



# Use of the French Franchise Militaire Stamps (F.M.) From the Colonies During the Era of the Group Type

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Hamilton Stamp Club

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# The Franchise Militaire (F.M.) Stamps

- What are these stamps?
- Why were they created?
- When were they created?
- How were they used from the Colonies during the Group Type Era?
- Was the use abused?

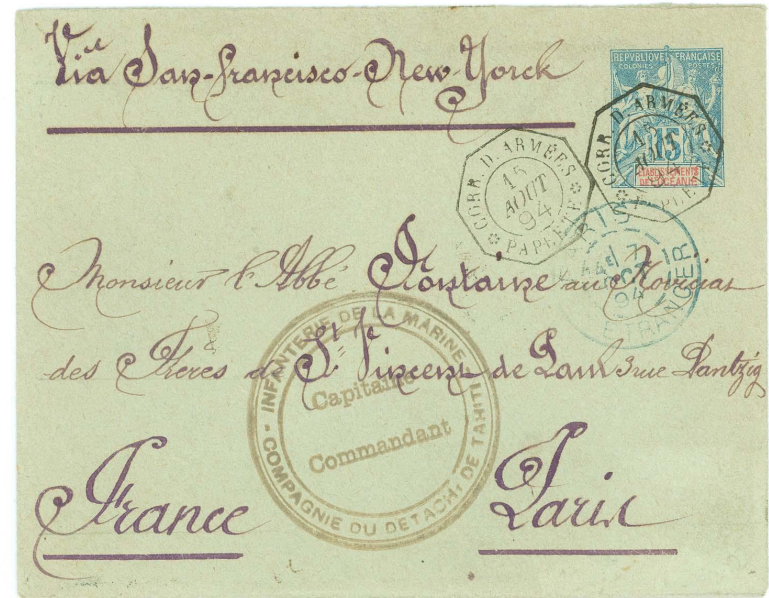


# French Military Mail Prior to 1901

- **Occupation forces and soldiers on station received a special military concession rate of 15 centimes in lieu the regular 25c rate within the French Community**
  - Rate required validation by local commander consisting of unit cachet, manuscript endorsement and commander's signature
- **Forces engaged in combat received full franchise – their mail was sent for free**
  - Franchise also required validation by local commander consisting of unit cachet, manuscript endorsement and commander's signature
- **Both types of mail required significant time to process at the point of origin before being carried to nearest post office**

# Typical Military Concession Rate

- Sent from Papeete, French Oceania in 1894
- Concession rate of 15c in lieu of 25c French Community rate
- Octagonal **CORR D'ARMEES PAPEETE** military datestamp
- Unit cachet on front
- **Manuscript validation and signature on reverse**
- Paris arrivals on front and back





Via San-Francisco-New-York

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Monsieur l'Abbé Containe aux Religieuses  
des Freres de St Vincent de Paul Rue Saint-Jacques  
Paris



France

Paris



# Typical Military Franchise Letter

- Posted Sainte Marie, Saint Marie de Madagascar in 1898
- Military cachet (Marine Unit), manuscript endorsement and commander's signature at left
- Transit and arrival on reverse
- Possibly the only recorded military franchise letter from Sainte Marie





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Monsieur le Dr H. Bernard  
à ~~Versey~~ (~~Ht-Marne~~)

P. P. Dijon  
Poste Restante  
Côte d'Or



# Creation of the Military Franchise Stamps

- On January 1, 1899 the military concession rate of 15c in lieu of 25c ceased to exist because the French Community rate was lowered to 15c
- All military mail became military franchise mail
- Complex validation process continued
- How might the process be simplified?



# Creation of the Military Franchise Stamps

- In 1901 France authorized creation of the military franchise stamps and a system to go with it
- The existing 15c Type Mouchon (Designer) French Community rate stamps were overprinted **F.M.** for use in the world-wide French military system



# Rules Under Which the Stamps Were Used

- Each member of the military was allowed to send two free letters each month not exceeding 15g (First weight level)
- For letters exceeding 15g additional postage, or registration if requested, was to be prepaid with regular postage
- Two franchise militaire stamps could not be used on a single letter
- If two stamps were not used in a given month, the right to use them was voided and did not carry over to the next month
- Use of the **F.M.** stamps replaced the standard validation procedures
- The stamps were considered to have no value and could not be used on foreign mail
- The distribution and use of the stamps was to be handled by the local Quartermaster
- Details for ordering the new stamps were developed

# Reality of the Use of the F.M Stamps

- The success of the use of these stamps depended on the ability of the French to get them to soldiers around the world on a timely basis.
  - For troops on station and not engaged in combat this was not a problem
  - For troops engaged in combat and changing locations rapidly, the timely delivery of stamps was not at the top of the priority list

# Reality of the Use of the F.M. Stamps

- Since it was not possible to readily provide stamps to troops engaged in combat, the F.M. stamps were used as follows:
  - Troops not engaged in combat but doing occupation or police duties received and used the stamps
  - Troops engaged in combat continued use of the old military franchise free mail system with its standard validation procedures
- This had not been clearly realized prior to this study



# Use of the Old System in Combat Areas

- Military franchise letter from November 1902
- French Indochinese forces attempting to conquer territory during the campaign in Siam
- Endorsement and military cachet used for validation
- Cachet: **POSTE DE PAK NAM SIAM**
- Mailed to Noumea, New Caledonia – Only example recorded
- This campaign failed



Troupes d'occupation de Chantama



Nouvelle Calédonie







occur until mid

- 15c Mouchon –
- Retouched 15c
- 15c Semuse (lig
- 10c Semuse (ro
- Rate change to



