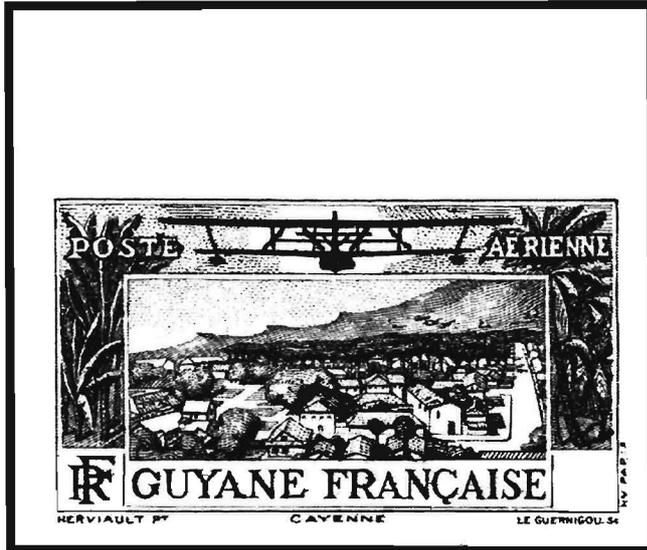
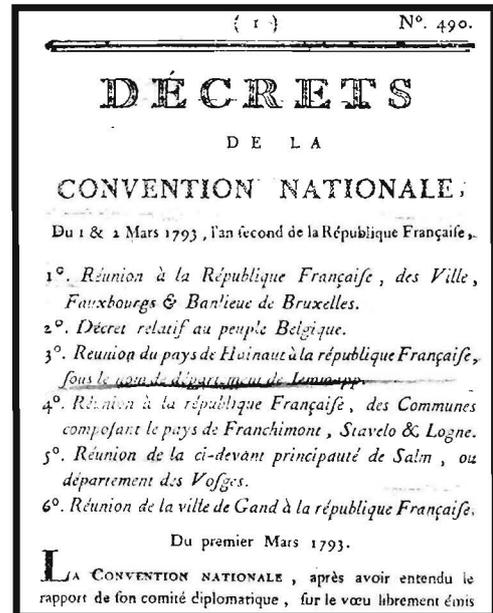


# FRANCE and COLONIES PHILATELIST

April 2009  
Whole No. 296 (Vol. 65, No. 2)



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*French Armies: 1791-1815*  
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**Correction and Apology**

The Editor most humbly apologizes to our colleague and contributor **Mr. Colin Spong** of the UK. I somehow managed to misspell his last name on his article *Diégo Suarez Military Railway* that appeared in the January 2009 issue. The error was also replicated in the Table of Contents.

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# Armies of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Periods 1791 - 1815

Bob Kinsley (FCPS 2180)

[Editor's Note: This article provides an overview of the military history and postal markings during the period noted. Primarily shown are the markings of this era. All are present on 200 year old folded letters in Bob's gold medal exhibit. Since many are poorly struck, they have often been enhanced for the purposes of this article, and sometimes taken from other, more legible sources.<sup>1,2</sup> The number of complete documents shown has been reduced for more efficient use of space.]

## The Revolutionary Era

The French conquest of much of Europe by its many armies at the turn of the nineteenth century began with the revolt of the Third Estate, the commoners, against the power and privileges of the First Estate, the clergy, and the Second estate, the nobles and the wealthy. The main grievance was the exemption of the clergy and wealthy from paying taxes which directly (land tax, poll tax, war tax, the hated salt tax, etc) or indirectly (church tithe, feudal taxes) amounted by some accounts to over eighty percent of a peasant's income.

The revolution manifested itself in the fall of the Bastille prison 14 Jul 1789, a date which continues to be celebrated every year. With King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette of

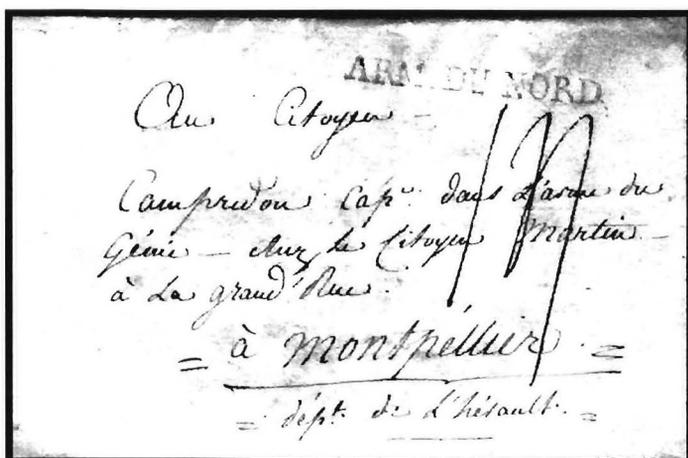


Figure 1. Typical Military Mail Cachet.

France under virtual house arrest, Emperor Leopold II of Austria and King Frederick II of Prussia met at Pilnitz in Saxony in August 1791 to declare their intent to restore Louis to his previous position and raze Paris if he was harmed. As the Austro-Prussian forces under Duke Ferdinand mobilized, France prepared for war by establishing, in Dec 1791, several armies. The marking for the *Army of the North* is shown in Fig.1. The cursive notation is the postage due, in decimes,<sup>3</sup> to be paid by the recipient. This was the standard method of payment in the prephilatelic era. Another, the *Army of the Rhine*, used a variety of markings including the one shown below.<sup>4</sup>

BAUGAL  
. ARM. DURHIN

These were but two of the many armies of the revolutionary period.

An insurrection of the commoners in Paris on 10 August 1792 resulted in the dethroning of the King, the end of the monarchy and establishment of the first Republic. As the countries engaged in war, new armies were authorized by France in Oct 1792. These included the *Army of the Moselle*, *Army of the Alps* and *Army of the Ardennes*, the markings of which are shown below.

ARMÉE DE LA MOSELLE  
ARMÉE DES ALPES  
4.<sup>EME</sup> DIVISION  
ARMÉE DES ARDENNES

The *Army of the Alps*, under General François Kellerman, proceeded to occupy the Savoy area of Sardinia adjacent to southeastern France. This became the first of many areas of Europe conquered and annexed to or ruled by France. The *Army of the Ardennes*, formed from the

Army of the North, was under the command of General Francis Dumouriez. This army proceeded to invade and occupy southern Belgium and part of the Austrian Netherlands. It won a major victory at Jemappes on 6 Nov 1792. Simultaneously, the *Army of the Rhine*, under General Custine, was invading Prussia.

The new French legislature was emboldened to issue a decree of 19 Nov 1792 offering aid to any nation whose people would revolt against their monarch. This decree, together with the execution of King Louis XVI on 21 Jan 1793, caused Britain, Spain and Holland to join with Austria, Prussia and Sardinia as a coalition against France. The legislature proceeded to annex the "country" of Hainaut [southern Belgium] as the department of *Jemmapp*. The front page of this long decree is shown in Fig. 2. This action proved premature when, in March 1793, Dumouriez was defeated by the Austrians and forced to flee to England.

Similarly, the *Army of the Rhine* under General Adam-Phillipe Custine was defeated at Valenciennes, a mistake for which he was executed. Then, in Sep 1793, General Jean Nicolas Houchard of the *Army of the North* was also executed for failure to defeat the Austrians east of Menin.

Meanwhile the *Army of the Alps* continued along the Mediterranean coast placing Monaco and Nice under French control, with Nice becoming the headquarters of a new Army of Italy.

## ARMÉE D'ITALIE

This army, created from part of the *Army of the Alps* on 1 Nov 1792, was commanded by a young officer, Napoleon Bonaparte. He had already distinguished himself by forcing the British fleet to evacuate Toulon. The *Army of Italy* endured throughout the entire revolutionary period, primarily as caretakers of the many areas of Italy annexed to France.

