, or digitally to my e-mail address at lugopspe@q.com. No responsibility is accepted for material submitted. Enclose stamped, self addressed return envelope with correspondence for any return mail

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DEADLINES

Issue	Article Deadline to Editor and Revisions	<i>Bulletin</i> in Member Hands 1st Date=Digital; 2nd=Hard Copy	
Winter	January 20 to 25	Early February	Mid February
Spring	April 20 to 25	Early May	Mid May
Summer	July 20 to 25	Early August	Mid August
Fall	October 20 to 25	Early November	Mid November

Sergio

OUR NEW MEMBERS Since 1/1/2017

- 3666 John Abrams
- 3667 Cmdr. David Thompson
- 3668 Michael Fellows
- 3669 Kenneth Young
- 3670 Robert Collins
- 3671 Ryan Baum
- 3672 George Michaels
- 3673 William Rodier
- 3674 Paul Cook
- Mick Zais
- Bobby Bryant

Please extend our new members a warm welcome.

E-mails to the Editor

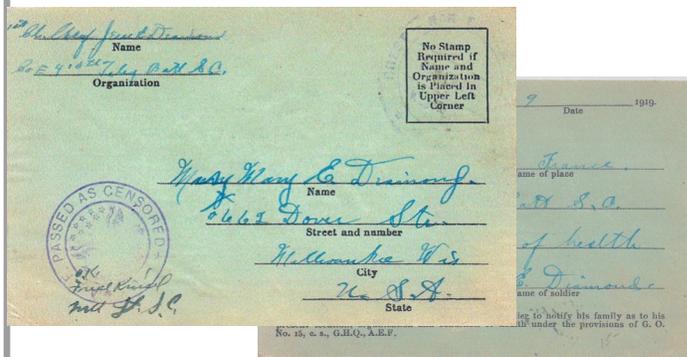
Your thoughts on the articles and presentations in the Bulletin are solicited. Send in a thumbs up or thumbs down on what you've read in our most recent Bulletins, and this one.

And BTW, MAKE IT POSITIVE. We don't need a rehash of our favorite Smokey Bear capped D.I. motivational practices. What is needed is encouragement about their articles in terms of the facts and issues. Leave the pointing fingers to the editor re. grammar, sentence structure, totally incorrect observations, punctuations, minor discrepancies, font size etc. What we really are seeking from you is the creation of a positive environment that encourages writers. Thanks for appreciating that need.

Comments via e-mail to lugopspe@q.com:

From: Fred Hensel: A student of WW I postal history, Fred graced us with a number of postal history additions to those shown in Volume 55, # 2 Anniversary Edition of America's entry into the First World War. I'm taking this opportunity to show them here to all of our membership, so that you don't loose the visual representation of these materials.

For the David Thompson article: *RMS in Europe*:



Above: Feb. 1919—Write in greeting card from member of 4th Telegraph Battalion, Signal Corps to his mother.

Below: Mar., 1919: Postcard view of Jentimiglia, Italy with what appears to be a Railroad Transportation Office cancel of Italy in March 1919.



For the Dann Mayo article: *American Airmen in Italy:*



Above: Feb. 1918—Cover from Foggia, Italy airbase of U.S. Air Service Cadet.

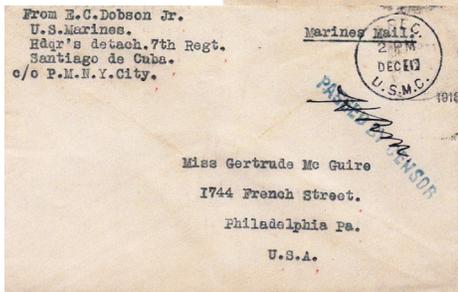
Below: Dec., 1917: Cover from Foggia, Italy airbase from C.M. Smith of AEF Aviation Detachment



For the Ciesielski & Lugo article: *7th Marines in Cuba—1917-1919:*



Above: Dec., 1918 cover from Marine Dobson, HQ Co., Santiago de Cuba, c/o New York postmaster



Left: Nov. 1918, cover Pvt. Frank, 7th Marines from Santiago de Cuba, Cuba



Above: Dec., 1918 another Dobson cover, passed by Censor straight-line cancel from 7th Marines Recreation Hall, Santiago de Cuba.

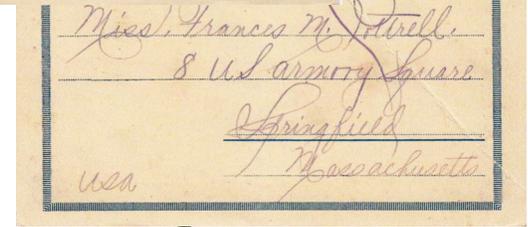
MPHS Holiday Post Cards of WW I page:

Fred has been a regular contributor to the postcard webpage since its inception. He sent along the two postcards below, which will be uploaded in August/September. These are brought to your attention as we embark on expanding the webpage beyond 300 postcards. As of the beginning of April, 2017, Bob Swanson, IT manager for the project, reported over 19,000 hits for those 300 postcards. This represents a totally

unanticipated number of visits to the page in 9 months. We



continue to solicit contributions to the webpage.