1903

1904

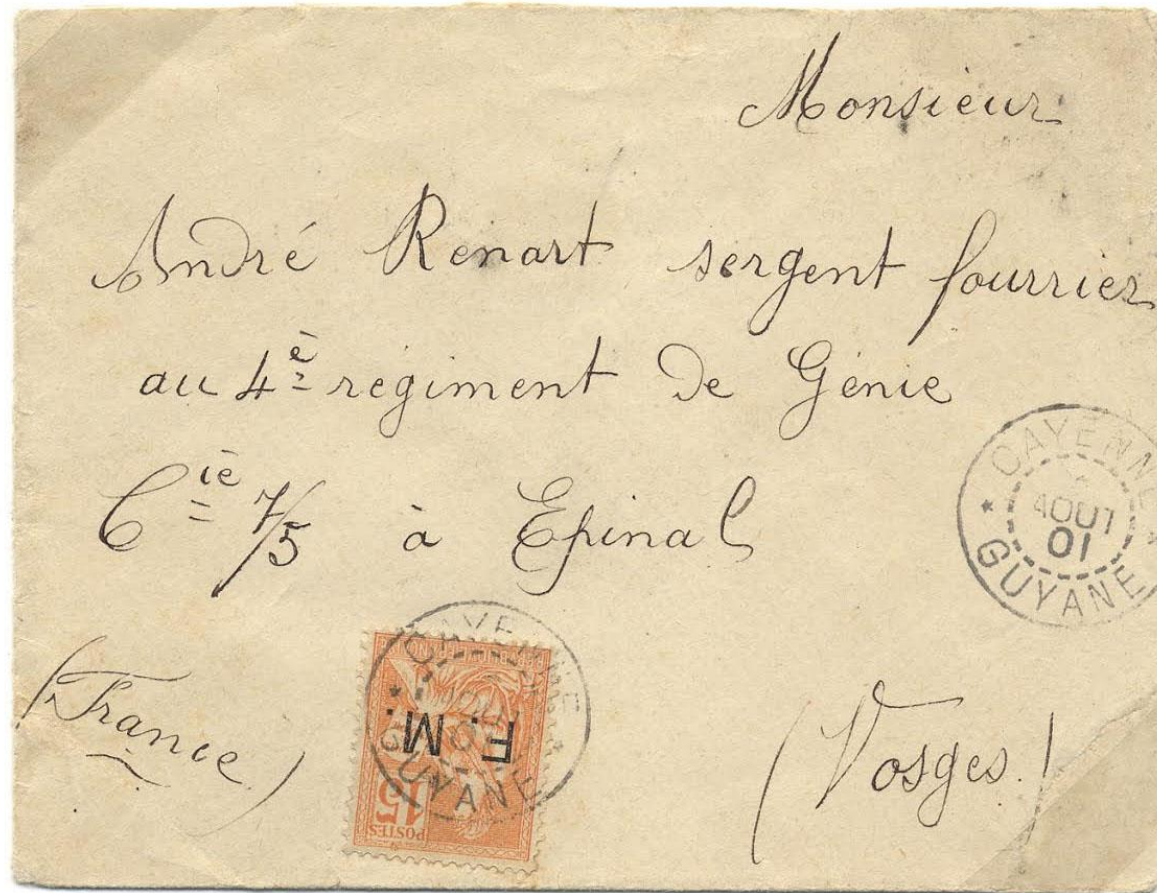
- 10c Semuse (vermillon) – August 1907

# Use of the Stamps

- The French American Colonies
- The West African Colonies
- The Indian Ocean Colonies
- Indochina
- The French Pacific Colonies
- **It is important to note that these stamps had no monetary value and were essentially labels to indicate a type of mail service. Thus, they were used until supplies were consumed, even when newer values were available or when the value shown on the stamp was no longer the valid French Community postal rate**



# American Colonies - French Guiana: Earliest Recorded Use August 2, 1901



# Guadeloupe: Small Village of Baie Mahault

## Gendarmerie Guadeloupe Handstamp



Guadeloupe: **GENDARMERIE DE LA**  
**GUADELOUPE** Handstamp January 11, 1908  
With 10c Sower





# Guadeloupe: Improper Use of Two Stamps, Not Caught by Originating Office at Saint Claude, Thus Incorrectly Allowed



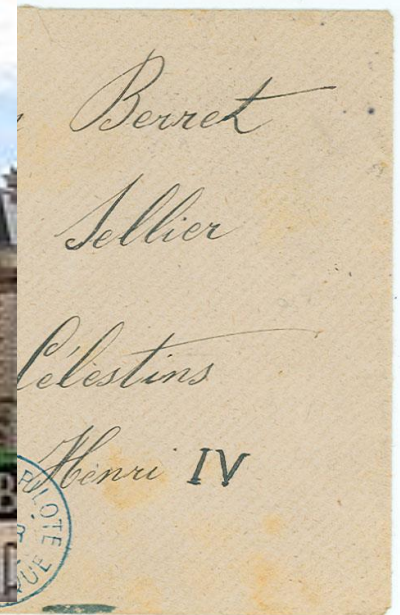


Martinique: Fort-de-France, November 19, 1903  
With Octagonal Military Handstamp (Not Required)



# Martinique: Trois Rivières

- Posted from the small village of
- February
- **Use of the Franchise stamp**
- Incomplete delivery not until August 24, 1905 in Paris





POSTES



Monsieur Berret  
Maître-Sellier

Caserne des Célestins

16 Boulevard Henri IV



# Saint Pierre & Miquelon

- Originated in little village of Miquelon
- From the Gendarmerie
- Registration required prepayment with regular 25c stamp
- Major rarity on all accounts
- Only recorded example







# West African Colonies

- Senegal – Limited use as not lots of troops stationed there
- French Sudan – extensive use as extensive military campaigns and occupation underway during the 1902 – 1915 period
- French Guinea and Dahomey – have not seen use from these colonies
- French Congo and Ivory Coast - Limited use

# French Sudan: Sikasso (Small Village)

## August 6, 1904 to Lyon

- This is a properly franked registered double weight letter (15 – 30 g)
- Franking:
  - F.M. stamp for the first 15g
  - 15c Group Type for the next 15g
  - 25c Group Type for registration