As France prepared to invade Portugal through Spain [to deprive the British of any ports on the coast] it established a new *Army of the*

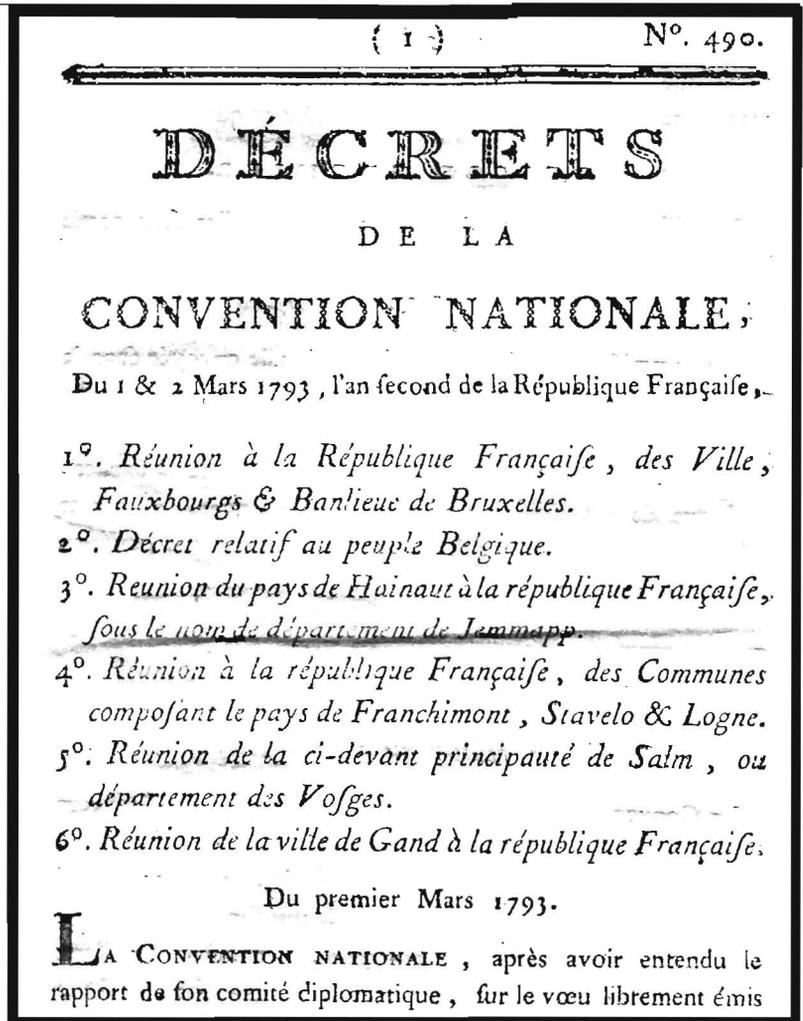


Figure 2. Front page of 1793 legislative decree annexing a portion of Belgium.

*Pyrenees* also on 1 Oct 1792, then quickly divided it into two separate armies, the *Army of the Eastern Pyrenees* and the *Army of the Western Pyrenees*. Fig 3 illustrates an official letter of the Eastern army with the "Bonnet Phrygien," the symbol of the revolution. The two armies were disbanded in 1795 following a secret peace with Spain.

## ARM. DES PYRÉNÉES ORILES

## ARM. DES PYRÉES OCLES

In early 1793 the *Army of the Coasts* was established to defend against a possible invasion by England. This army lasted only three months when it was divided into two new armies: the *Army of the Coasts of Brest*; and the *Army of the Coasts of Cherbourg*. Later in the year another coastal army was formed,

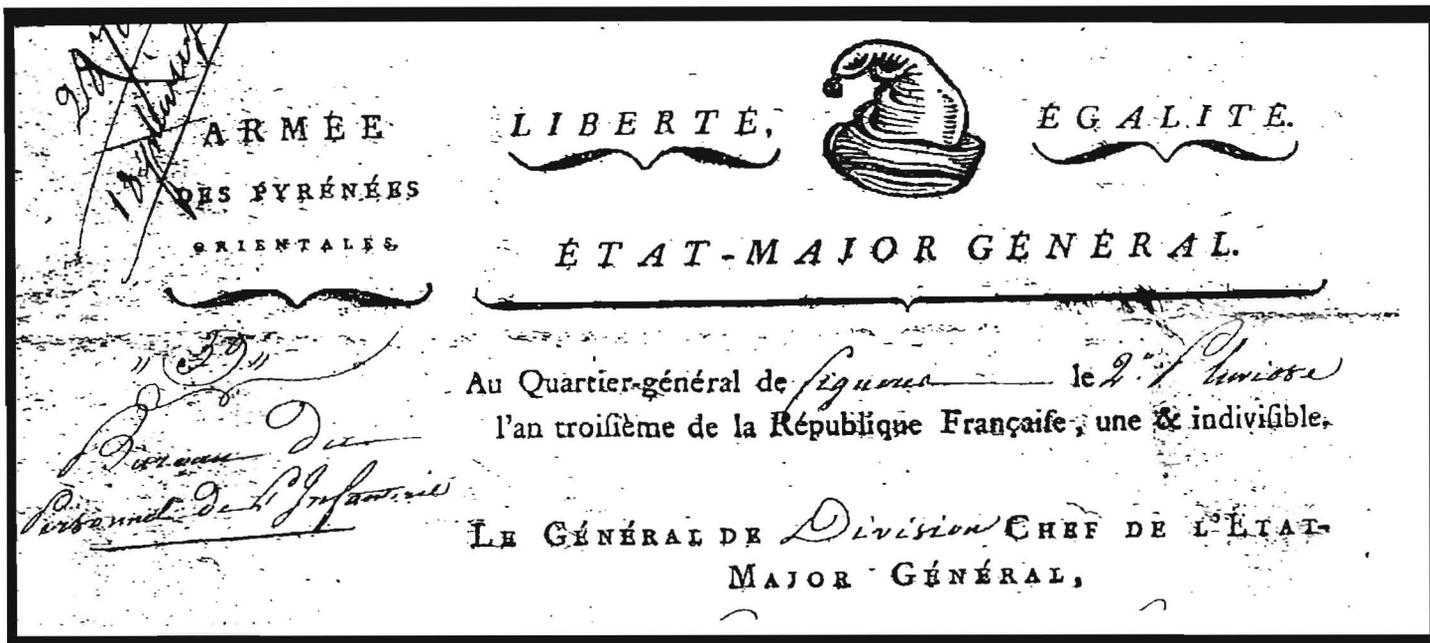


Figure 3. Portion of Official Letter of the Army of the Eastern Pyrenees showing the "Bonnet Phrygien."

called the Army of the West, to defend coasts further south near Bordeaux. The various armies were being created, reformed, renamed and disbanded throughout the period.

## ARMÉE DES CÔTES

I DIV. ARMÉE  
DES CÔTES DE BREST

ARM. D. CÔTES DE BREST  
1<sup>RE</sup> DON DE CHERB.

3<sup>E</sup> DIV.  
ARMÉE DE L'OUEST

As the Army of the Moselle continued through Luxembourg across the Rhine into Germany it joined parts of the Army of the North to become the Army of the Sambre and Meuse in 1794, named after the two rivers which flowed from Belgium into France. The Army of Germany was established 29 Sep 1797 merging the Army of the Sambre and Meuse and parts of the Army of the Rhine such as Army of the Lower {Bas} Rhine and the Army of the Upper {Haut} Rhine and of the Moselle, mainly for occupation duties. Part of this army became the Army of Mayence in Dec 1797 which was charged with maintaining peace in that city.

ARM. SAMBRE ET MEUSE

ARMÉE DUBAS RHIN

ARMÉE DU HAUT RHIN

DON G  
ARM. DE MAYENCE

At the end of Napoleon's victories in Italy he was offered command of a new army formed in Oct 1797 called the Army of England. In anticipation of the invasion of England, he convinced the Legislature that such action would not succeed and instead created an Army of the Orient with which to invade British-controlled Egypt. This action led to Russia joining with Britain and Turkey to form a Second Coalition against France.

DON E  
ARM. D'ANGLETERRE

An Army of Rome was a short-lived revolutionary army established in Feb 1798 to keep the peace in Rome. In Jun 1799 it was relocated and became the Army of Naples; after six months it again became a part of the Army of Italy. In Mar 1798 part of the Army of the

Rhine became the *Army of Switzerland* and in Mar 1799 part of the *Army of Mayence* became the *Army of the Danube*. Apparently the names kept changing depending on the sector in which they were fighting. Following their victory against the Russians at Zurich in Sep 1799 these armies were absorbed back into the large Army of the Rhine and Russia defected from the coalition of allies.

ARMEE DE ROME  
1 D<sup>ON</sup>

ARMÉE DE SUISSE  
4<sup>ME</sup> DIVISION

13<sup>E</sup> D<sup>ON</sup> PORT-PAYÉ  
ARM. DUDANUBE

Following the French conquest of Holland it was given the name Republic of Batavia and the occupation troops were part of that army although no army handstamps are known. Instead they used a *Holland Troops* handstamp. In Nov 1800 the occupation troops changed their name from *Army of Batavia* to *Army of Holland* under General Pierre Augerau. The area became the Kingdom of Holland in 1806 and was annexed as part of France in 1810.

HOLLANDE  
TROUPES F<sup>OISES</sup>  
BAUGAL  
ARM DE HOLLANDE

The *Army of Reserve* was created by an order of Napoleon in Mar 1800 using troops taken from the *Army of the West*, the *Army of the Orient*, and from troops stationed in Paris. Following his famous march across the Saint Bernard mountain pass into Italy he renamed it the *Army of Grisons* in Oct 1800. Another occupation army of the period was called the *Army of Observation of the South* operating in Italy in the areas of Tuscany and the Papal States lasting only one year until absorbed back into the Army of Italy in Apr 1802. Since Napoleon was unwilling to mount a direct attack on Britain he tried less direct means such as shipping embargoes and the invasion

of Egypt. In addition he directed his attention toward Hanover, the homeland of King George III. He mounted an army of some 30,000 men to overrun Hanover, a German state at this time. By the Convention of the Elbe on 5 Jul 1803, Hanover agreed to disband its army. Many of these troops were recruited to form the British "German Legion" which subsequently played an important role in the final defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo.