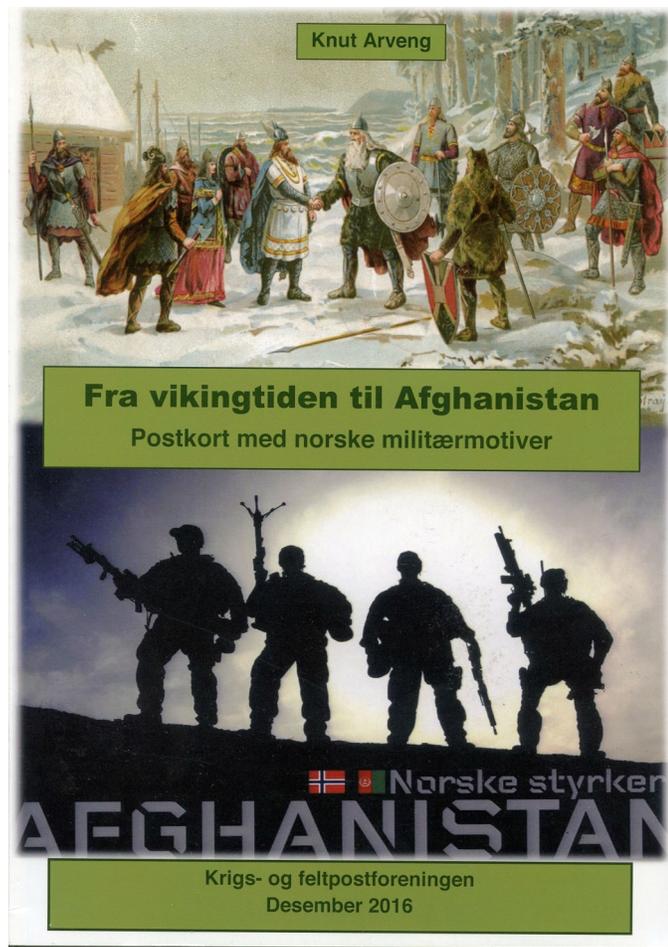
Book Review

by Alan Warren

Fra vikingtiden til Afghanistan: Postkort med norske militærmotiver (From the Age of Vikings to Afghanistan: Postcards with Norwegian Military Themes) by Knut Arveng. 100 pages, 8 ¼ by 11 ¾ pages, card covers, Norwegian text, Norwegian War and Field Post Society, Oslo, 2016. 200 NOK plus postage from www.warandfieldpost.com.

Deltiology or the collecting and study of picture post cards continues to make inroads into the philatelic arena. Many shows now accept post card exhibits, and articles and books are being written about exhibiting the cards.

The Norwegian War and Field Post Society published this book that illustrates post cards related to Norway that have a military theme. The author begins with scenes of the Vikings and Nordic mythology. Next are some cards illustrating Peter Wessel Tordenskiold (1690-1720), the naval officer who achieved fame in the Great Northern War and in defeating the Swedish supply fleet.



Another personality whose work is seen on post cards is painter and illustrator Andreas Bloch (1860-1917), who depicted ski patrols and other battle scenes. More 19th

and early 20th century pictures on cards relate to secession, the constitution, war, and the new union. Next are scenes from Norway's roles in World War I including training operations, military camps, semi-automatic guns, and the coastal artillery.

Scenes of the various services are shown on more cards—airports and aircraft, and naval and marine installations between the wars. World War II begins with the April 1940 occupation and includes scenes of Narvik, occupation post cards with German text, Vidkun Quisling, efforts of Norwegians outside of Norway, naval and air battles, POWs, resistance, liberation, and finally the celebration parades and scenes of the royal family.

Some post-war post card scenes show Norway's peace-keeping efforts in Korea, Sinai, Congo, Kosovo and Afghanistan. There are also scenes of naval and air force activity following WW II. The book ends with brief sections devoted to humorous and Christmas post cards with military themes.

The book is a survey of what one can compile in the way of a thematic post card collection. Technical details of the cards such as printing methods and publication data are not provided. The emphasis is rather on the challenges and enjoyment that post cards can bring to those who collect them.

We're trying out other video formats on OUR WEBPAGE, look for them in the future (beginning with the postal history of the Vichy French Empire). Our first such video is on the Greco Turk War of 1919-1922. It can be found at www.militaryphs.org or on You Tube at <https://youtu.be/OuZ2NWmI4pU>. If the direct link does not work, right click on your mouse and select "Open Link in new window."
YOUR FEEDBACK IS IMPORTANT!

Your generous donations to the MPHS allows the Board to explore other services to offer the membership - such as our publications program and its products. Please consider a contribution.
Ed Dubin, President

RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS

As a valued Member you know first hand the benefits of Membership. Let's build the future of the MPHS together

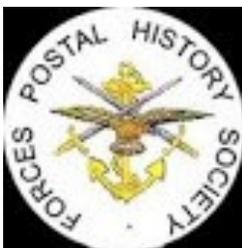
SOLICITATIONS for 2017

(Moan and Groan as you deem appropriate)

- Bob Swanson (IT) has gotten the NY 2016 SPECIAL EDITION on portable devices. Sorry—we could not get such MPHS issues on your mobile devices earlier—your editor is technically challenged.
- Bob and I have completed the Holiday Cards of WW I webpage to 300 postcards. We continue to accept submissions, and work on this unique resource. Another 150 postcards, mostly silk embroidered, have been submitted - work on it suggests uploading will be completed by July.

FORCES POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Established in 1952, the Forces Postal History Society was formed to bring together the many collectors interested in the postal history of the Armed Forces of all countries, (and United Nations), at all times. For info, contact: Hon. Secretary: Michael Dobbs, 52 Leamington Avenue, BROMLEY Kent BR1 5BL, UNITED KINGDOM,
www.forcespostalhistorysociety.org.uk



TRANSVAAL-GB: 1900
 BOER War CONSULAR
 SERVICE USA envelope
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Check the premiere military postal historian's offerings of [Mike White](http://www.mikewhiteuk.com) at
www.mikewhiteuk.com

BAHRAIN—USA:1945 CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE using US APO & MISSENT:

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GB... 1917 WRECK MAIL from SS NORWEGIAN or Armed Merchant Cruiser KARMALA.



LOOKING FOR

This space is RESERVED for YOU, at no cost, for a one issue announcement

LOOKING FOR postal history to, for, from **ELSIE JANIS**, "Sweetheart of the AEF." Janis was a songstress, lyricist, stage actress and movie actress of the 1900's to 1930s. For an article. Please contact Thomas Richards at richardsthoas@sbcbglobe.com

Our 75th Year!

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Join the Universal Ship Cancellation Society and enjoy the fun of collecting Naval Covers and Postal History from Historic ships like the USS CONSTITUTION and USS MISSOURI.