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Madame

Madame et Monsieur Frantz Canisat  
8 Rue Servians 8

Lyon



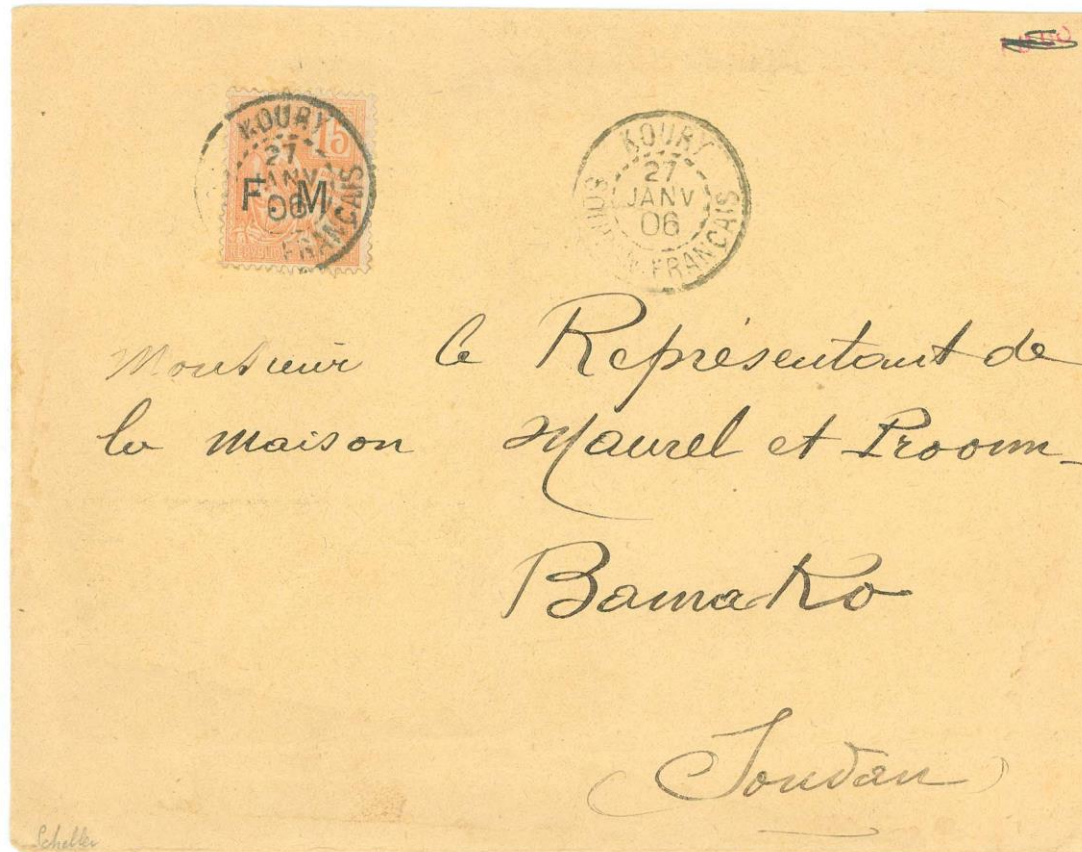
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inst. Grefectin  
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# French Sudan: Koury (Small Village) January 27, 1906 Local Use to Bamako, the Capitol



**Note: At this time the 15c Semuse F.M. stamps were available, but use of the existing stock of older stamps continued until they were consumed.**



# Ivory Coast – Bouake 1914



# French Congo: Impfondo February 13, 1913 Village Deep Within Congo – 10c Sower Stamp



# The French Indian Ocean Colonies

- Madagascar
- Reunion
- French India
- There was no significant military activity or presence in Obock/Djibouti/Somali Coast during this period

Madame <sup>per</sup> Ponsan  
Rue des Pyramides  
Bel. Abbes  
Oran (Algérie)

33



# Use With Provisional -56- Numeral Cancel From the Newly Opened Office at Sitampitky



# Posted on the Reunion – Marseille French Packet While at the Port of Diego Suarez



# Posted at Diego Suarez With Request for Registration (25c) in 1908



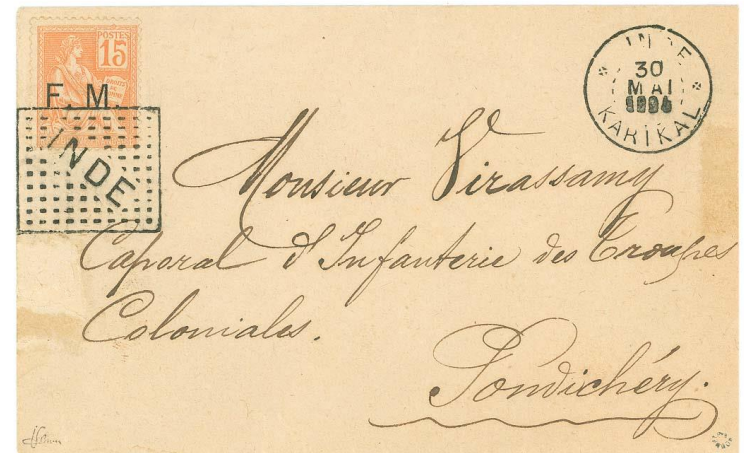
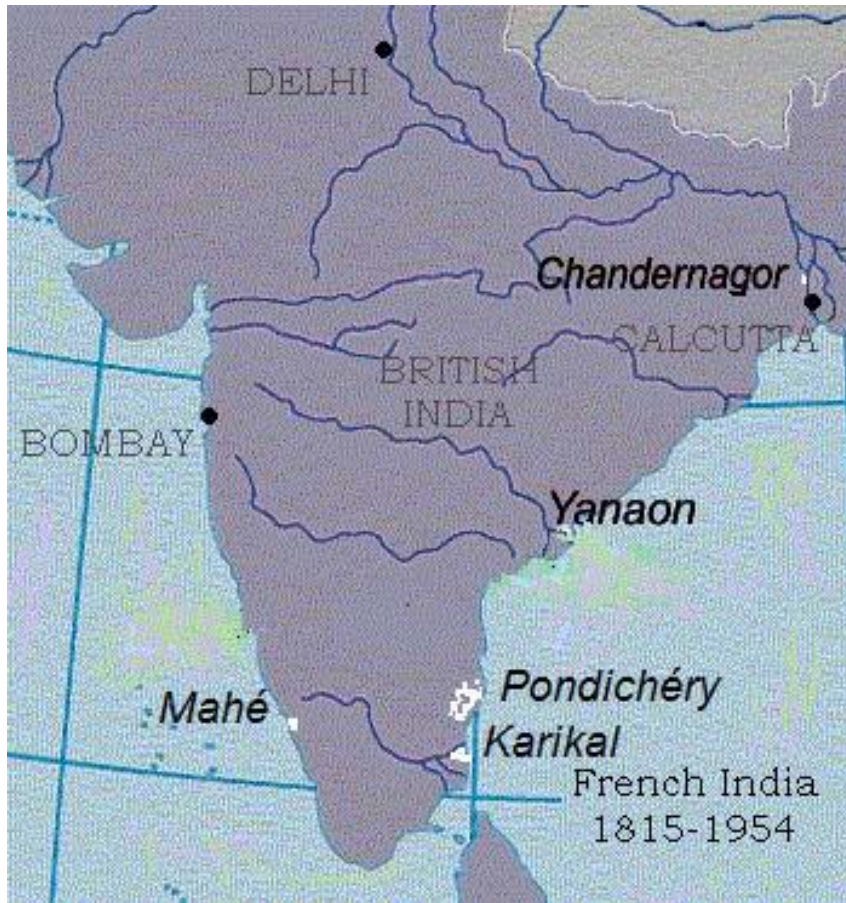