ARM D'HANOVRE

### *The Napoleonic Era*

The end of the lengthy array of armies of the revolutionary period came about when Napoleon proclaimed himself Emperor in 1804. At that time Napoleon authorized the many *Grand Armies* which were numbered from 1 to 100 according to the sector in which they operated. As seen below, several different types of cachets were used by these armies.

N<sup>O</sup> 77  
GRANDE-ARMÉE

2<sup>EME</sup> CORPS  
GRANDE ARMÉE

There continued to be a few armies named after the area in which they operated, such as the short-lived *Army of Dalmatia*. This army was formed following what Napoleon considered his most brilliant victory: the defeat of the Austrian-Russian forces at Austerlitz. This resulted in Austria ceding the coastal area of Dalmatia to France in Dec 1805.

Napoleon next turned his attention to closing the last remaining ocean port available to the British, that of Lisbon. A secret treaty with Spain granted French troops access through Spain to conquer Portugal. The *Army of Portugal*, under General Jean-Andoche Junot, entered Spain in Nov 1807 and took possession of Lisbon that month.

In Mar 1808 Napoleon marshaled some 100,000 troops, comprising some 45 *Armies of Spain*, and invaded Spain. This was known as the Peninsular War. In May 1807, he placed his brother Joseph on the Spanish throne as

B A U G A L  
ARM. DE PORTUGAL

king. Some troops were reformed as the *Army of Catalonia* operating in the last area to be overrun by the French. Others were raw recruits from France conscripted into a *Corps of Observation of the Gironde*, a second army of the same name authorized in 1808 and sent to Spain (the first army with this name, each with two Corps, was authorized in 1800 and became part of the Army of Italy).

N<sup>o</sup> 43  
ARM FRANÇAISE  
EN ESPAGNE

ARM. DE CATALOGNE

B A U G A L 2<sup>ME</sup>  
CORPS D'OBSERV  
DE LA GIRONDE

Subsequently the British not only forced the French out of Spain but continued with the invasion of France, since Napoleon had taken most of his armies out of Spain to invade Russia in the summer of 1812. Instead of pitched battles the Russians employed a scorched-earth practice, leaving little for the subsistence of the French armies which had begun with over 600,000 men and by December numbered only about 5,000.

### *The End of the Era*

Napoleon returned in defeat from Russia and, upon the allies victory over Paris in Mar 1814, he abdicated and was exiled to the Isle of Elba. An amazing document, dated 1 April 1814, is the proclamation a reproduction of the first page of which is shown in Fig. 4. It says, in part:

*He [Napoleon] each year through conscription decimates our families. Who of us has not lost a son, a brother, a parent, a friend? Why are they dead? For what cause?*

On page 6, it finishes:

*As a result, the consul of Paris declares unanimously that [we] formally renounce allegiance to Napoleon Bonaparte and support the establishment of the monarchy under Louis XVIII.*

Napoleon still had visions of victory and returned

to France in 1815 to again face the British forces under Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, and the Prussian forces under Marshal Gebhard Blucher on the northern frontier, and then the Austrians and Russians under Prince Schwarzenberg on the eastern frontier. Napoleon was defeated at the famous battle of Waterloo, again abdicated and was imprisoned on the Isle of Helena. He died there on 5 May 1821.

### *Conclusion*

This article provides an overview of the military history and postal markings of France during an extremely turbulent period of history. Hopefully some readers will find this to be an area that they would like to pursue in the future.

### *End Notes*

1. Leralle, A., *Les Armées de la Révolution et leurs Marques Postales*, Les Éditions E. H. de Beauford, Paris, 1954.
2. Maury, A., *Catalogue des Estampilles et Oblitérations Postales de France et des Colonies Françaises*, Yvert & Cie, Amiens, France, 1929.
3. A *decime* is one-tenth of a franc, or 10 centimes.
4. BauGal stands for Bureau General (i.e. headquarters). Some markings include other supplemental identifiers and division names.

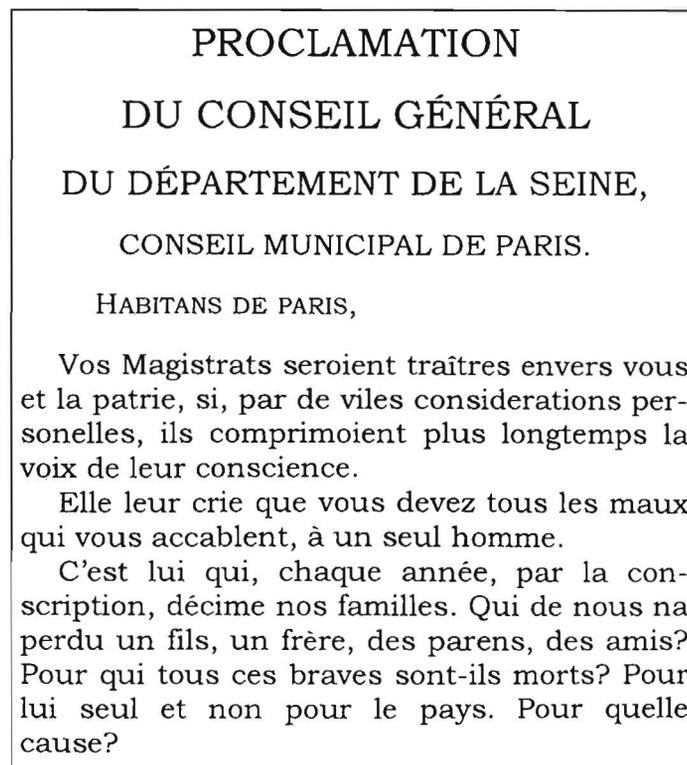


Figure 4. Proclamation ending Napoleon's rule.

# Philately and Crisis

*Pascal and Bernard Behr*

[Our regular advertiser, prominent Paris dealer, and good friend Pascal Behr wrote and distributed this essay to his client email list in January. Originally appearing in French, it has been translated by the Editor. These words of wisdom are valuable to us in America where we have not lived through the great dislocations faced by Europe in the 20th century. While we may have had rough times, at least our country was not overrun and bombed into dust. They bring some needed perspective to our current economic disjunction.]

**W**ithout claiming to give a course in economics, I would like to respond to some of my stamp collecting friends in the face of today's economic and financial crises.

For three generations, through most of the twentieth century, my family has lived and breathed philately. My grandfather, George, helped build many collections during the 1st World War, trading in stamps of France, Germany and Memel. At that time, resisting inflation and keeping capital were the primary concerns of the French. Their solution was philately, which was seen as a refuge. Demobilized after the war, George continued to build his business and he became an increasingly important dealer in the growing stamp market.

Then, in 1939 conflict engulfed Europe again. During this time, George remained at the helm of his firm which by then had offices in Paris and Nice. Philatelic classics again proved to be the best and only way to protect ones wealth against inflation during these periods of occupation. History showed that while gold, real estate, and stock market investments did not survive the war, first-rate stamp collections retained their value, and protected the interests of stamps collectors and investors.

After the liberation, George resumed his trading activity with a new player: his 21 year old son Bernard,. The two Behrs, assisted by George's wife Renée, rolled up their sleeves to live and allow the Stamps to maintain its safe place and investment among collectors.

During the years of high inflation of 1965-85, the value of stamps increased steadily at about the rate of inflation +4% each year. Through this period, I always was a serious buyer of quality classic stamps. In the various stock market crashes from 1987-2000, philatelic investment has always

resisted swings in value and favorable tax treatment. [At least in France. — Ed]

Is stamp collecting an investment today? Probably not in the very short term, but in the medium and long term it has been. The most reliable investments for philatelists are those that combine collecting passion and safety.

Do not leave all of your property in the hands of banks and insurance companies, diversify your investments and enhance your collection's value by adding rare and difficult to find items. You can leave your heirs more than a sentimental memory, you can leave them real value.

**Bernard and Pascal Behr** will help you buy the best pieces that you may be missing, thus building the best collection possible. So, collect, invest and do not be to afraid to protect your assets. Should you want to sell your collection, please let us know, we have a constant need for stamps, covers and collections for our upcoming auctions.

Examples of the Green 15c Ceres issue of 1849-50, (Y&T 2) unused and on a single weight letter in France.