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NAVY DAY 1932 Cover from USS CONSTITUTION

U.S. Navy MISSOURI SEPT 2 1945 JAPANESE FORMAL SURRENDER TOKYO BA

Post Office cancel used by USS MISSOURI on this historic Day

For more information, please contact:
 Steve Shay, Department D
 747 Shard Ct., Fremont, CA 94539
 visit www.USCS.org

Military Postal History Society



Help the Society by donating materials or funds (we are a 501 c (3) organization). Please contact Treasurer Ed Fisher for more information

LA POSTA: Journal of American Postal History

The postal history journal "La Posta" was created and published for over 40 years by the late Richard W. Helbeck. Currently, this very important postal history publication remains active and is expanding. It is now produced quarterly by La Posta Publications. The editor is Peter Martin. It is considered one of the foremost postal history publications in the world. Each issue is full of excellent articles on United States postal history, covering all eras, and all parts of the country. Contact Information: Peter Martin, Editor, POB 6074, Fredricksburg VA 22403

Stars and Strife

Movie Studio Mail from Netherlands East Indies (NEI) During WWII

by Thomas Richards & Regis Hoffman

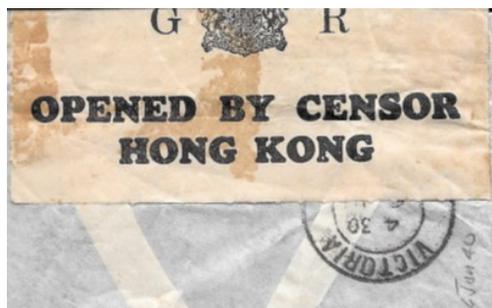
Most of our past articles in *Stars and Strife* have covered mail to and from individual stars. This time we will cover mail from/to movie studios during WWII. In the late 30s and early 40s as the storms of war gathered this was also the time, during the Golden Age of Movies (1920 – 1950s), where the movie studios were expanding throughout the world. In this article we will cover the Netherlands East Indies (NEI). Future articles may cover movie company mail in other areas of the world during times of strife.

Movie company mail from four of the major film companies is examined - MGM, Columbia Films, Warner Bros. First National Pictures, and United Artists. These are the only examples of movie company mail from NEI during WWII known to the authors.



Figure 1 shows a 29 May 1940 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) cover from Batavia Central to San Francisco, CA. Carried on Dutch Airlines to Hong Kong where it received a 6 June 1940 backstamp and a Hong Kong Censor tape (**Morenweiser Type 3A**)

It was then carried on a **FAM 14** Pacific Clipper flight to the U.S. via Hong Kong, see **Figure 2** below.



Unusually the cover did not have an NEI censor tape. The Netherlands was invaded on 10 May 1940, with censorship begun in the NEI on that date. The NEI tape would be under the Hong Kong tape but this was not the

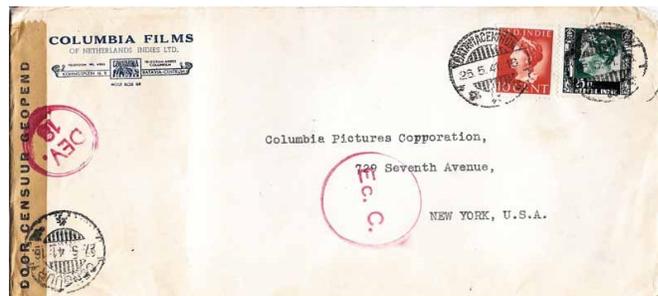
case here.

Nico de Weijer (Co-author of "*Postal Censorship and Internment Camp Mail in the Netherlands Indies 1940 – 1942*") said it was unusual to not be censored but did happen. He also made the interesting observation that the sender expected it to be censored because they wrote "*Correspondence in English*" on the letter, which was required to indicate to the Indies censors that the letter was not in Dutch. The NEI censors could assign an English-speaking censor to read the contents. The rate of 195c is proper for an envelope that weighed 10-15gm.



Figure 3 (above) shows the MGM Batavia office, most likely pre-war. There may have been a Laurel and Hardy film festival going on with the large Laurel and Hardy figures and Laurel and Hardy movie posters in the background.

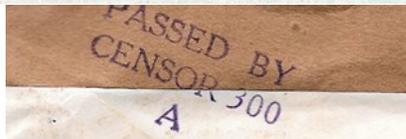
Figure 4 (below) is a 26 May 1941 Columbia Films envelope from Batavia Centrum to Columbia Films in New York. On the left is the NEI censor tape (**Type T 9** – bilingual Dutch/Malay – used Feb. 1941 to March 1942). It is marked front and back with a circular **DEV 18**. (**Type Da 3**) This is a currency censor marking that was applied at the post offices. There is also an oval economic censorship marking – "**Ec. C.**" (Economische Censuur) -



(**Type EC 1** without a number). This examination was used to detect illegal business transactions. A circular May 27 1941 **CENSUUR 4** marking ties the tape to the cover (**Type Text M15** – used Oct 1940 to Feb. 1942). The 35c postage is proper for a surface letter.

Figure 5 (below) shows the front of a 9 Sept. 1941 Warner Bros (WB) First National Pictures cover to WB Foreign Department in New York. A NEI censor tape (**Type T 9** – bilingual Dutch/Malay – used Feb. 1941 to March 1942) is on the left tied by a circular **CENSUR 6** (Type Text M15 – used Oct 1940 to Feb. 1942) marking. A circular DEV 22 (**Type Da 3**) is on the front and back. As with the Columbia Films cover on the prior page (**Figure 3**) it also has the oval economic censorship marking - “Ec. C.”

On the right is a Singapore censor tape with a censor marking on the front and back tying it to the cover. The PASSED BY CENSOR 300 A marking is a **Morenweiser Type 5B** (**Figure 6**):



An **oval 32** and an **oval G** are on the front and are believed to be airline route markings applied in Singapore. Not much more information is known about them, but a study of these markings is beginning in the Civil Censorship Study Group (CCSG). It was sent **VIA AIR MAIL-TRANS PACIFIC ROUTE** on **FAM 14**. The route to Manila went via Singapore starting on 9 May 1941. It had previously gone via Hong Kong. It travelled to San Francisco and then onwards to New York. The rate of 210c is proper for the airmail flight.