# Reunion: Posting from Saint Denis Principal Commercial Center

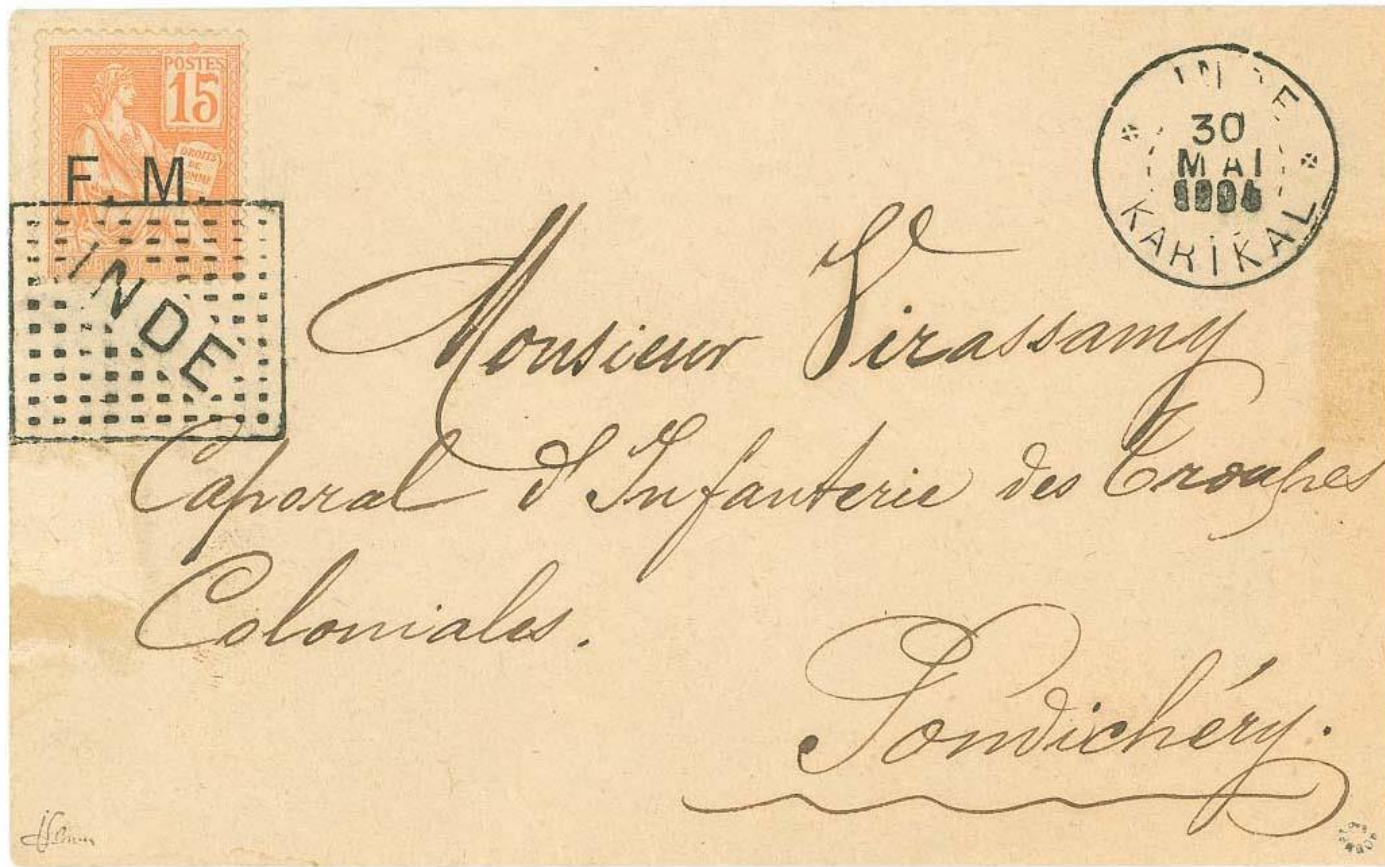




# French India



# French India: Posting From the Small Village of Karikal in 1906 – Boxed **INDE** Cancel



# Indochina

- Most Complex Colony
  - Cochinchina – Military Occupation
  - Annam – Military Occupation
  - Tonkin – Active Combat
  - Cambodia – Active Combat
  - Laos – Active Combat
  - French Offices in China – Occupation and Combat depending on which office



