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R.F.

Badonviller

L i b e r a t i o n O v e r p r i n t s of F r a n c e



Measures

The Liberation overprints made on French stamps from June to September 1944 are the despair of the catalog makers. Conflicting opinions about their standing, the fear of fakes and forgeries, and the difficulty of ascertaining the facts about many of them, all combine. Hence this group of stamps is one of the most puzzling among recent issues from any part of the world.

This article is aimed to bring some order into the known facts. It is based on an exhaustive but confusingly arranged one by Albert H. Harris, in "The Philatelic Magazine" of Feb. 9, 1945, supplemented by information from other sources. Mr. Harris, working from direct information furnished by members of the British army, who took part in the liberation, and with the information in "L'Echo de la Timbrologie" to aid him, has covered fully the authorized issues.

The Minister of Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones (whose office is spoken of as the "P.T.T.") issued a communication dated Nov. 22, 1944, stating which stamps were authorized, the quantities produced, etc. Mr. Harris worked with this in hand.

The authorized overprints appear to have been made at the suggestion of (or with the approval of) the Regional Commissaires of the French Government for the area in which each was produced and used. These same Commissaires in several cases ordered the withdrawal of issues which they had directed to be prepared and used, and on short notice.

The unauthorized ones were in some cases issued on instructions coming from officials who had no power in matters postal-- such as mayors. In other cases, they seem to have been made by postmasters on their own initiative, by the local F.F.I. authorities or at their request; or even on the request of local philatelic groups!

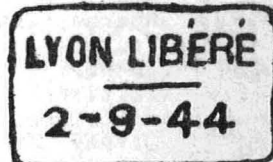
In only one case, that of Lyon, does there appear to have been such a device as a Liberation cancellation made or used.

From reliable sources, information comes, to the effect that many of the Liberation surcharges have been counterfeited, and that even very well informed dealers have been deceived by some such forgeries. In a few cases it has been possible to report the existence of forgeries in this article.

For many of the small offices, especially in the case of unauthorized overprints, no description or picture of the overprint was readily available. In compiling this list, no attempt has been made to trace back the report of each issue in chronicles in



Lille ↑
Chalons →



R.F.

R.F.

Lyon

various stamp papers. But all reports since Jan.1,1945, in the six leading stamp weeklies have been used, to bring the treatment up to date.

The term "monogram" is used for the "R F" overprints by the translators from the French official list and the French stamp journals. In French usage, this word does not indicate that the letters are intertwined: it applies when they are together on a single handstamp, or on a single printers' "logotype," or when they are set up in type so as to come close to each other. Thus the term "monogramme" does not mean or imply intertwined letters, and should not be taken as equivalent to "monogram" in the English sense.

Arranged by styles and by alphabetical order of the offices, here is the summary of what we know for 38 offices of issue and 4 offices of use. Mekeel's Weekly, March 12, 1945, reports that 45 offices issued or used Liberation overprinted stamps; of these 15 had authorized issues. The names of the three missing offices are not given.

The reader must judge for himself which of the stamps reported he should choose to consider "good." Where information herein is incomplete, future increased knowledge will no doubt change many details, extend or restrict the list, show that some are fakes, legitimize others here not definitely reported as valid, etc.

1. List by Styles.

Cross of Lorraine, printed:

Aigurande-sur-Bouzanne (with "Libre")
Le Croix-en-Brie (with "Republique Francaise")

Lille (with "R F" above)

Cross of Lorraine, handstamped:

Bourg-d'Oissans (with "F F I" and + value)

Cherbourg (with "R F" between branches)

Cross of Lorraine, boxed (probably handstamped)
Measnes (with "LIBRE")

R F (or R.F.), printed:

Badonviller (large)--possibly handstamped.
Bordeaux
Chalons-sur-Marne (large)
Chattellereault
Decazeville (with scroll and "C L B H")
Lyon
Poitiers
Pons (large).

R F (or R.F.), handstamped:

Badonviller (large)--possibly printed.
Civrey
Cursai
Loches
Niort
Roanne (with 21 Aout 44)
Tours

R F (or R.F.), boxed, printed:

Poitiers
R F in italics:
Civrey
Pons

F F I (or F.F.I.):

Annecy (with "Liberation Annecy 19-8-44")
Annemasse (with "18-8-44 Liberation")
Chambery (with "Savoie 28 Aout 1944" or no date, or + value also)

Various:

R F, scroll and C L B H---Decazeville.
F F I Savoie 28 Aout 1944 (or without the date, or with + value)-----
Chambery
18-8-44 Liberation Annemasse F.F.I.-----
Annemasse
Liberation Annecy 19-8-44 F.F.I.-----
Annecy
21 Aout 44 R.F.-----
Roanne
Chablais Libéré-----
Chablais
La France est Libre-----
Paris

2. List by Offices.

Aigurande-sur-Bouzanne: Authorized.