Figures 7 and 8 (another # 10 envelope) show the back and front of a multi-genre cover. It appeals to the movie mail collectors (the authors), as *censor collectors*, *Ad cover collectors*, *Airmail* and *NEI collectors*. Sent on 18 Dec. 1939 from United Artists Corporation, Batavia, NEI to the Foreign Dept. of United Artists in New York. Censorship would not start in NEI until 10 May 1940.

At first glance one would think that it went via Amsterdam by KLM airlines since it is clearly marked “**VIA AMSTERDAM**”. Both KLM and Imperial Airlines (IA) went via Calcutta and it was censored in Calcutta. It has a triangular “**PASSED CENSOR CALCUTTA**” censor marking (**Morenweiser Type 1A1** – used Sept. 1939 – Apr. 1940) It also has a handwritten #462 on the front. This may be the Imperial Airways flight number as it was common to have the Post Office write these on the mail. Even though the **PAR AVION** label is crossed out in red – it

probably went by air on IA to London. Further confirmation is the censor tape = a PC66 (**Morenweiser Type D** – with serif oval “O”) applied in England. It was then forwarded to NY by a **FAM 18** flight. The rate of 115c is proper for the route to the USA using Imperial Airways for a letter weighing 6 – 10 grams



The attraction to the movie collector (the authors) is the Ad for the 1938 movie *Winter Carnival* starring Richard Carlson and Ann Sheridan. It was released in July of 1939 so this is an early foreign ad for this movie and may be considered its first foreign run. It is the only reported Movie Ad cover known to the authors.

References:

- de Weijer, Nico and van Putten, Piet, *Postal Censorship and Internment Camp Mail in the Netherlands Indies 1940 – 1942*, Southwest Pacific Study Group (ZWP), First English Edition, ed. by Nash, F. J. and van Nieuwerkerk, J.R., 2015.
- Morenweiser, Konrad, *British Empire Civil Censorship Devices WWII – British Asia*, The Civil Censorship Study Group, 2011.
- Fred Nash email - NEI censorship and routes.

LOOKING to SELL:

American Flag WW I Postal Service Flag Cancels:

Mel Dick, pollodelmar143@yahoo.com

WWI Covers: AEF Covers (14) ; 15 covers (9 censored); Ltr. Shts., Camp Devens (6); At Sea (2); France (3) Occupied Germany (4); F-VF; by Brian Green, bmgcivilwar@triad.rr.com

Eye on Foreign Military Covers

1801 French Military Letter

by John Abrams

(Editor's Note: A new regular column is being introduced, authored by John Abrams of New Mexico. John is also the editor of the Palo Duro Stamp Club Newsletter, in which has appeared a number of his outstanding postal history articles. You will begin seeing them with the next issue).

This letter was written during the "War of the Second Coalition" between the Republic of France and Great Britain, Austria and Russia. The war (from 1799 to 1802) was the second major war against France after the revolution.

The letter was written by a French officer, Tribout, the commander of the 17th Demi-Brigade [Regiment] of the Infantry of the Line, 2nd Division, French Army of Batavia. It was addressed to the Prefect of a French Department (similar to a state or province).

On the front of the cover (Figure 1), the postmark applied by the military post office (red, upper right) is "HOLLANDE TROUPES FOISES". All postmarks (both civilian and military) of this period were undated straight line hand stamps. The postal rate, 4 decimes, is written across the right side.



Figure 1: The front of the folded letter.

On the back (Figure 2 - next column) is a civilian post office transit postmark (red), "D93B ANVERS". Anvers (Antwerp, Belgium) was in the Deux-Nèthes Department (no. 93). The initials, "D...B" in "D93B" are the abbreviation of "Déboursé" indicating postage paid to destination. Also on the back (at the top) is a manuscript note "Ouvert par Erreur" (opened by mistake).

The letter (Figure 3—next column) is datelined "A La haye le 24 Nivose l'an 9e de la République Française, une & indivisible". (At The Hague the 24 Nivôse the 9th year of the French Republic, one and indivisible). The Republican date "24 Nivôse, year 9" was January 14, 1801 on the Gregorian calendar.

The letter is addressed "Au Citoyen Préfet du départe-



Figure 2: The back of the folded letter.

ment de L'escaut" (To Citizen Prefect of Department of the Escaut). The Escaut Department (capital at Ghent) was formed in 1795 in the "Batavian Republic" (the French annexed the Austrian Netherlands – present day Netherlands and Belgium).

The text of the letter is:

"To Citizen Prefect of Department of the Escaut.

The citizen, Jean Minne, native of Gaud, ? of your De-

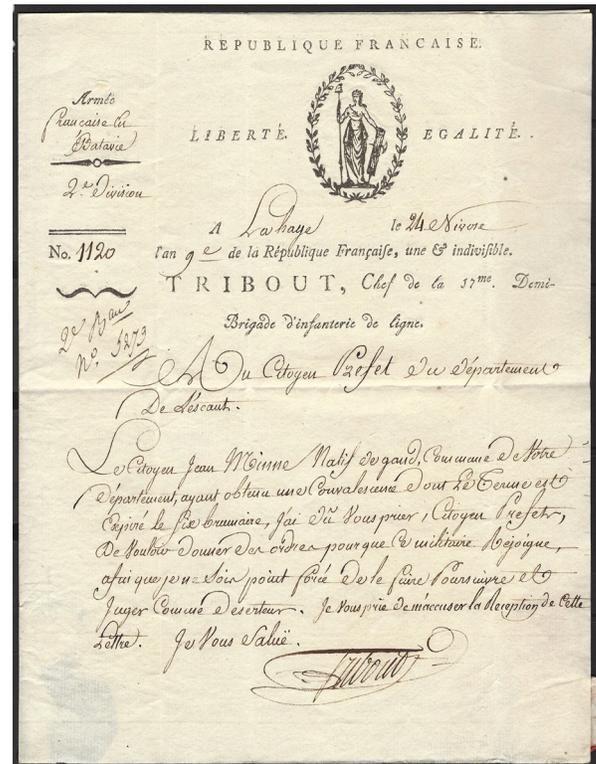


Figure 3: The text side of the letter.

partment, having obtained a convalescent leave of which the term had expired on six Brumaire [October 28, 1800], I am requesting, Citizen Prefect, that you give orders for

this soldier to return so that I am not forced to pursue him and judge him as a deserter. I request that you acknowledge receipt of this letter.