# Incorrectly Applied to Post Card to Switzerland Not Valid and Corrected With 10c Group Type



Posted at Soctrang, Cochinchine



# Banghoy, Annam 1905



# Tonkin, Indochina



Village of Hon-Gay 1905

Village of Viettri 1906



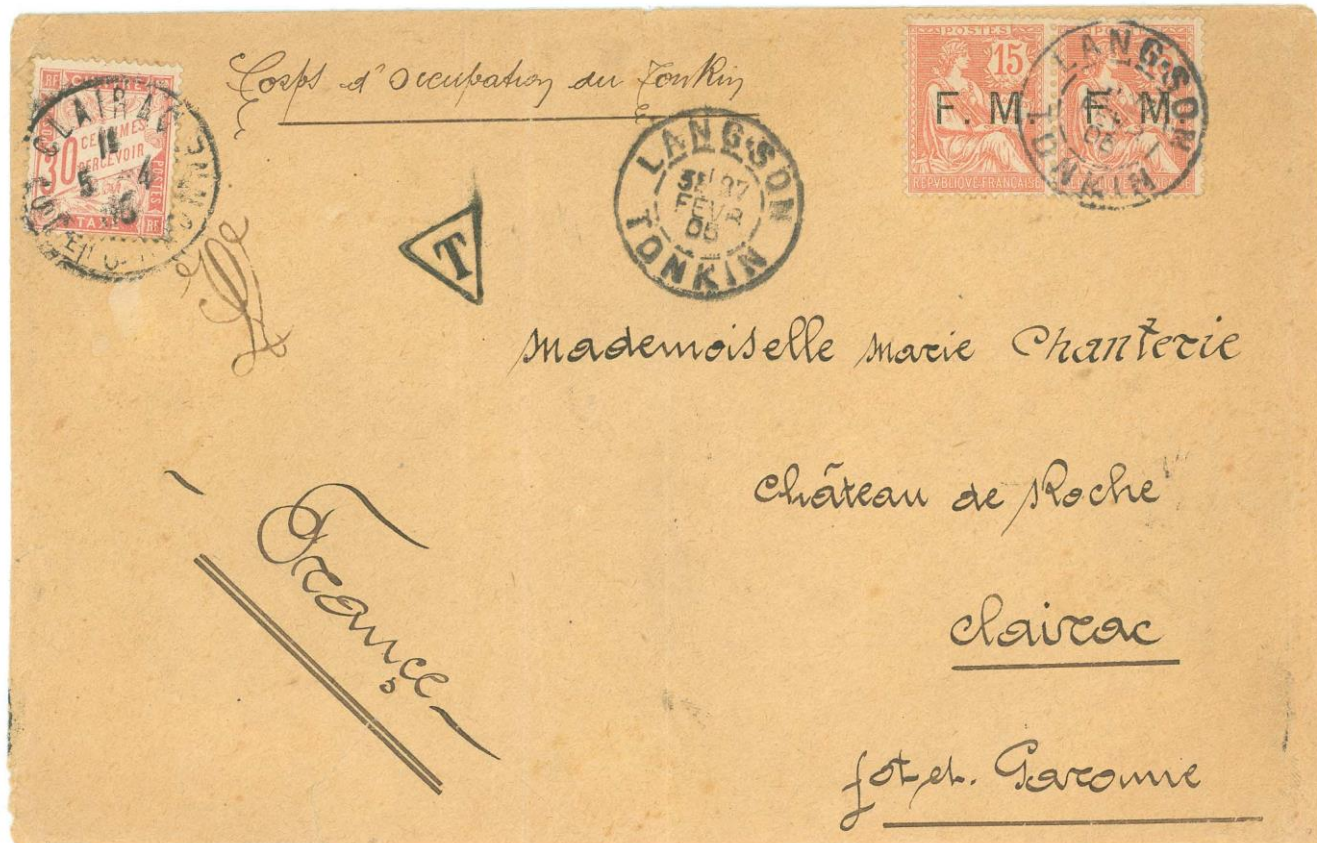
# Village of Cao-Bang 1905

Second Weight Level with 15c in Postage Stamps





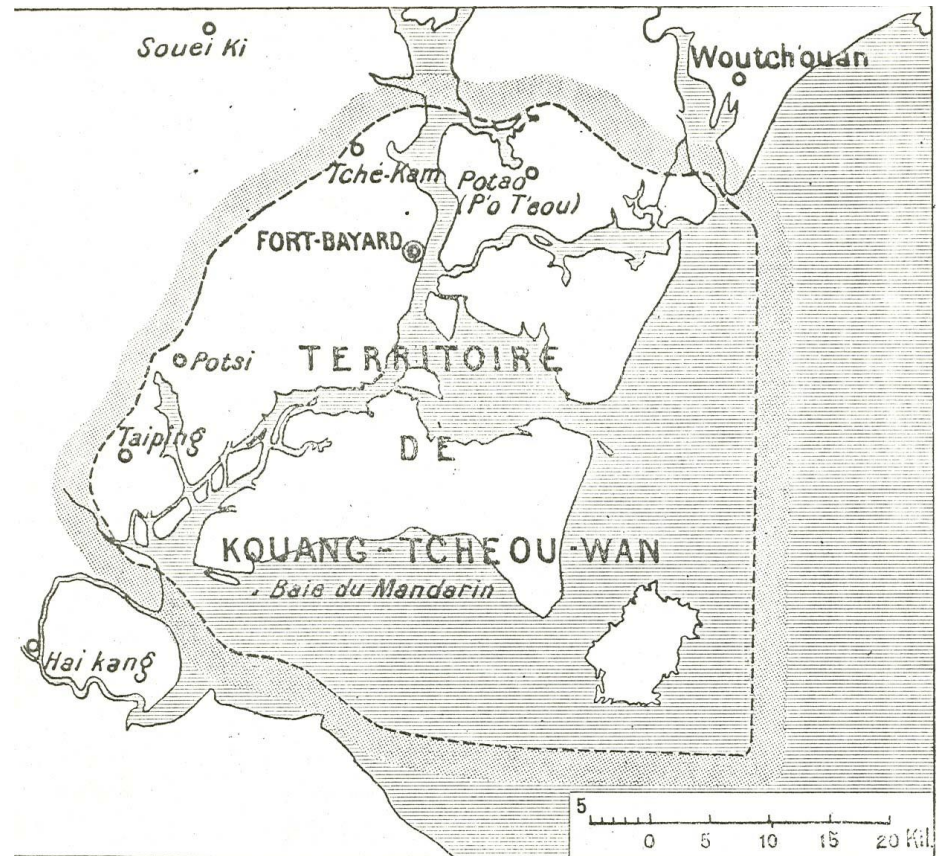
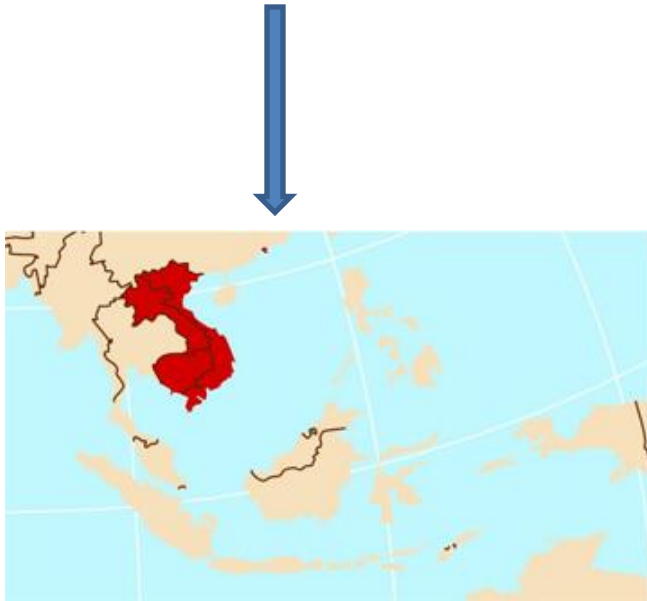
Proper Treatment of Attempted Use of Two F.M. Stamps:  
Second Stamp Not Accepted, Letter Considered 15c Underpaid  
and Charged 30c Due at Arriving Post Office