Yvert 1940	price was	7000.
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Price on cover 1 December 1939		1 fr.
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Yvert 1946	price was	90,000.
------------	-----------	---------

Price on cover 1 March 1945 20gr.		2 fr.
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**Stamp increased 1185%, cover 100%**

Yvert 1960	price was	3500.
------------	-----------	-------

Price on cover 6 January 1959		25 fr. or 0.25 nfr.
-------------------------------	--	---------------------

Yvert 1982	price was	55,000.
------------	-----------	---------

Price on cover 1 September 1981		1.40 fr.
---------------------------------	--	----------

**Stamp increased 1450%, cover 460%**

Yvert 1982	price was	55,000.
------------	-----------	---------

Price on cover 1 September 1981.		1.40 fr
----------------------------------	--	---------

Yvert 2009	price is	25,000 € (164,000 fr)
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Price on cover 1 March 2008		€ 0.55 (3.61 fr)
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**Stamp increased 200%, cover 160%**

Thank you for your loyalty

**Bernard and Pascal Behr**

# The Cayenne Airmails of French Guiana

Jeff Ward (FCPS 3142)

In 1933, France produced the first regularly issued airmail stamps for its South American colony French Guiana. Catalogs such as Dallay<sup>1</sup> and Scott give 20 November as the first day of issue. However, it is not clear whether this date represents the first day the stamps were available in the colony or the first day they were available in Paris. This uncertainty is typical of French colonial issues. The vast majority of French colonial stamps were produced in Paris and made available to dealers and collectors there. Although there may be exceptions, I believe that most issues were available in Paris before (perhaps well before) arriving in the colonies.

## The Stamps

The issue consists of one design, shown in Fig. 1, in eight denominations ranging from 50 centimes to 20 francs. At the top of the design is what appears to be a biplane coming head on. Beneath the plane is a view of the city of Cayenne, capital of French Guiana. Scott describes the view as an "aerial view of Cayenne," but this is not exactly correct. Having visited Cayenne, I know that the view is actually from the top of *Fort Ceparu* hill at the western edge of town.



Figure 1. 50 Centimes  
Cayenne Airmail

Each denomination has a different color. The colors are bright, and the stamps make an attractive display when assembled as a set. The denominations and colors are: 50c orange brown, 1f yellow green, 1f50 dark blue, 2f yellow orange, 3f black, 5f violet, 10f brownish black, 20f scarlet.

All denominations are plentiful unused and catalog at a small premium above the minimum price. Many still exist never hinged

so that assembling a complete set in this condition is fairly easy. Used off cover copies with legitimate cancels are not nearly as common and should catalog for more than unused copies. They are not rare however, and a complete set is obtainable with some effort.

Aided by large margins around the frame, most copies look at least fairly well centered. The 50c is the most difficult to find well centered and seems to be the least plentiful denomination in general. Finding a well centered, unused, never hinged 50c can be a serious challenge.

The initial issue produced an error: Fig. 2 shows the 3f value with the denomination missing.<sup>2</sup> The error is not listed in any catalog, and the illustrated example is the only one I have seen after many years of collecting this issue. As will be seen later, several additional varieties were created intentionally by various postal authorities.



Figure 2. 3 Francs with  
Denomination Missing

## Development

The design was by *André Herviault* after an engraving by *Le Guernigou*. Three essays in black on card stock illustrate the development of the design. The shading of the first (Fig. 3a) is darker overall and is especially dark behind "*Guyane Française*." There are no inscriptions outside the frame line. The second (Fig. 3b) has lighter shading, and inscriptions are added outside the frame line. With the third (Fig. 3c), the shading is darker, but not quite as dark as the first. Frame lines are added around the blank areas in the lower corners and around the central vignette. The caption "*Cayenne*" appears below the central frame line, and the letters "RF" are in the lower left box. The lower right box is designed to contain the

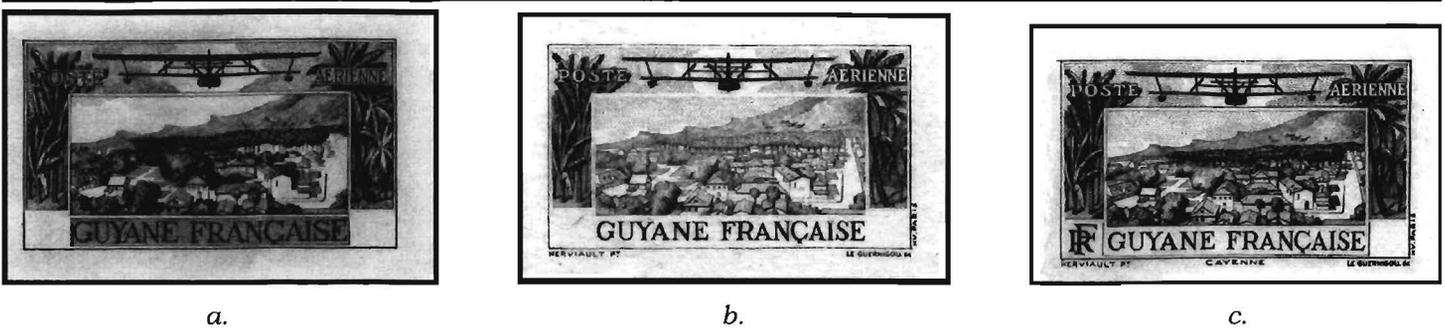


Figure 3. Essays Showing the Progressive Development of the Design



Figure 4. Trial Color Proof, Black on Yellow.

denomination. This is the approved design.

Trial color proofs exist that are imperforate on gummed paper (Fig. 4). Each is printed in black on a tinted background. This option was rejected because the final

production decision was to use a near white background and to print each denomination in a different color. The Maury catalog<sup>3</sup> lists six trial colors. I have six trial colors corresponding to these, although my description of the colors: dark orange, yellow, green, pink, dark blue, and gray blue, differs slightly from those cataloged. I also have a seventh with an off-white background that could be described as very light pink. It may represent a fading of the pink background although the black ink shows no evidence of fading.

As far as I know, these represent all existing essays and proofs of the Cayenne airmails.

**Production**

The stamps were printed in Paris by the firm *Hélio-Vaugirard*, using the photogravure process, on unwatermarked paper, perforated 13½. This firm did not produce any other French Guiana stamps. The stamps were printed in sheets of fifty consisting of two panes of twenty-five arranged in five by five rows and columns. Separating the two panes is a wide horizontal gutter containing five color bars (Fig. 5). The only other printing in the selvedge consists of a few faint, short, vertical and horizontal lines used to help position the sheet for perforating. Most of the lines are located near the bottom edge of the sheet.

Full sheets of these stamps are rarely found as almost all were broken up long ago. After many years of searching, I am still one denomination shy of a complete set, having found seven of the eight denominations in full sheet form.

According to Dallay,<sup>1</sup> from 100,000 to 200,000 were printed of each denomination. In some cases, lower quantities were printed of the more heavily used



Figure 5. Selvedge and Color Bars Between Panes of the 3 Francs



Figure 6. Imperforate Pair of the 20 Francs

denominations. This suggests that large quantities of the less popular denominations, such as the 50 centimes, may have been destroyed.

### *Imperforates*

The entire set of Cayenne airmails exists imperforate (Fig. 6). Although they are listed in all French language catalogs, little is known about them including their purpose, the issue date, and the quantities printed. Although it is possible they were valid for postal use (they are gummed), I have never seen a used copy, on or off cover. More than likely, the imperforates were produced primarily as souvenirs or presentation pieces.

The quantity printed was almost certainly quite small.<sup>4</sup> Judging from how often they appear on the market and the selling prices, I estimate production at 100 of each denomination, i.e., two full sheets.

When the imperforates appear on the market, they are always offered as a complete set of eight denominations. However, multiples are quite scarce. I was able to obtain a set of horizontal pairs a few years ago, but otherwise all offerings of imperforates I have seen are for singles.

### *Vichy Versions*

Although the World War II Vichy government of France produced stamps for each French colony, most never reached the colony for which they were intended. French Guiana received no Vichy issues, and consequently, they are not found on legitimate covers. Nevertheless, they are interesting and desirable collectibles, and all major catalogs list them.

In 1942, the Vichy government produced two

airmail stamps for French Guiana featuring the Cayenne design.<sup>5</sup> The first was simply a reissue of the 50c in the exact same design, color, and perforations, but with "50" in the lower left corner instead of "RF" (Fig. 7). Presumably, they were produced in sheets of 50 in the same format as the regular issue. However, I cannot verify this because I have never seen one of the sheets. In fact, I have never seen a multiple of this stamp, not even a pair.



Figure 7. Vichy Cayenne Airmails: Left, 50 Centimes, Right, 50 Francs

An interesting aspect of this stamp is the apparent large quantity printed. Despite cataloging at a higher price, the Vichy version seems to be more common than the regular 50c. I have often seen dealers selling complete sets of Cayenne airmails with the 50c represented by the Vichy version instead of the regular version.

The second Vichy airmail is a green and brown 50f with a slightly redrawn view of Cayenne inside a completely new border (Fig. 7). It was produced in sheets of 25 with wide, completely blank selvedge on each side. The quantity printed is unknown, but they are less common than the 50c Vichy airmail.