I salute you, Tribout"

The red wax seal on the back of the cover has the official stamp of the 17th Demi-Brigade. Around the top curve is "17ME DEMI BRIGADE". In the bottom oval is "REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE". Above the oval are symbols of the Republic such as the liberty cap.



Figure 4: Details of the wax seal.

References:

French Revolutionary Wars - Key Events, <www-emersonkent.com>

The Calendar of the French Revolution, <www-abelard.org/france>

Departments of France, <en.wikipedia.org>

On the Show Circuit

by Alan Warren

[Note: The purpose of this column is to bring to the attention of MPHS members the awards presented in recent shows for exhibits that are about military postal history. This may include exhibits by non-members. While there are many non-military related exhibits by members, these are not recorded here.]

At the March AmeriStamp Expo in Reno, Nevada, **David McNamee** received a **large gold** and the MPHS award for his "**Conquest of the Zulu Kingdom 1876-1897.**" **Gold** awards went to **Stephen Schumann** for "**New Zealand POW Air Letter Cards,**" and **David Zemer** for "**WW I Censorship of Mail in the Canal Zone.**" **Large vermeils** went to **David Kent** for "**Austro-Hungarian Battleships in WW I**" and **Ralph Nafziger** for "**A Soldier's Diary: The WW I North Russia Expedition.**"

Dan Telep won a **large gold**, the MPHS award, and the APS 1940-1980 medal of excellence at the **March Party in Cleveland** with his "**Vietnam's Communist Insurgent Military Mail 1959-1975.**" **Gold** awards went

to **Ken Lawrence** for "**Wake Island in World War II,**" and to **Charles LaBlonde**, and the India Study Circle award, for "**The Postal History of the Goa WW II Internee Mail.**"

Several military related exhibits were in the **2017 National Spring Show** held in Edmonton, Alberta, **Canada** in March. **Jon Johnson** won a **gold**, the APS 1900-1940 medal of excellence, and the Postal History Society of Canada award for his "**WWI Canadian Army Nursing Sisters Serving Overseas.**" A **large vermeil**, the BNAPS research award, and the Ritch Toop best military postal history award went to **Hal Kellett** for "**The Military in Canada 1812-1905.**" Kellett also won a **vermeil** and the BNAPS best 2x4 award for "**Force 'C': The Canadian Army in Hong Kong 1941-1945.**"

A **gold** and the MPHS award went to **Wally Tears** at **St. Louis Stamp Expo** in April for his "**Swiss Volunteers during WWII.**" **Greg Galletti** took a **large gold** and the American Philatelic Congress award for "**The League of Nations: The War Years.**" **Wayne Youngblood** received a **large vermeil** for "**Lost Almost: Los Alamos, N.M., Post Office and WW II.**"

Armando Grassi received a **large gold** and the MPHS award at **Westpex** in San Francisco in April with his "**A Postal Historian Study of the Crimean War.**" A **gold** and the APS 1940-1980 award of excellence went to **Louis Fiset** for "**U.S. Internment of Noncombatants in World War II, 1939-1948.**"

In the single frame category at **Westpex**, **Andrew Urushima** took a **large gold** and a Polonus Polish Philatelic Society gold for "**The 1944 Gross Born POW Olympics.**" **Regis Hoffman** won a show **bronze** and a Polonus bronze for "**Polish Refugees in Africa, World War II.**"

Ken Lawrence earned a **gold** at **Philatelic Show** in Boxborough, Mass., in May with his "**Wake Island in World War II.**" **David Kent** won a **large vermeil** and the Lighthouse Stamp Society award for "**The Merchant Submarine Deutschland in Picture Postcards.**" A **vermeil** also went to **Dave** along with an AAPE award of honor for "**Austro-Hungarian Battleships in WW I.**"

Victor Potter received a **vermeil** and the best military postal history award at the **Orapex** show in Ottawa, Canada, in May with his "**Franco-Prussian War and Aftermath, 1870-1872.**" **Louis Fiset** earned a **large gold** and the APS 1940-1980 medal of excellence at **Pipex** in Portland, Ore., in May for his "**Censored, Rerouted, Suspended, Resumed: US International Mail in World War II.**" He also won another **large gold** and the Lighthouse Stamp Society award for "**M.S. Gripsholm: Ocean Liner, Cruise Ship, Mercy Ship.**" **Michael Dixon** took a **gold** for "**Boer POW Camps in Ceylon 1900-1902.**"

Andrew Mazzara earned a **gold** and the APS 1940-1980 medal of excellence at **ROPEX** in Canandaigua, NY in May with his "**British and Guernsey Stamps and their Use during German Occupation, 1940-45.**"

Several military related exhibits were on hand at the **Rocky Mountain Stamp Show** in Denver in May for the MPHS convention. **Large golds** went to **Robert Hisey** for **“The Fall and Rise of French African Air Routes in WW II,”** to **Harry K. Charles**, along with the single frame grand award for **“The United States War Savings Stamps of WW I,”** and to **Dickson Preston** for **“U.S. Army Post Offices in Greenland 1941-1945.”**

Sergio Lugo received a **gold**, the MPHS award, and the Aurora Stamp Club award for best exhibit by a Colorado resident with his **“Morale Maintenance Work in World War I by U.S. Service Organizations.”** **Gold** awards also went to **Alfred Kugel** for **“World War II Pacific Navy Location Code Numbers,”** **“German World War I Military and Occupation Mail from Allied and Enemy Territory,”** and **“A Potpourri of Mail from American Forces in World War I.”**