# Kwangchow-wan, China

## French Territory in China Administered by Indochina



# Fort Bayard, Kwangchow-wan 1907

## CHINE Datestamp



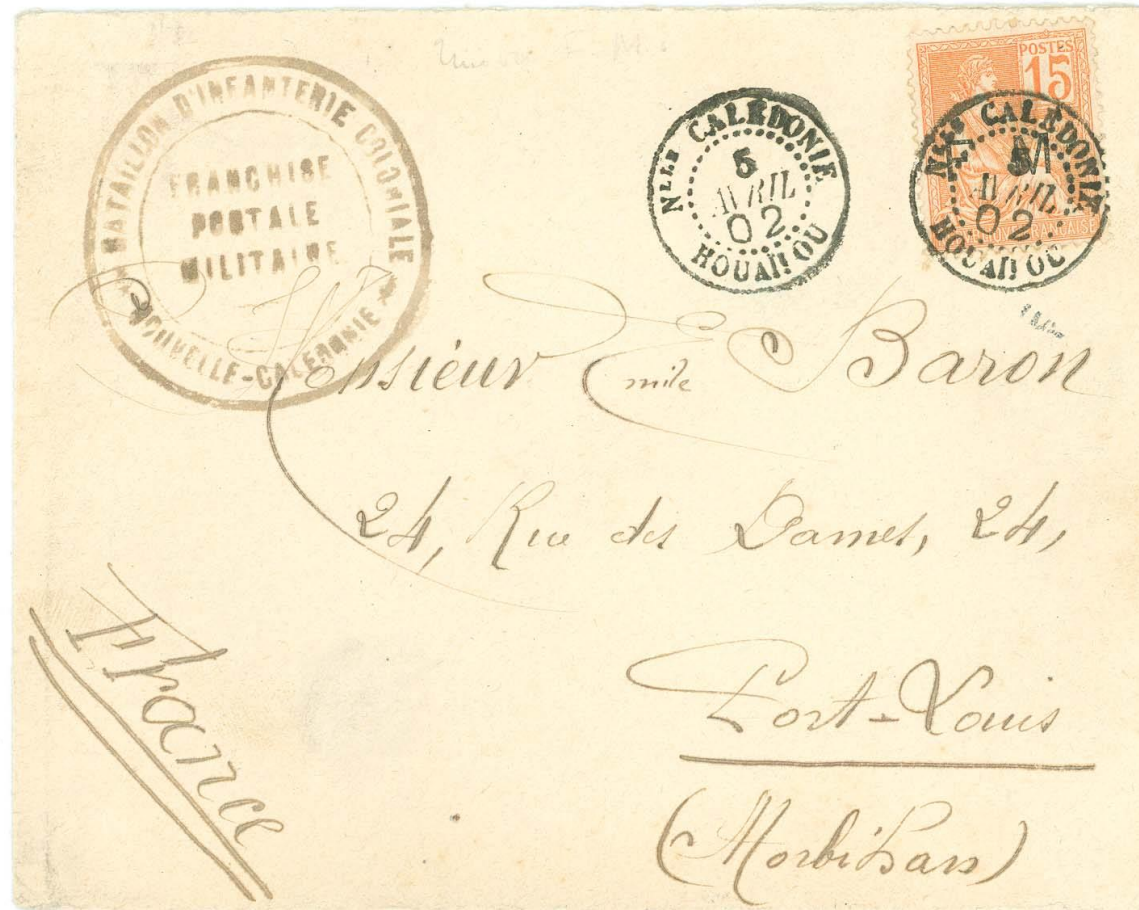


# Fort Bayard, Kwangchow-wan 1910

## INDOCHINE Datestamp



# New Caledonia: Small Village at Houailou – April 1902





Nouméa, New Caledonia - USA: Illegally Used in Combination with 10c Group Type to Prepay 25c Rate – Not Noted in Nouméa or Napa (Alain Millet Collection)





# New Hebrides: Use From Port Vila During Period of New Caledonia Postal Administration



# Papeete, Tahiti 1903

## Two Examples Recorded

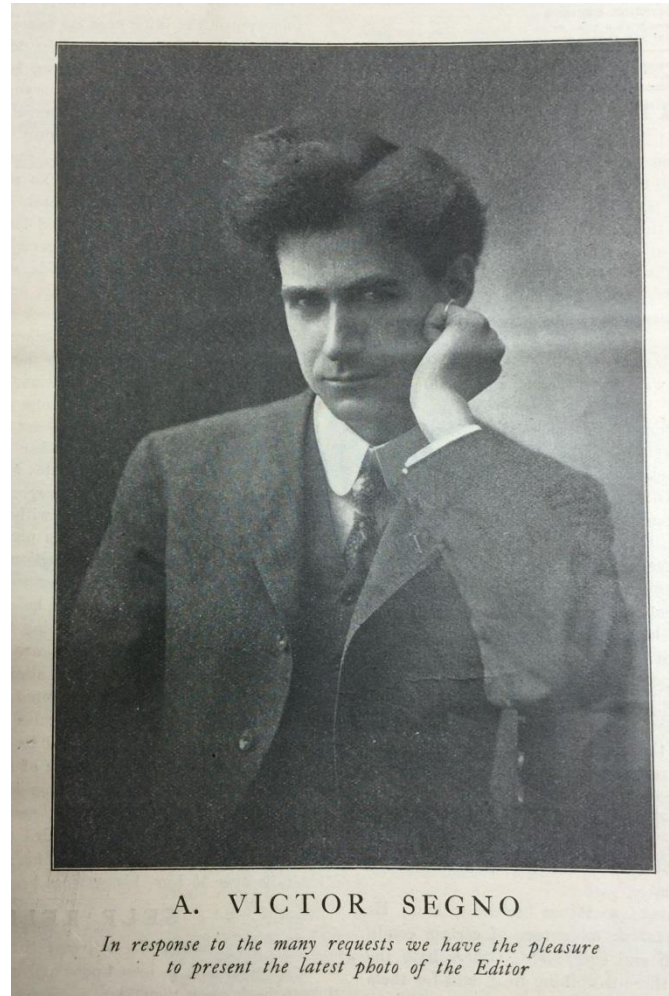


# Conclusions From this Study

- The F.M. stamps were used only by troops on station and not engaged in combat
- The regular military franchise system continued for those troops engaged in combat
- Although the stamps were to remove the need for standard endorsements and cachets for military mail, such continued to a small degree
- Not all military postmasters were completely familiar with the rules governing the use of the F.M. stamps, and errors (use of two stamps and use to foreign destinations) occurred
- The stamps were used as available and not according to the most current or those corresponding to the current French Community rate – 15c stamps continued to be used when the French Community rate dropped to 10c
- It has taken 30 years to assemble the ~30 covers in this collection