Trial color proofs exist of the 50f on gummed, stamp paper with vignette and frame as separate images side by side (Fig. 8). They show evidence of having been cut by scissors from a larger sheet of paper. I have seven

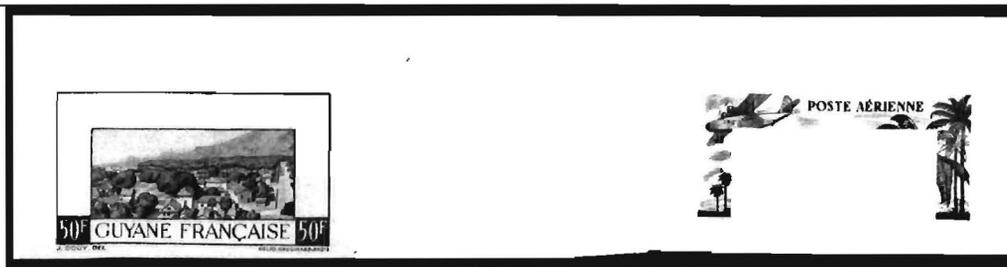


Figure 8. Trial Color Proof of the 50 Francs Vichy Airmail

different colors including those selected for the issued stamp. Others may exist. There is also a proof of the finished design in the issued colors on card stock approximately  $6\frac{1}{4}$  inches wide by  $4\frac{3}{4}$  high. The image is slightly smaller than the issued stamp. Both proofs are listed in Sanabria<sup>6</sup> and are seldom seen on the market. I have seen only one example of some of the trial colors. Unfortunately, Sanabria does not tell us how many different trial colors were made.

### France Libre Overprints

The story of the Cayenne airmail **France Libre** overprints has been well documented elsewhere, and I give only some basic information here.<sup>7</sup> Many French colonies celebrated their colonial government's allegiance to the Free French by overprinting **France Libre** on stamp issues on hand at the time.<sup>8</sup> When local Free French overthrew

French Guiana's Vichy colonial government in 1943, local authorities decided to commemorate the event by overprinting all eight Cayenne airmail denominations. They prepared at least several hundred sets while a routine request for permission for the overprinting was wired to Free French headquarters in Algiers. On 9 June 1943, the stamps were put on sale. Three hundred sets were sold, and thirty covers were mailed. Twenty-five covers were sent by surface mail to St. Georges Oyapoc, French Guiana. As seen in the example shown in Fig. 9, each bore a complete set of eight singles.

I have seen about a half dozen of these covers, and they are virtually identical in appearance. Each cover bears the same address typed with the same typewriter, and the eight stamps are in the same location on each envelope. In addition, each contains the penciled signature of Edmund Queyroy, the New York stamp

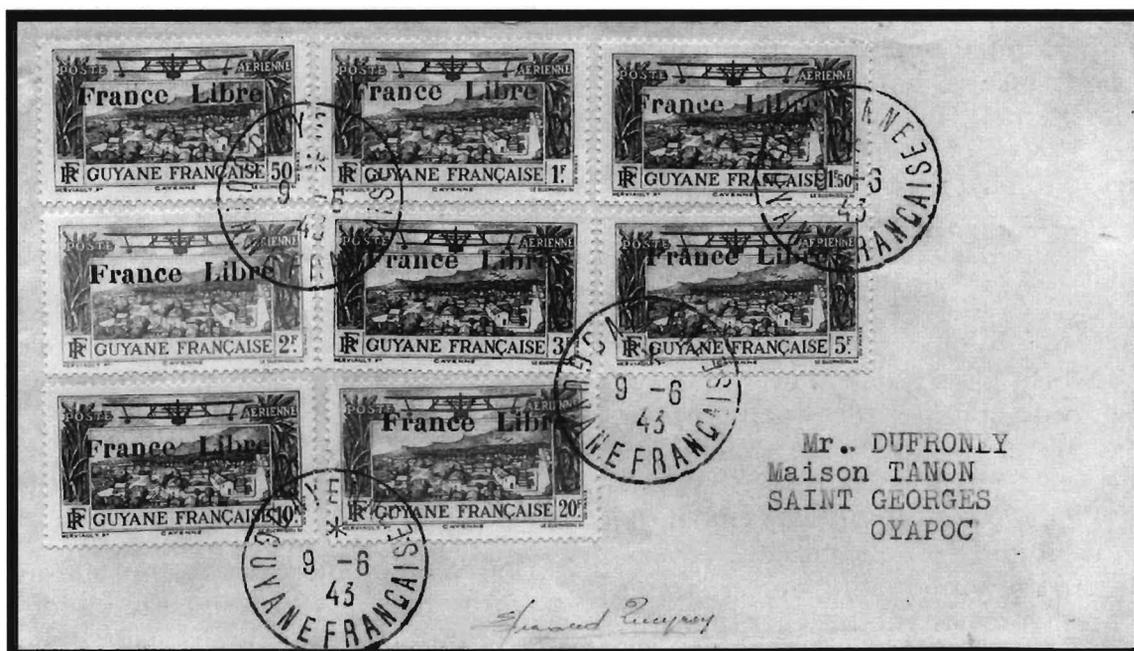


Figure 9. France Libre Overprints Mailed June 9, 1943

dealer who was instrumental in producing these covers. Five covers were reportedly sent to New York. I have never seen a New York cover, and therefore their appearance, including the mailing address and what stamps and markings are on them, is unknown to this author.

The following day, local postal officials received a big surprise from Algiers. Free French Headquarters denied permission for the overprinting. The locals immediately withdrew from sale all remaining overprints and destroyed them. But they could not undo what had already been done, leaving the philatelic world with thirty covers and 270 mint sets of this unusual issue.

The overprints are listed by Dallay<sup>1</sup> and mentioned by Ceres.<sup>9</sup> The most detailed listing occurs in Sanabria<sup>6</sup> which provides the intriguing information that 25 copies of the 1f50 denomination have inverted overprints. It also indicates that five vertical gutter pairs could exist with the inverted overprint *tête-bêche* with a regular overprint. This is consistent with the quantity of 25 inverts since each sheet consists of two panes of 25 each. In other words, a single sheet was produced with one pane of inverted overprints and the other pane with correct overprints. How many of the possible five *tête-bêche* gutter pairs were saved is unknown.

In more than ten years of collecting French Guiana, I never saw an inverted overprint on the market. Nor did I know of any collectors who owned one. When the first Dallay<sup>1</sup> catalog appeared in 2004, listing the overprints but not the invert, I began to wonder if they were still around. Then, in the summer of 2008, one of the five possible gutter pairs appeared in a US stamp auction. I was fortunate enough to obtain it, and it is illustrated here (Fig. 10). It shows that the lower pane has the inverts. Note also that the inverted overprint is not properly centered on the stamp.

### Postal Uses

French Guiana covers are not plentiful because of the colony's small population<sup>10</sup> and low literacy rate. However, it is fairly easy to find most denominations of Cayenne airmails on the



Figure 10. Gutter Pair Showing Regular Overprint Above and Inverted Overprint Below

surviving covers. Almost all covers bearing Cayenne airmails were mailed in the period from early 1934 to 1948. Sanabria<sup>6</sup> gives 28 January 1934, as the first day of sale in the colony. However, I have a cover dated 22 January 1934, sent from Cayenne to British Guiana. This is the earliest use that I know of. The Cayenne airmails saw almost no use after 1950.

*Solo* uses of Cayenne airmails on *airmail* covers must be exceedingly rare. I have seen many airmail covers bearing one or more Cayenne airmail stamps, and every one of them has at least two stamps on it. This is in part due to the complex and frequently changing rates during the period the stamps were in use. At any one time, there were numerous different rate schedules depending on the country of destination. In addition, strong inflationary pressures caused frequent increases in the rates. As a result, only rarely and briefly did a given rate correspond exactly to one of the eight denominations. For example, between 1934 and 1945, there were ten different rate schedules (surface rate plus airmail surcharge) for airmail to the United States. Only once (letters weighing less than 10 grams mailed May 21 through July 31 in 1935) was the required postage exactly equal to one of the Cayenne airmail denominations.

During the 1930s, most airmail covers bearing Cayenne airmails were franked with the lower denominations. However, the 1f50 and especially the 50c are difficult to find on nonphilatelic covers. I have found only two

nonphilatelic covers bearing the 50c (Fig. 11), one of which was badly damaged. The higher denominations are seldom found on cover until the 1940s. In fact, I have not seen a cover bearing a 20f dated prior to 1943. But in the 1940s, the 10f and 20f are found more frequently than the other denominations. Again, this is the result of inflation causing rates to rise rapidly.

Although designated airmail stamps, the Cayenne airmails can be found on *surface* mail. Such use was either permitted or widely tolerated because examples are not difficult to find. I have several covers that were obviously not sent by air, including the solo use to Oakland, CA seen in Fig. 12.