Golds were earned by **Phil Miller** for **“Foreign Volunteers with the German Military during WW II,”** and by **Charles LaBlonde** for **“The Rise and Fall of WW II Postal Censorship: Swiss Perspective.”** **David and Laurie Bernstein** received a **large vermeil** and the USCS Herbert Rommel award with their **“Kriegsmarine Schlachtschiff Bismarck: A Philatelic History.”**

Vermeil awards went to **Charles LaBlonde** for **“The Postal History of the Goa World War II Internee Mail,”** to **Stanley Luft** for **“French Army of the Orient, 1915-1923,”** and to **Phil Miller** for **“German Afrika Korps.”** **Lloyd Ferrell** won a **large silver** for **“Little-known Ships at Pearl Harbor,”** and another **large silver** went to **Sergio Lugo** for **“The Vichy Overseas Empire in Decline between 1940-45: Postal History.”**

At the Napex show in McLean, Virginia, in June, **Phil Rhoad** received a **gold**, the Society for Czechoslovak Philately Mucha award, the Professional Stamp Experts award, and the Stephen Luster award for **“The Murder of Lidice.”** A **large silver** went to **Marvin Murray** for **“Swastika Over Germany – The Role of the Post Office during ‘The Model Occupation.’”**

Michèle Cartier won a **large gold** for **“The French Revolution from the Ancien Régime to the End of the First Republic”** at the **Royale 2017 Royal exhibition in Boucherville, Quebec, Canada**, in May. Cartier also received a **gold** and the Postal History Society of Canada’s Ritch Toop best military award for **“The French Revolutionary Wars in Italy 1791-1815.”** **Don Hedger** took a **large vermeil**, the AAPE creativity award, and the ATA single frame first award with his **“Epic of Vimy – A Canadian Pilgrimage.”** Don also won a **bronze** for **“A Soldier’s Postcards – Mailed from the Somme and Flanders WW I, May 1915-March 1916.”**

Janet Klug took a **large gold**, the MPHS award, the Collectors Club of Chicago Philatelic Exhibitors award, and the American Philatelic Congress award at Col-

opex in Columbus, Ohio in June for her **“The Australian Occupation of Japan 1946-1952.”** At the same show **Thomas Prutch** won a **large vermeil** and an AAPE award of honor for **“Papal States Military Mail.”**

Philatelic Militaria

by Alan Warren

[The following articles appeared in recent issues of a variety of journals and may be of interest to military postal historians. Copies of the complete articles can usually be obtained through the American Philatelic Research Library, 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte PA 16823.]

Erik Nicolaisen describes the **POW camp at Løgumkloster, Denmark, during WW I** and shows correspondence in the **March issue of *Dansk Posthistorisk Tidsskrift***. In the same issue **Arne Fredens** provides examples of the strange **red star handstamp** that appears on **some WW I censored covers from Denmark**. They appear to be applied to British censor resealing tapes on letters sent to Brazil and Argentina.

Richard Sheaff nicely covers the subject of the **WW II “free” military mail adhesive labels** in the **March issue of the *American Stamp Dealer & Collector***. A variety of these patriotic red and blue perforated stamp-like labels were used in the upper right corner of the envelope. Some were printed with the wording “Postage Free” but were banned. Most simply had a patriotic symbol (flag, liberty bell, statue of liberty) and a slogan.

In the same issue **Kevin Lowther** discusses the **early confrontation of the U.S. and Germany that propelled America into the war**. He shows a mail piece that survived a German attack on a ship and a cover that lost its postage stamp due to water exposure. It was handstamped **“DAMAGED BY IMMERSION IN SEA WATER.”**

In the **March issue of *Scandinavian Contact***, **John McKay** continues his series on **Swedish neutrality** with illustrations of military letters sent from the **Åland islands** in 1918-1919 when Sweden sent troops there to remove Russian units. **Sveinung Svendsen** discusses **correspondence relating to Operation Doomsday** in the **December issue of *Norwegian War and Field Post Journal***. The British furnished a temporary occupation unit in Norway until Force 134 arrived. Some examples of correspondence during the period between May and August 1945 sent from the Oslo area to England are shown.

Ian Robertson shows a cover sent from **Canada to the International Red Cross in Geneva** in 1943, in the **March 21 issue of *Canadian Stamp News***. The sender mailed the letter from Mountain View, Ontario, where there was a training facility with a Military Post Office #309. The author explores the history of Mountain

View and its use by the RCAF.

Edward Klempka offers the second part in his series on the **Russian Revolution: Military Intervention into Russia 1917-22** in the *April Gibbons Stamp Monthly*. He discusses the American, Canadian, French, and Italian forces in Siberia and shows examples of mail that resulted from these military missions.

Two MPHS officers, **Ed Dubin and Al Kugel**, are co-authors of an extensive article in the *April American Philatelist* marking the **centenary of World War I**. Some of the many topics they touch on include the American Red Cross mercy ship, the American hospital at Neuilly-sur-Seine, the Henry Ford peace ship, American training camps, secret poison gas research, internment camps, domestic censorship, the APO system, AEF mail, Christmas package coupons, POW camps, and welcome home cards among others. Mail associated with these aspects is shown.

Kevin Lowther continues his series on WW I in the *April American Stamp Dealer & Collector*. This time he **profiles William "Billy" Mitchell** who was sent to Europe as a military observer for aviation. Several covers that relate to him are shown. In the **same issue Art Groten** describes the use of **service stamps during WW I**. These labels containing one to three stars were used on mail by families who had members serving in the military, and were based on the service flags or banners used for the same purpose in people's windows and homes.

The **February** issue of *War Times*, published by the WW II Study Group of BNAPS, reproduces some **press releases of Canada's Department of Munitions and Supply in the 1940s**. Most deal with announcing contracts that have been let. Examples of the O.H.M.S. envelopes that were used to mail them are also shown.

Anthony Fandino looks at some aspects of **censorship** during war time in the **May** issue of *U. S. Stamp News*. He shows a cover that was plastered with a variety of U.S. stamps and marked for return to sender. It apparently also contained stamps for a collector requiring a special permit to send stamps outside the country. Permission had to be obtained from the Philatelic Control Unit.