Printed, corss of Lorraine with "Libre" above, on Petain 60c, 70c, 80c, 1f, 1.20f, 1.50f, 2f, 2.40f, 3f, 4f, 4.50f. Made at request of the local Committee of Liberation. Sold over the counter Aug. 18, 1955. The 1f comes inverted (1 sheet).

Annecy: Unauthorized. Printed, in four lines: "Liberation ANNECY 19-8-44 F.F.I." Made at request of local stamp club. 10,000 copies Petain 1.50f. 3,000 copies given to the local stamp club; rest reported sold at post office.

Annemasse: Unauthorized. Printed, in four lines: "18-8-44 Liberation Annemasse F.F.I." Made by local committee "on authorization from Annemasse Liberation Committee" (whatever that was). On Petain 60c, 70c, 1f, 1.20f, 1.50f, 2f, 2.40f, 3f, 4.50f and on dues (500 copies each) 10c, 30c, 50c, 1f, 1.50f, 2f, 3f, 5f. Quite obviously made to sell to collectors.

Argentan: Unauthorized. No information on hand.

Badonviller: Unauthorized. Large gothic capitals, "R.F." printed. On Petain 60c, 70c, 80c, 1f, 1.20f, 1.50f, 2f, 2.40f, 3f, 4f, 4.50f. Issued on order of mayor; known philatelically cancelled Nov. 27, 1944. Probably never valid for postage. (See Mekeel's Weekly, Feb. 5, 1944).

Bordeaux: Authorized. Printed, "R.F." in three styles of type: the 3 types together for pane of 100 stamps; gothic light, gothic bold, ionic bold (all 14-point). On Petain 60c, 70c, 80c, 1f, 1.20f, 1.50f, 2f, 2.40f, 3f, 4f, 4.50f; and on dues 30c, 50c, 1f, 1.50f, 2f, 3f, 5f. On sale at main office and stations Sept. 1 and 2, 1944, and the 1.50f again Sept. 7. Sale stopped by order from Paris. Some double overprints exist.

Bourg-d'Oissans: Unauthorized. Lorraine cross and F.F.I. with a + value. Issued July 14, 1944, by the F.F.I. On Mercury 50c + 9.50f for 10f; on Petain 70c + 24.30f for 25f (Harris mislists as for 30f), 1f + 49f for 50f. Used locally on souvenir cards.

Calais: Unauthorized. No information at hand.

Cannes: Unauthorized. No information at hand.

Chablais: Unauthorized. Overprint "Chablais Libéré." No further information at hand.

Chalons-sur-Marne: Authorized. Printed, in large roman capitals (24-point Bodoni bold), "R.F." On 1.50f Petain; 12,150 copies, printed in half sheets of 50, at postal printing works, on direction of postal administration, Aug. 30, 1944. Sold also in the post offices at Eprenay, Reims, Saint-Menehould and Vitry-le-Francois.

The Chalons overprint has been counterfeited. The forgery is reported as "too well done" with clean new type.

Chambery: Authorized. "F.F.I. Savoie 25 Aout 1944" in 3 lines, or without date on the smaller stamps. Printed. Also a second series with same overprint and + values. Official list gives only 8 values as authorized: On 1. 50f Petain, 4f Chappe, 4+6f Railway, 10f Languedoc, 15f Orleans, 20f Normandie, 20f La Maije, 30f Great Men. Also reported on Paris-Orleans and all six values of 17th Century Great Men. With additional + value are reported: 1.50f Petain +1.50; 5f Petain +10, 10f Languedoc +15, 15f Orleans +20, 20f Normandie + 25, 20f La Maije +30.

Chatellerault: Authorized. "R.F." type-set, printed, 3 subjects only. On sale Sept. 10 to 20, 1944. Made by direction of the P. O. Dept. On Petain 60c, 70c, 80c, 1f, 1.20f, 1.50f, 2f, 2.40f, 3f, 4f typographed, 4.50f typographed, 4.50f engraved, 5f, 50f. The 60c and 80c in red as well as the usual black. The Echo states that some Mercury values were also overprinted. This is apparently identical with the overprint at Tours.

Cherbourg: Authorized. Rubber handstamp. Cross of Lorraine with letters "R F" between its branches. On Petain 60c, 70c, 80c, 1f, 1.50f, 2f, 2.40f, 3f, 4f, 4.50f, 5f, 50f. Issued July 23, 1944, by order of Commissaire Coulet; withdrawn by his order July 24, 1944. Has been seen on philatelic cover (10 values together), Aug. 24, 1944. Reported to have been only from 1300 copies (1.50f) down to 4 copies (50f) of the various values were made. All signs point to this having been an issue to sell to G.I.'s in the liberating army, and used by complaisance or favor only.