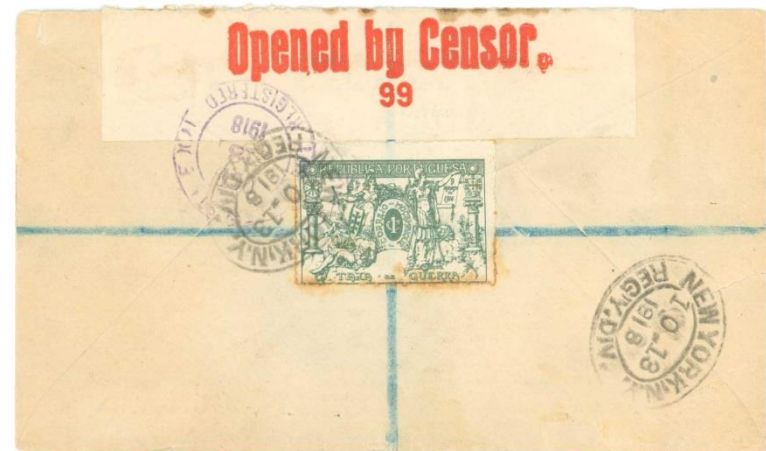
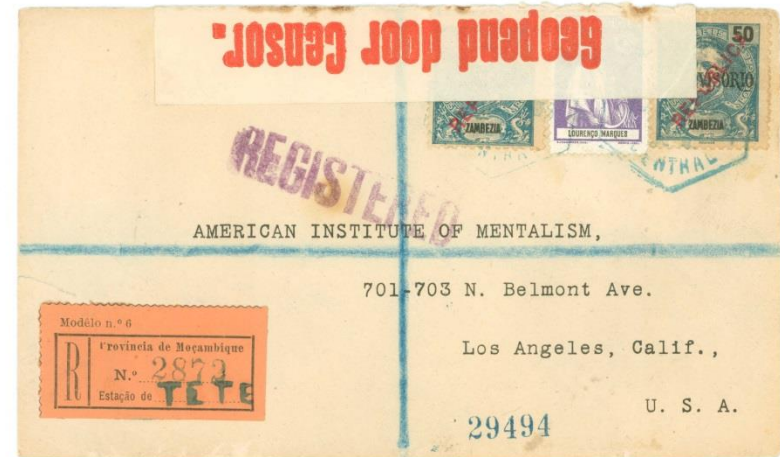


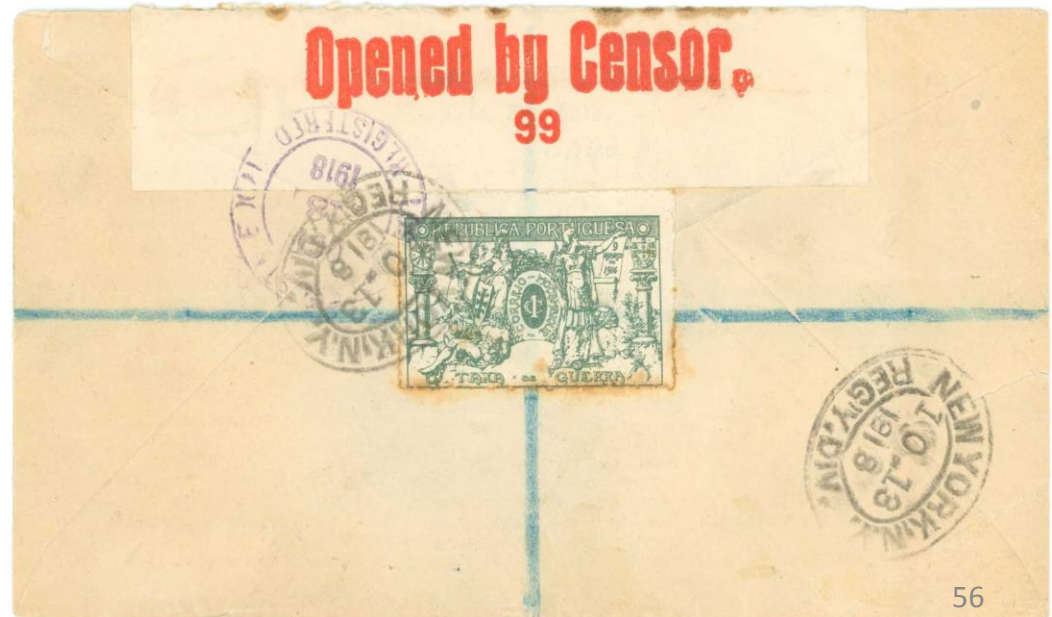
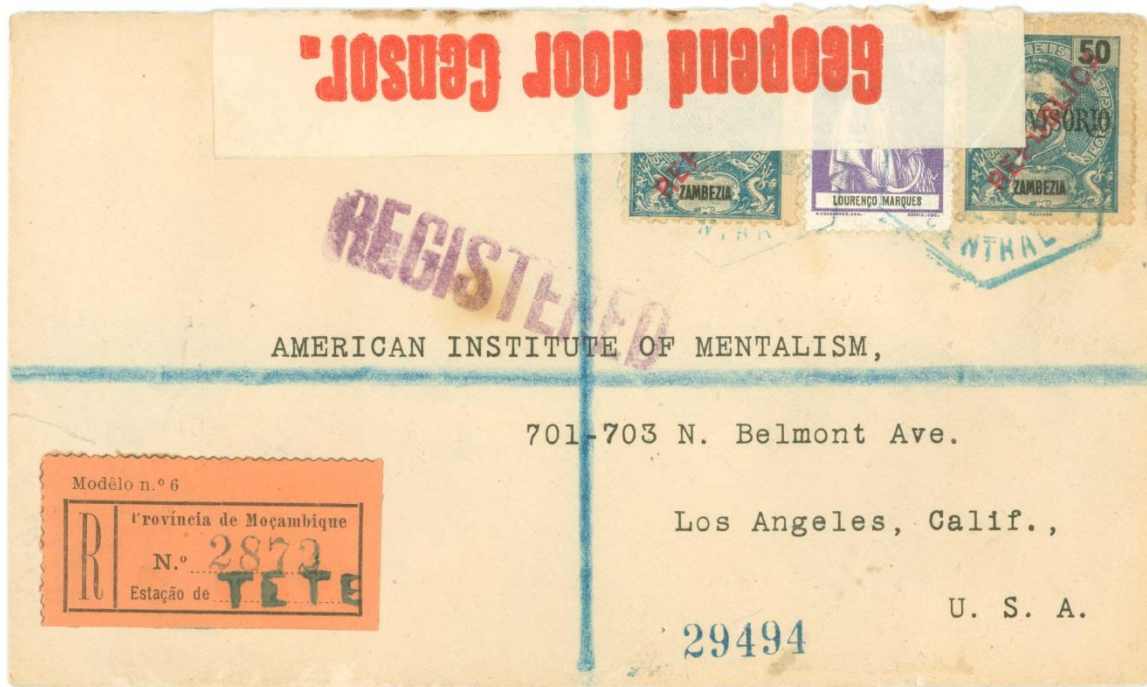
# And What Is New in the Professor A. Victor Segno Collection?