Gunnar Melbøe illustrates **fieldpost mail**, postmarks, and censored covers, all relating to activity at **Narvik, Norway**, during the period **April 9 to June 10, 1940**, in the **March** issue of *Norwegian War and Field Post Journal*. **Dick Scheper** describes the **franking of mail in Blagoveshchensk in far Eastern Siberia** during the Civil War in the **Spring 2017** issue of *Rossica*. The period covered is from May 1918 to November 1922. Many different adhesives were used during certain periods including stamps issued by the city itself.

John Burnett describes the **paper shortage in Canada during WW II** in the **April-June** issue of *BNA Topics*. He illustrates the use of printed labels that promoted re-use of envelopes and provided resealing capability as

well as an area for a new address. In the **same issue Ed Fraser** identifies an **undercover service in Geneva** used for forwarding correspondence during WW I, and not previously described in the philatelic literature. He shows examples of mail from Canada, England, Austria, and Slovenia sent to the Switzerland address.

Jerome C. Jarnick provides a description of **Exercise Polar Strike**, the 1965 Cold War operation, in the **April** issue of the *Canadian Military Mail Study Group's Newsletter*. It was a large scale warfare exercise by 14,000 U.S. Army and Air Force personnel and 600 Canadian paratroopers, and conducted in central Alaska, about 250 miles from Fairbanks. Jarnick shows one piece of scarce mail from this mock warfare exercise.

James Milgram describes and illustrates a wide variety of **Civil War soldiers' postage due mail** in the *May American Stamp Dealer & Collector*. Normally soldiers' mail was prepaid with postage but they were allowed to endorse the envelope "Soldier's letter" and have it hand-stamped Due 3. Often a manuscript notation was added by an officer to certify that it was soldiers' correspondence.

German WW I food ration stamps is the subject of **William Velvel Moskoff's** article in the *May German Postal Specialist*. He provides a background discussion on how the system was developed to deal with food shortages and then focuses on their use in Stuttgart. In the **June** issue he continues with **civilian rationing, ration stamps for the Wehrmacht, and ration stamps for vacationers**.

An unsigned article in the *May War Times*, published by the World War II Study Group of BNAPS, briefly discusses **Canada's World War II war savings stamps and certificates**. **Kevin Lowther** turns to the subject of **volunteer ambulance drivers in France** during WW I in the *June American Stamp Dealer & Collector*, showing a number of photographs and some related mail.

William DiPaolo delves into the **Ponce and Coamo Provisionals of Puerto Rico** towards the end of the Spanish American War, in the **first quarter 2017** issue of *Possessions*. The Ponce issue has been characterized as a local post but the author argues against that position and suggests it be delisted from catalogs.

THIERRY DELESPESE

Thierry was a long time member of the MPHS, and its auction manager for the past several years. News of his death, from pancreatic cancer was received in early June 2017. He had most recently been on an extended educational and research trip to Vietnam. Thierry had also been working on Vol. 4 of the MPHS' book on APOs. He is survived by his wife Julie and a daughter.



CLASSIFIED ADS

For details and to submit all copy with payment (payable on a U.S. bank) contact editor, Sergio Lugo, lugopspe@q.com.

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SEEKING:: Material for exhibit and column. **focused on "Intelligence..** Covers, stamps, postal history, literature/ references and appropriate other sought. I write for government & academic publications on the intelligence field and it is a good way to introduce non-collectors to the hobby.. All inquires acknowledged. Mark Sommer, 1266 Teaneck Road (10A), Teaneck, NJ 07666; (201) 837-0489 16/2

FOR SALE: YOUR UNIFORM IS YOUR PASS: *Soldier and Sailor Welfare Relief in WWI.* 5 of 12 completed vols.: *American Library Association; Jewish Welfare Board; Salvation Army; National Lutheran Commission; National League for Woman's Service;* Softbound, saddle stitched, 60 - 85 ppg. ea.; \$25 per vol., \$125 for set; postage paid: Sergio Lugo, 1190 S. Grape, Denver, CO. 80246; 303-691-0393; lugopspe@q.com 16/1

WANTED: Postal history of (1) **U.S. 2nd Inf. Regt.** (1791-now), (2) **1st Inf. Div.** (1917-now), or (3) **Social Welfare Organizations** of WWI. S. Lugo: 303-691-0393; lugopspe@q.com 15/4

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QUIXOTIC ITEM OF THE ISSUE

by Ken Lawrence

The quixotic element of this 1941 airmail cover stares at you in the exact center of a Ken Lawrence cover. Stopping over at the home of postal historians Elwyn & Anne Doubleday on a road trip to Boxborough, Ken discovered the letter below explaining the use of this unusual U.S. Army Examiner number. Rather than taking you through an explanation, Ken provided the letter below for your reading, and educational, enjoyment.



APS 41275 (1)
ENCL 911 (1)
PHS 713

Victor E. Engstrom
2653 Pebble Beach Drive
Clearwater, Florida 34621-2741

COL. CLUB, N.Y.
A.P. CONGRESS (4)
F.R.P.S. LONDON

Mr. Richard B. Graham
c/o Linn's
Sidney, Ohio

April 26, 1994

Dear Mr. Graham,

This is in reference to your article in Linn's April 18 issue regarding U.S. Armed Forces Mail.

I was stationed in Washington, DC during WW 2 as an officer, G-2 War Department, Counter Intelligence Division. Military censorship was one of our concerns.

Your speculations regarding the 00000 censorship stamp are completely correct. The handstamp came to my office for design approval. I did approve the design and put the handstamp in my desk drawer. There it was available to a few officers to pass on unusual mail that arrived in Army channels, including diplomatic pouch mail of a personal nature. I believe that the officer who passed on your letter was then Lt Stanley R. Goodrich. When I read your article, I thought I still had the handstamp in my possession, but I cannot locate it.

I know that the stamp was used quite a few times in the early days of the war. I indicated my approval with my initials VEE (VEE). Joe Geraci (Smithsonian) located one and gave to me since we had a mutual interest in the address. However, that also is lost. I did locate a few censorship labels, but can't remember when they were to be used.