Chouze-sur-Loire: Unauthorized. No information at hand.

Civrey: Unauthorized. No information at hand; said to be italic "R F" handstamp.

Cluzes: Unauthorized. No information at hand.

La Croix-en-Brie: Unauthorized. Bold cross of Lorraine, with "Republique" above and "Francaise" below, "19" on left, "44" on right. On 10c Mercury in red, 30c Mercury in black.... may be printed but probably handstamped. The Echo reports these on a letter.

Cursai: Unauthorized. No information at hand; said to be "R F" handstamp, style not described.

Decazeville: Authorized. Fancy scroll in center, "R.F." above, "C L B H" below. Apparently printed. On Mercury 10c, Petain 60c, 70c, 1f, 1.20f, 1.50f, 2f, 3f, 4f, 4.50f.

Epernay: See Chalons-sur-Marne.

Lille: Authorized. Large Lorraine cross, as tall as stamp and continuous vertically from one stamp to next, made up of printer's rules. Cross bars sometimes not symmetrical. "R" and "F" in upper corners of stamp. Printed: letters in a separate operation. On 2 subjects in each 100 the letters are closer together than usual. On 1.50f Petain only; 50,000 copies issued, by authority of Regional Commissaire. On sale Sept. 5 to 9, 1944; withdrawn by official order.

Loches: Authorized. Rubber handstamp, "R F". On 1.50f Petain red brown. No further information at hand.

Lyon: Authorized. Made on direction of the Regional Commissaire, as per Decree No. 50 of Journal Officiel for the region. "R.F." in 18-point ionic bold type: printed. On Mercury 10c, 30c, 40c, 50c and Petain 60c, 70c, 80c, 1f, 1.20f, 1.50f, 2f, 2.40f, 3f, 4f, 4.50f. Large quantities made; distributed widely to many post offices throughout the region; in use for many days. A special postmark, rectangular box with rounded corners, "Lyon Libéré" and date, was in use at Lyon for one week in Sept. 1944. Exact date of issue of stamps not reported. Counterfeits reported to exist, with forged cancellations in some cases; but this report is not verified as yet.

Measnes: Authorized. Octagonal box, outline cross of Lorraine above "LIBRE". Box sometimes very faint. On Petain 1f, 1.50f, 2f, 3f, 4f, 4.50f. Probably handstamped. This is a small village near Aigurande-sur-Bouzanne. Date of issue not reported. Believed to have been counterfeited.

Montlucon: Unauthorized. No information at hand.

Montluel: Unauthorized. No information at hand.

Nevers: Unauthorized. No information at hand (if this issue exists at all).

Nice: Unauthorized. No information at hand. Possibly strictly a favor overprint, used by complaisance if at all, and unofficial.

Niort: Authorized. Rubber handstamp, "R.F." On Petain 60c, 70c, 80c, 1f, 1.20f, 1.50f, 2f, 2.40f, 3f, 4f, 4.50f typographed, 4.50f engraved, 5f. Two types of overprint reported (Mekeel's Weekly) but not described.

Paris: Unauthorized. "La France est Libre" in 3 lines. Apparently privately done. Seen on a letter by Harris: no report as to what stamp, how overprinted, etc. Others may exist.

Poitiers: Authorized. Two series; dates, etc. not reported. "R F" printed, on Petain 60c, 70c, 80c, 1f, 1.20f, 1.50f, 2f, 2.40f, 3f, 4f, 4.50f. "R F" in box, printed or possibly a metal handstamp, on Petain 60c, 70c, 80c, 1f, 1.20f, 1.50f, 2f, 2.40f, 3f, 4f, 4.50f, 50f. (Possibly the 5f, not the 5f, says Harris).

Pons: Authorized. Typeset printed large "R F", some subjects roman, some italic. On Petain 60c, 70c, 80c, 1f, 1.20f, 1.50f, 2f, 3f, 4f typographed, 4.50f engraved, 4.50f typographed. The Echo reports the 2.40f also. All were sold at the Pons post office, continued on sale till sold out, except a few 1f and 1.50f returned to the Direction of Posts.

Reims: See Chalons-sur-Marne.

Roanne: Unauthorized. "21 Aout 1944" above large gothic bold "R.F." Probably handstamped. On Mercury 10c, 30c, 50c and Petain 60c, 70c, 80c, 1f, 1.20f, 1.50f. Made by or at instance of the Association Philatelique Roannaise and of a representative of the Committee of Liberation. Only 100 of each reported made. Actual postal use not yet reported.

Les Rousses: Unauthorized. No information at hand.

Sainte-Foy-la-Grande: Unauthorized. No information at hand.

Saint-Menehould: See Chalons-sur-Marne.