## And What About Professor Segno? Censored Registered Letter From Tete, Zambesia in 1918 via South Africa

- Registered Letter at 13½ centavos rate with:
  - Zambesia stamps 2 x 50 reis = 10 centavos
  - Lourenco Marques 2½ centavos stamp
  - Mozambique 1 centavo War Tax Stamp
- Censored at South Africa
- Contained the equivalent of \$10 for those Success Waves







# Foreign Postage Stamps For Sale

We have a quantity of canceled postage of various denominations that we received on letters from all parts of the world. Among them are stamps from Japan, China, Russia, India, Ceylon, Turkey, Egypt, Siam, Borneo, Cape Colony, Transvaal, Gold Coast, Lagos, Africa, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, France, Holland, Belgium, England, Canada, Colombo, Panama, British Honduras, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, Central and South America.

We have had these stamps sorted into packages of 25 (all different) and will send them prepaid for ten cents a package.

Foreign stamps are interesting souvenirs. Many people make a collection and keep them in albums, but the latest fad is to use them for decorative purposes. Screens, picture frames and walls are being decorated with them. They make very artistic effects when nicely arranged.

**PRICES: One Package, 10 cents.  
Six Packages, 50 cents.  
Thirteen Packages, \$1.00**

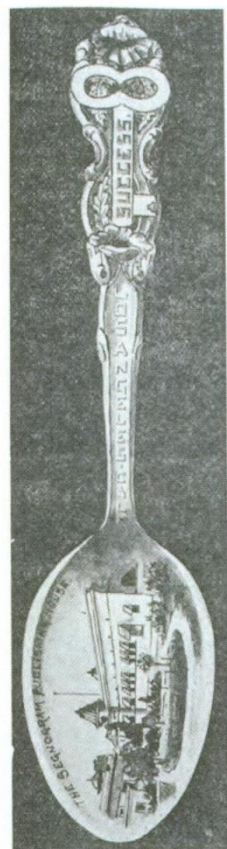
Address,

**SEGNOGRAM PUBLISHING CO.**

**703 N. Belmont Ave., Los Angeles, Calif.**



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# WHAT SHALL IT BE?



THE Holiday Season is upon us and we are brought face to face with the old, old problem of what shall we give as a Christmas gift to those most dear. Each year the same question confronts us. Wouldn't you like to settle the matter right now?

Wouldn't you like to have us help you? Believing that you would, we have taken it upon ourselves to do so. We have had our artist prepare a drawing of this handsome Souvenir Spoon of the Segnogram Home, and are now having the Shepard Manufacturing Company of Melrose Highlands, Mass., fill our first order for a thousand. They are the actual size of the spoon shown in the cut; are of sterling silver and are guaranteed to last a life-time. The Shepard Company does not make anything that is not the best.

This is our Success Spoon. Like the Segno Success Key, we expect it will be in thousands of homes throughout the land, conveying its silent message of good cheer and strength, and ever attracting to the mind of the user thoughts of success from others. Aside from the personal message of inspiration that would be carried to the recipient from the giver, this spoon has an attractiveness that few such souvenirs carry.

The design of the spoon is particularly appropriate and effective. In the bowl, the artist presents a side view of our new publishing house, and on the handle, intertwined by the adorable California poppy, the Success Key stands out boldly with the words "Los Angeles, Cal." running down the handle to the bowl.



These spoons will be ready for delivery about the Fifteenth of November. We expect to receive orders from all over the world. The spoons will be shipped, neatly packed in a box, and delivered to any address in Canada, Mexico or the United States at the price named; but if ordered to be sent to foreign countries, one shilling must be added to pay extra postage. A limited number of these spoons have been ordered. If you would make sure of getting one, you should let us know how many you want and they will be reserved for you. The cash may be sent later. For those who would desire two different spoons, we have made arrangements to send with the "Spoon of Success" a smaller spoon of California, which will be mailed with the Success Key Spoon. The "Spoon of Success" will cost you \$1.50; the smaller spoon, \$1.00. You may order the Spoon of Success alone, to be sent to different addresses, or any number you desire will be shipped to you direct. When you see this spoon, you will agree with us that it is the best Christmas offering we have made. It is such an inspiring little thing, this Spoon of Success. It speaks to us of worlds yet unconquered—of things to be done—and spurs us on to greater achievements. It conveys to those we love in a simple, unostentatious way the message we have to deliver, and inspires them to DO and BE—to *Think and Live*. We are what we want to be; we see what we want to see; we do what we want to do; we have what we want to have—if we want and work hard enough for it.

Order a Spoon of Success today; pay for it on or before November 15th.

Address all communications to

THE SEGNOGRAM PUBLISHING COMPANY, Los Angeles, California

# Adios & Success to All