I enjoy your postal history writings, and even quote you. I have a modest Advertising Cover exhibit. In American Illustrated Cover Catalog you stress the point that Ad covers are Postal History. I write this in my title page.

Sincerely,
Vic

The Sky Is Falling, The Sky is Falling Volunteer

No one wants to plead Chicken Little here, But a quick look at pg. 2 will show **five (5)** vacancies in the MPHS' leadership. Those vacancies have been hampering the growth of the MPHS and stifling activities as remaining officers have to assume greater responsibilities or the work is left undone. Please consider running for office in the upcoming elections.

Contact President Ed Dubin

Email address = dubine@comcast.net

What's Coming To You In Future Bulletins

In addition to MPHS Society news and regular features, the following are in the next issues of the *Bulletin* (subject to change). **Bold titles indicate completed:**

Fall (# 4, release 11/10/17)

- **German Air Field Service Post** (Abrams)
- MPHS Convention RMSS
- **Gunner's Mate & Postal Clerk, Pt. II (Lugo)**
- **"Gladan" Shootdown-Correction** (Sanford)
- **Military Postal History - Marconigram** (Richards)
- **Do Not Bring My Body Home-Korea** (Albright)
- **Disney Animators-Nisei Internees** (Richards)
- **Gray Leaders on Horseback** (Green)
- **Courier Mail: Revolutionary War re. Draft (Vora)**
- Index to 2017 MPHS Bulletin

Winter (# 1, release 2/10/18)

- **1937-39 Civilian Mail China** (Weirather)
- **U.S. Consular Service China, USS Brooklyn** (Vora)
- **Why Is This Postcard Censored?** (Nelson)
- **NY Copperhead Writes (Lugo)**
- **Naval Wife Scrapbook & USS Ommaney Bay** (Lugo)
- **Quixotic Mail 1947**
- **Espionage Act of WW I** (Berlin)

Spring (#2, release 5/10/18)

- **Mexican National WW II US Army -Bilingual**(Lugo)
- **Texas Politician in Post War Japan+Korea** (Vora)
- **Newfoundland Special Delivery** (Crown)
- **Halifax Censors in WW I** (Lowther)
- **APS Article on Espionage** (Berlin)

Summer (# 3, release 8/10/18)

- **Y Worker in Brutalized French Village** (Lotwtther)
- **1795 Am. POW Letter to James Madison** (Vora)
- **Anglo Boer War POW Mail** (Abrams)

Fall (# 4, release 11/11/18) -

Special Edition: 100th Anniversary of the Armistice

- **Summary of U.S. PMG Reports 1917 - 1919**
- **Postal History of the 1st Infantry Division** (Lugo)
- **5th Year of the War** (Kugel)

Rear Guard Cover of the Month - "Oh, How I Hate to Get Up In the Morning"
by David Kent

Camp Upton

March 22, 1918

"My Dear Aline:

Got your letter all right and was more than glad to hear from you and glad to hear that you have a new baby. If he look like the rest off the famelly he must be a cute little. Think that will take some off your spare time away but I suppose you will enjoy it after you take a liking to it.

Well talking about this here place it hase nothink on Slocum it is like know man land. This his a real place this his the place where there ship them to france. There a company that will leave to-morrow there are all pack up and ready to leave.

I think that I am nearer france then anys other place but I should worry the quicker there ship me across the better I will like it because I dont like this place. I am among people that I never seen and I feel lonesome. I often think off you and at home and I often wonder if I will ever meet my brother Bob. he did the wrong think by joining the canadian army and I can get over it.

Well Aline this week his holy week and I am doing my Easter duty. I ain't forget god yet and I often prey that he will kept you the same as when I was home. I am going to confes-tion Saturday. Last Sunday was palm Sunday and there all give us a strip off palm. I got mine yet and I will give you a peace. I thought I would be able to home for Easter but now I know I can so I will be content to stay hear.

You want to tell Chick that I wish him the best off luck. I was cought in the draft here and my face his all chap. I

look as if I been living on the outside all my life. I aint got mush more to say only that I wish your mother will recover soon and wish that it will be a nice Easter Sunday so you can were your new hat. If you go to my house tell them that I am in the best of health and tell them to send me Bob address. I wrote home allready and there did'nt answer so please tell them to push there feet. I will close wishing you a fine time for Easter and in the future there will be running dances and you can have a good time. Dont forget to kiss the baby for me.

From Walter xxxxx
Camp Upton, L.I.

Commentary: The modern custom of placing a return address on an envelope was not firmly established in 1918, so it is impossible to figure out who "Walter" was, other than the cause of much despair to his English and grammar teachers. Likely, he was from the New Bedford, Massachusetts area. Clearly he was a new draftee, preparing for overseas service.

He writes from Camp Upton, located in the village of Yaphank in Suffolk County, New York, at the east end of Long Island. Postal regulations of the day provided that city post offices were divided into four classes based on business volume. Only a First Class office could host a branch such as Camp Upton. The nearest First Class post office on the sparsely populated island was Brooklyn, 60 miles away (see cancellation)

With a capacity of 18,000 troops, Camp Upton was one of three transient camps controlled by the NY Port of Embarkation (Walter notes another— Fort Slocum). The camp was named after Emory Upton, a Civil War Union general. Built in 1917, Camp Upton provided basic training, and housed troops awaiting assignment overseas. The Long Island Railroad built an extension to the camp for service to New York City. There, troops boarded troopships at the Brooklyn Navy Yard or at Hoboken, New Jersey. At war's end, thousands returned to Camp Upton for discharge. The 152nd Depot Brigade was the garrison unit that received and trained new recruits and provided discharge services.

Among the soldiers trained at Camp Upton was Alvin York, America's most decorated soldier of WW I. Another was the song writer Irving Berlin of "God Bless America" fame (in WW II) and the musical "Yip, Yip, Yaphank," featuring the memorable tune "Oh! How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning." The musical was turned into the WW II movie "This Is The Army," starring Ronald Reagan, with Irving Berlin still singing about how he hated mornings!