### The Mysterious Reissue

The Cayenne airmails were reissued with two features that distinguish it from the original issue: the paper of the reissue is thinner and whiter, and the letters "RF" in the lower left box are thinner. The latter characteristic is apparent in Fig. 13. However, information regarding the reissue is sparse to say the least. Except for being briefly mentioned in the *Ceres*<sup>11</sup> and *Mauroy*<sup>3</sup> catalogs, nothing has

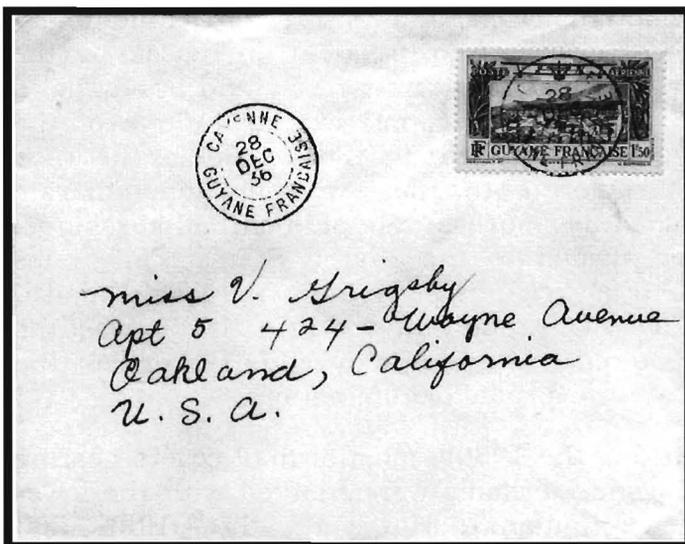


Figure 12. 1.50 Francs Paying the Surface Rate, First Weight Step to the US, Dec. 28, 1936.



Figure 11. Nonphilatelic Use of the 50 Centimes and 5 Francs Cayenne Airmails to Guadeloupe, 22 February 1946 (ex Grabowski)

appeared in print.

Mint copies of the reissue are rather plentiful except for the 50c which I have not found. *Ceres* indicates that the reissue includes only the highest seven denominations. More than likely, there was no 50c reissue.

When were they printed? This is one of the big mysteries. I submitted this question, along with the question of whether anyone has seen a 50c reissue, to COLFRA, an organization that includes most, if not all of the world's experts in French colonial philately. I got no response.

Based on the plentiful supply of mint copies (many never hinged) versus the scarcity of covers, it is likely that most of the reissue went to dealers and collectors and very little to the colony. The stamps apparently saw little postal use. I have seen only two covers, one of which is shown in Fig. 14, bearing these stamps and no used copies off cover.

Judging from the dates of the two covers (the



Figure 13. Left, Original "RF"; Right, Reissue "RF"

other was mailed 11 Nov 1947), I believe that the reissues were produced after World War II. Perhaps the colony was running low on airmail stamps, and Paris postal authorities went back to the original printer, *Hélio-Vaugirard*, requesting an additional supply. Because the

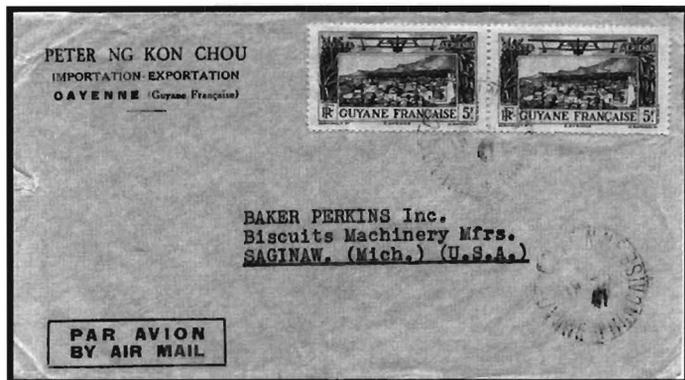


Figure 14. A Pair of the 5 Francs Reissue Mailed to Saginaw, MI, March 19, 1947

original paper was no longer available, the printer substituted a whiter variety. It is unknown why the “RF” letters are thinner because, in every other respect, the impression made by the reissue plate appears to be identical to the original issue.

Two additional varieties were produced in conjunction with the reissue. The first, seen in Fig. 15, is a bicolored 20f in violet with the denomination in the regular scarlet color. Paper, gum, and “RF” letters are the same as for the reissue. I see this stamp at auction on a regular basis, but never in multiples. The purpose of this stamp is unknown, but all known copies of the estimated production of 100 are unused. It is listed in Sanabria,<sup>6</sup> Dallay,<sup>1</sup> and Maury.<sup>3</sup>



Figure 15. Left, Bicolor 20 Francs in Violet with Scarlet Denomination

The second is the 1f50 imperforate with denomination missing (Fig. 16).<sup>2</sup> Paper, gum, and “RF” letters are the same as for the reissue. This variety is much rarer. I have seen only two copies, both unused singles. It is listed in Dallay<sup>1</sup> and Maury.<sup>3</sup>

## Conclusion

From their inception in 1933, the Cayenne airmails became a workhorse issue supplying much of the postage on French Guiana’s limited mail. Despite the fact that four new airmail issues were supplied to the colony after World War II, the Cayenne airmails remained the most popular choice for airmail postage. In 1947, French Guiana ceased being a colony and became an integral part of France. But the Cayenne airmails continued in use until around 1950 when they were phased out and replaced by the stamps of France.

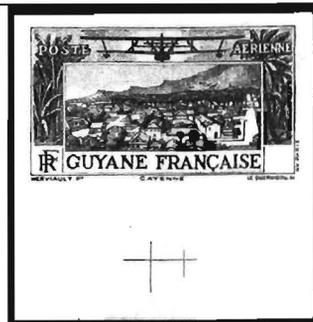


Figure 16. Imperforate 1.50 Francs with Value Missing

Over the years, a surprisingly large number of varieties were produced, some intentionally and some accidentally. It has been an interesting and rewarding challenge to study and collect these varieties along with the essays, proofs, and postal uses. Obviously, many mysteries remain, but hopefully in the coming years at least some will be resolved.

## References and Endnotes

1. *Catalogue de cotations des Timbres des DOM-TOM*, Edition 2004-2005, Dallay, 2004, Paris.
2. The color of the stamp identifies the denomination.
3. *Catalogue specialise de timbres-poste Pays d'expression française : tome II*, Maison Arthur Maury, Paris, 1965.
4. This contrasts with the more recent French policy of printing large quantities of imperforates for each new issue.
5. They also used a redrawn Cayenne design to produce regular and semi-postal stamps for French Guiana and Inini in 1941 and 1944.
6. Sanabria, N., *Standard Catalogue of Air Post Stamps*, Nicolas Sanabria Co., Inc., New York, NY, 1959-1960.
7. For example: Queyroy, E., “Air Mail French Guiana Surcharged France Libre,” *Stamps*, Vol. 57, 21 December 1946, pp. 546-547.
8. French Equatorial Africa was the first to do so in 1940.
9. *Catalogue des Timbres-Poste: Anciennes Colonies Françaises*, Cérés Philatélie, Paris, 2001.
10. The population was 30 to 35 thousand during the time the Cayenne airmails were in use.
11. Cérés designates the reissue as “II” and the original issue as “I”.

# Looking Forward to Denver

The 2009 FCPS exhibition, to be held in Denver 15-17 May 2009, promises to have what may be the greatest showing of French colonial material ever seen in a single U.S. national show. At this writing, we have 18 exhibits comprising no fewer than 108 frames. In addition will have a program that will include eight talks by members. Naturally, the society table will be manned every day so we can meet and schmooze to our heart's content.

## The Exhibits

The following sections give a brief description of the exhibits that will be shown by our members.