Salon-de-Provence: Unauthorized. No information at hand.

Thonon: Unauthorized. No information at hand.

Tours: Authorized. "R F", apparently a metal handstamp. On Petain 70c, 1f, 1.20f, 1.50f, 2f, 4f, 4.50f, 5f. Two other values may exist. The overprinting was ordered by the P.T.T., 3,000 of the 1.50f and "eight other values." This has already tempted the forgers, as it is made from a set of loose type apparently supplied to and found in several post offices. Apparently identical with the Chatellerault overprint.

Vitry-le-Francois: See Chalons-sur-Marne.

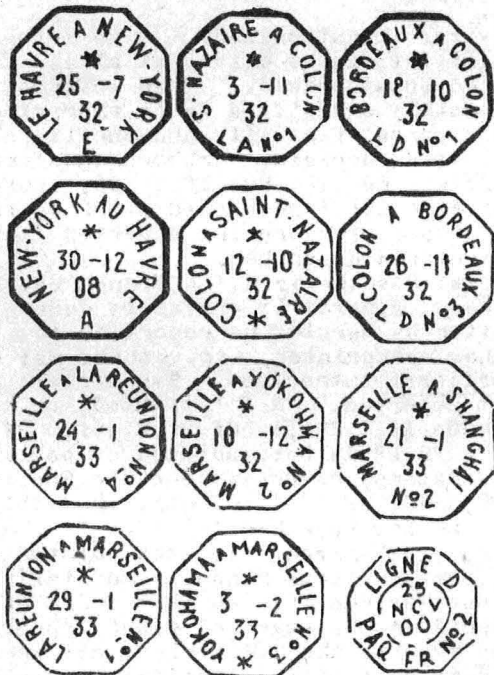
This list has purposely been given as pessimistic a bearing as possible with regard to the status of the various items and as to reporting forgeries.

---Compiled by S.G. Rich

(Reprinted from POSTAL MARKINGS, May, 1935)

FRENCH OFFICIAL SEAPOST

All Major Types
Traced by WILLARD P. SNYDER from his collection



French-Made Postmarks of Louisiana.

Mr. Robert G. Stone calls to our attention that the "INDIAS" and "ISLAS DE BARLOVENTO" on the covers mention by Mr. Blomfield in our last number are not French marks, but Spanish transit marks used in Cuba.

Back Numbers of the F & C Philatelist.

Vol. 1, No. 1 is out of print. All others may be had for one dollar a volume (6 numbers) or 25 cents per single number, from the Corresponding Secretary.

Should there be enough demand, No. 1 can be reprinted. Until at least 75 copies shall be wanted, the cost is so large that probably the Group will not care to make this outlay.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

February 1 to 28, 1945

NEW MEMBERS: None to report. (Application of prospective member to whom membership as No. 200 was tentatively assigned, still pending).

-----CHANGES OF ADDRESS-----

- 197 Gordon, Robert S., to 39 Lloyd Road, Montclair, N.J.
43 Kirchofer, Arnold, to 8 McKinstry Place, Hudson, N.Y.

PROSPECTS: We have several, to whom information has been sent as requested, but from whom we have not heard further.

Have you a friend who would care to join? Bring him to a meeting of the New York resident members (first Thursday evening of the month, Collectors Club, 22 East 35 St.) or of the Chicago Chapter (Austin Town Hall, fourth Wednesday evening of the month) and get him interested.

Election of Officers for 1945-46.

At the meeting on May 3, 1945, in New York, the election of officers for the coming year will be held. Nominations should reach us well ahead of the meeting, and may be made by any member, whether resident or not. Likewise votes in writing, sent to the Secretary, will all be counted.

The officers to be elected are:

President
Vice President
Recording Secretary
Corresponding Secretary
Treasurer
Editor.

The editorship has hitherto been appointive but as Dr. Vaurie cannot further handle it, the desires of the Group are asked expression by means of an election this year.

Dr. Vaurie, despite much urging by several, declines to be a candidate for the Presidency. I would prefer not to serve a fourth term, and would be glad to take on the Editorship. Whom can we draft for President?

S.G. Rich, President.

Wisconsin or Milwaukee Chapter Projected or Planned.

Mr. Kenneth F. Olson, member in Milwaukee, is actively interested in forming a Chapter in that city, and has the cordial support of our member, Mr. Paul Segnitz, also in that city, on the project. Mr. Segnitz's working hours prevent his doing any active work on the matter.

If you Don't Get A Reply.

Several members have lately been worried, since letters from them to the Corresponding Secretary have not received replies within two weeks. Be it explained that this is strictly an honorary office, without pay, and that often these letters ask information which takes time to look up or secure from others. All mail to the Corresponding Secretary is answered in the order in which it is received.