- ♦ **France: Transatlantic Mail to the United States, 1926-1937, Tom Broadhead**, 6 frames. Transatlantic Mail to the United States, 1926-1937 - The 11 year constant international rate period for letters, cards, and printed matter includes remarkable variety, including 58 different rate examples, a wide range of usages, and the early diversity of French commemoratives.
- ♦ **Petite Messages: Development of Carte de Visite Mail in 19th Century France, Tom Broadhead**, 1 frame. *Cartes de Visite* became increasingly popular during the late 19th Century, and in France they were recognized by a distinct class of mail and special postal stationery.
- ♦ **Subterranean Airmail: French Pneumatic Postcard Usages -1879-1901, Tom Broadhead**, 1 frame. French Pneumatic Postcard Usages - 1879-1901 - The opening of the Paris pneumatic system to the public was accompanied by the introduction of postal stationery, but postal cards were issued for only a 22 year period.
- ♦ **Postal History of Tahiti and French Oceania Prior to Independence, Ralph DeBoard**, 8 frames.
- ♦ **Madagascar: Early Postal History, Ed Grabowski**, 1 frame. A study of the island's postal history prior to 1896 when it became a colony.
- ♦ **Postal History of the French Colonial Allegorical Group Type: Use in the French Pacific Ocean Colonies, Ed Grabowski**, 7 frames. A study of the use of the Group Type from New Caledonia & Dependencies and French Oceania.
- ♦ **Postal History of the French Colonial Allegorical Group Type: Use in Indochina; The French Indochinese Offices in china and China, Ed Grabowski**, 10 frames. A comprehensive study of the use of the Group Type from this historically complex colony.
- ♦ **Aftermath of the French Revolution of 1791, Bob Kinsley**, 8 frames. Letters from the many French armies and from the many areas in which they fought under Napoleon's leadership.
- ♦ **French Sudan & Niger, Paul Larsen**, 8 frames, French possessions in the Sahara evolve during 1890-1944. Forerunners, military mail, definitive and special issues including proofs, varieties, booklets, and usage.
- ♦ **Ubangi-Shari-Chad 1900-1938, Paul Larsen**, 10 frames, *Forerunners, definitives 1915-1933, and usage of French Equatorial Africa issues. Includes proofs, many overprint varieties, stationery, and postage dues.*
- ♦ **Alsace-Lorraine/Elsass-Lothringen 1870 to UPU, Stan Luft**, 8 frames. Chronological study of the effects of the 1870-1871 War and its aftermath upon mail of this historically important region.
- ♦ **St-Pierre et Miquelon, ses émissions de 1885 à 1900, J.-J. Tillard**, 8 frames. A comprehensive study about SPM with all rarities and varieties known between 1885 and 1900.
- ♦ **St-Pierre et Miquelon, la tête de pêcheur, premier timbre propre aux île, J.-J. Tillard**, 1 frame. A complete study of this stamp, issued in 1909, is shown. The study includes many proofs, varieties and covers

- ♦ **French West Africa, Steve Tucker**, 10 frames. A traditional exhibit of the stamps of French West Africa.
- ♦ **French Guinea, Steve Tucker**, 10 frames. A traditional exhibit of all postage stamps of French Guinea from its formation in the late 19th Century to WWII.
- ♦ **French Guiana and Inini Commemoratives, Jeff Ward**, 5 frames. Essays, proofs, errors, varieties, and postal uses of the thirteen commemorative issues of French Guiana and Inini.
- ♦ **French Guiana's First Pictorials, 1904-28, Jeff Ward**, 5 frames. Essays, proofs, errors, varieties, and postal uses of French Guiana's first pictorial definitives featuring the anteatier, gold washer, and palm grove designs.
- ♦ **The Cayenne Airmails, Jeff Ward**, 1 frame. Essays, proofs, errors, varieties, and postal uses of French Guiana's first regular airmail issue of 1933.

Additionally, **Dave Herendeen** is the odd-man-out showing a one-frame exhibit of postage dues of Bosnia-Herzegovina (?)

### **The FCPS Society Table**

As is the case in other shows, there will be an FCPS table on the show floor. This table will be manned during show hours, except during our meetings. It will be a place for members to meet and *schmooze* during the show. Please check-in at the table when you arrive to pick up your name tag.

### **The FCPS Dinner**

The group dinner has been set. It will be held at 7:30 PM, Friday evening, 15 May at a French restaurant in Denver. The restaurant is **Le Central** at 8th and Lincoln in Denver. This restaurant is a regular stop for **Stan Luft**, and the editor can also attest to the fact that the food will be great! Transportation will be arranged for attendees without cars. Director **Dr. John Bloor** has kindly acted as the organizer of the event. If you plan to attend and haven't already contacted the editor, please do so as soon as possible.

### **The Schedule**

We are trying something different this year. We have reserved two blocks of time, two hours on Friday afternoon, and three hours on Saturday morning. Not only does this allow time for the Annual Meeting, but also for an ambitious group of presentations covering a wide range of topics in French-related philately. The current schedule, subject to change, is shown on the next page.

**Ed Grabowski** has graciously agreed to present his keynote program **Real or Fake? How Does a Philatelist Know For Sure?** As an added treat, Ed has donated 20 copies of his full-color book documenting his study **The French Colonial Allegorical Group Type: Use in Indochina, the French Indochinese Offices and China**. This program has been given to the Royal Philatelic Society, The Collectors Club of New York, the Collectors Club of Chicago and more. It will be available on a first come-first served basis to members for \$5 and non-members for \$15.

### **Other Presentations**

In addition to **Ed Grabowski** (NJ), we will have a number of other speakers from around the country talking about specific philatelic subjects and other aspects of collecting, exhibiting and researching. Those giving talks will be: **Ralph DeBoard** (TX), **Ron Hill** (CO), **Ray McGarrity** (AZ), **Steve Tucker** (NV), and **Jeff Ward** (CA). President **Ken Nilsestuen** (OH) and editor **Dave Herendeen** (NV) will be leading the various parts of the meetings.

### **The Annual Meeting**

Of course, the FCPS Annual Meeting will also be held. There are a number of important items that will be discussed that should be of interest to our members. These will include the of the FCP and a discussion of future meetings.

### **The Palmares Banquet**

Because we expect many members to attend the awards banquet on Saturday night, we have requested, and been granted, several tables that will be reserved for the FCPS. Check in at the society table for details.

# Annual Meeting Events

The meeting room will be published in the RMSS program that we will all receive when we get to the show.

## Friday, 15 May 2009

15:00	Welcome to the Annual Meeting: Ken Nilsestuen, President
15:05	Introduction to the Poster Session: Dave Herendeen, Organizer
15:10	Attendee Introductions
15:20	<i>Fezzan</i> : Ray McGarrity
15:50	<i>Why I Exhibit</i> : Steve Tucker
16:10	Short Break
16:20	<i>Marie Curie Stamps</i> : Ron Hill
16:40	<i>The First Issue of French Guiana</i> : Jeff Ward
17:00	Adjourn
19:30	<b>Group Dinner at La Central Restaurant</b>

## Saturday, 16 May 2009

09:00	Brief Introduction: Dave Herendeen, Organizer
09:10	<i>Real or Fake? How Does a Philatelist Know For Sure?</i> Dr. Ed Grabowski
09:40	<i>The First Issue of AOF?</i> - Steve Tucker
10:00	Short Break
10:10	<i>Post Offices in Paradise?</i> - Ralph DeBoard
10:30	<i>Research at La Musée de la Poste, Paris</i> : Dave Herendeen
10:50	Break
11:10	Annual Meeting—Ken Nilsestuen
	Status of <i>FCPS</i> —Ken Nilsestuen
	Membership/Treasury—Ken Nilsestuen
	Elections 2010—Ken Nilsestuen
	<i>FCP</i> , Electronic and Color—Dave Herendeen
	Open Form—Nilsestuen/Herendeen
	Future Meetings—Chicagopex 2010: Nilsestuen/Herendeen
	Closing and Next Meeting Announcement
12:00	Adjourn
15:00	<b>Exhibit Critique</b>
18:00	<b>Cocktails/Palmars Banquet</b>

## A New Kind of Essay?

David L. Herendeen

On my recent visit to New Zealand, I was fortunate enough to spend a few days with good friends and well-known French colonies dealers Ed Wener and Naya Nicolins. Their company, Indigo, is one of our faithful advertisers.

They not only have a great stock of issues for many of the colonies, but they also manage to find unusual specialty items. While perusing their stock for postage due items, Ed noted that he had a strange essay or proof of the Senegal issue of 1914. This stamp, part of the second key type postage due issue used in the territories comprising French West Africa, is shown in Fig. 1.



Figure 1. Issued postage due of 1914.

To date, I had encountered only a single proof item: what I had believed to be the master die proof of the frame. A cropped illustration is presented in Fig. 2. There is neither a duty value nor a colony name on the essay.

The new proof/essay is shown in Fig. 3. As noted, it appears to be a finished design of the 5c value for Senegal. It is, however, printed in black and imperforate on a very thick stock. Since it is very closely trimmed, it is not possible to determine whether it was once a plate proof or a die proof. The more the item was studied the more interesting and incongruous it became.

We first noticed the cut out areas in the corner designs. On closer inspection, we noticed that the "stamp" was actually created by two layers



Figure 2. Die essay of frame.



Figure 3. The subject essay.

of paper. What on the surface appeared to be an imperforate color proof was certainly not. The topmost layer of the item was mounted on thick card stock lending credence to the possibility that it was a plate proof on a paper such as India which was subsequently mounted on card. Next, it had small cutouts in the corner ornaments as shown in Fig. 3. In the figure, these cut outs appear black because a backing sheet was used for scanning purposes. These cutouts are more easily seen in the enhanced image shown in Fig.4.

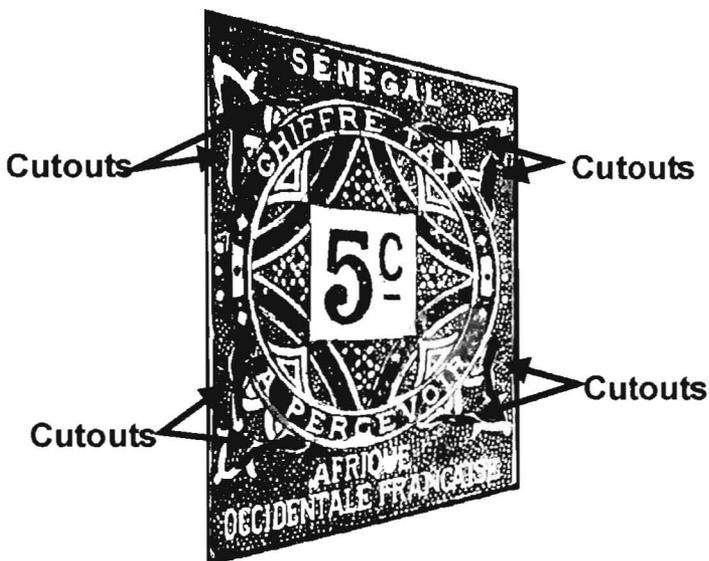


Figure 4. The cutouts on the subject essay.

Notice in Figs. 3 and 4 that the cut outs are done in a crude manner. They do not follow any of the lines of the engraving. This is easier to see on the enlargement of the northeast corner of the essay shown in Fig. 5.



Figure 5. Blowup of NE Corner of the Essay.

Another interesting anomaly is that the new essay has a number of hand drawn lines on it. This can be seen in the Fig. 6 blow-up. I frankly hadn't noticed these before.

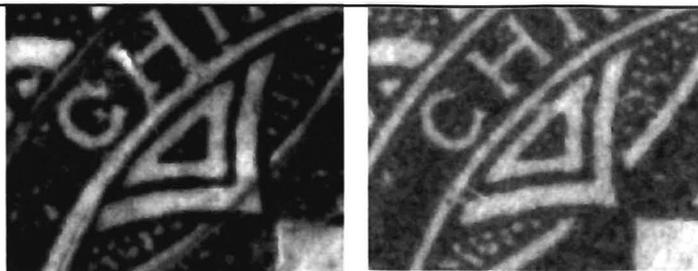


Figure 6. Hand drawn guide lines on essay (left).

### What is it?

Even owning this item has not helped unravel its secrets. Why was it created? Why would the artist(?) excise a portion of each corner ornament? Why would such a poor and incomplete job be done? Finally, the most important questions, what is this and are there any more examples of such a thing for Senegal or any other colony?

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## Membership Notices

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### NEW MEMBERS

- 3400 NIELSEN, DANA S., Snohomish, WA
- 3401 TILLARD, JEAN-JACQUES L.,  
St-Pierre et Miquelon, France
- 3402 BERTOLACCI, CHARLES E., Kirkland, WA
- 3403 SEGAL, RONALD, Revere, MA
- 3404 TAYLOR, JAMES R., Calgary, AB, Canada

### ADDRESS CHANGES

- 2908 BROWN, GARY H., Santa Barbara, CA
- 2518 ROUSSOT, PIERRE, Macon, France

### RESIGNATIONS RECEIVED

Marcel Becard, Richard Frajola, Kenneth Goss, Tom Kilmer, Dale Lilljedahl, Dennis Mitton and Barbara Mueller

### DECEASED

- 2171 GUYER, JOHN O.

### DONATIONS

We would like to thank the following member for their generous contributions:

Rollo Adams, Carl Barna, Christian Beslu, Daniel Brouillette, Lewis Bussey, Walter Clarke, John Englund, Carl Faulkner, Henry Googer, Leonard Langdon, John Lindholm, Stan Luft and William McCarroll.

**Show Reports**

**OKPEX 2008**

Oklahoma City, OK, October 2008

Gold Medals to **Ralph DeBoard** for "Tahiti Postal History," **Stan Luft** for "France - Marianne de Decaris (1960-1967)," and **Al Kugel**. Silver medal to **Ralph DeBoard** for "Slogan Cancels of the French Colonies." Vermeil to **Al Kugel** for a one-frame exhibit.

**CHICAGOPEX 2008**

Arlington Heights, IL, November 2009

Two Golds to **Elliot Landau**. Also, a Gold to **Roger Quinby**.

**FLOREX 2008**

Orlando, December 2008

Gold Medal to **Steve Turchik**.

**SANDICAL 2009**

San Diego, January 2009

Gold medal to **Steve Tucker** for "French Guinea." Vermeil medal to **Charles Lablond**, and Silver medal to **Steve Washburne**. Gold to Jeff Ward for his one-frame exhibit "The Cayenne Airmails of French Guiana."

**Filatellic Fiesta 2009**

San Jose, CA, January 2009

Gold medals to **Elliot Landau** for "Classic France: Postal History of the Ceres and Napoleon Issues of 1849-75" and **Al Kugel**

**COLOPEX 2009**

Columbus, OH February 2009

Gold medal to **Roger Quinby** and Vermeil to **Al Kugel**. One frame exhibits, Vermeil medals to **Jay Carrigan** and **Al Kugel** for their one-frame exhibits.

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 ☆ Join Us ☆  
 ☆ in Denver, CO. ☆  
 ☆ See Page 40 for Information. ☆  
 ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

**CORRESPONDING SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2008**

**Total Membership as of 1 January 2008** ..... 372

New Members ..... 16  
 Members Reinstated ..... 9  
 Resignations Received ..... 12  
 Members Deceased ..... 3  
 Members Dropped 2008 ..... 15  
 Net Membership Gain (Loss) for 2008 ..... (5)

**Total Membership as of 1 January 2009** ..... 375

**TYPES AND SUBTYPES**

*O,20 Arms of St.-Lô*

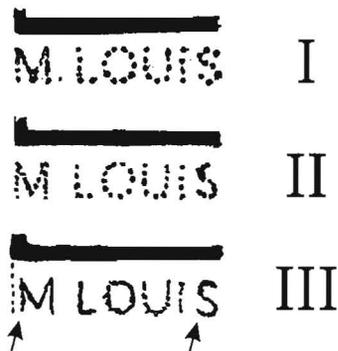
(All printed only in sheet form by photogravure)

Type I: **M. LOUIS** is 2.3 mm long; letters well formed. From Paris 1966-68 printings from cylinders prepared by a private firm; 5 press runs

Type II: **M LOUIS** is 2.5 mm long and slightly further from bottom frame line; letters more or less deformed, particularly the S. From most Périgueux printings of 1970-1978; with phosphor bars from 1971, increasingly common from 1973; coils, issued from late 1971, scarce used.

Type III: **M LOUIS** is 2.4 mm long and slightly further away from left frame line; letters more or less deformed; the S extends further down than the other letters. From the 29th and last Périgueux 1978 press run, with phosphor bars.

--S. J. Luft



## *President's Letter*

Denver is fast approaching! The stamp show season is warming up as is the weather. This will be my third WSP show in as many months, and I am really excited about it. This will really be a **convention**, not just a dozen of us sharing a few ideas for 45 minutes or an hour. I can't encourage you enough to get to the show.

In addition to **Dave Herendeen's** exertions as organizer, we owe it to our speakers to attend their presentations. As you can see from Dave's e-mails and elsewhere in this journal, every talk is an interesting subject. Many if not all have broader application than just a country topic. For example, **Ralph DeBoard** is likely to explain his original research on the post offices in Paradise, work performed not in a library, but in the field. I've talked with Ralph about this in the past and found it entertaining and interesting. I have the same expectations of all our speakers, and know I will not be disappointed.

On Friday evening we will have our dinner, so in addition to the philatelic subjects of the day, we can socialize over good food and drink. That evening the subject matter will certainly stray from philately, and the more spouses who attend, the more certain I can be of that statement. **Can you tell I am excited? I want you to share this with all FCPS members!**

I haven't even touched on the exhibits. Again, we have a strong showing from our membership. Thanks to all of you who are participating. **Eliot Landau** will serve as the FCPS judge, and Dave and I will also be there just in case (tongue in cheek).

News at the board level is quiet. We have **Bill Wallis**, our treasurer, chasing down non-renewing members to get them back in the fold. We are looking at a manuscript that we may publish as a Vaurie Fund project. Other than that, things are sliding along.

So, it's not too late to get to the Rocky Mountain Stamp Show! Let's have a great show and gathering. Folks, I am really looking forward to this.

## *Come Join Us...*

*David L. Herendeen*

When I began my career in organized philately more than 20 years ago, I had two principal motivations. The first was to gain knowledge from other fellow philatelists. It did not take long for me to appreciate the helpfulness of nearly all of the collecting and exhibiting fraternity. The second, which I did not appreciate at first, was the camaraderie of the same group; a common interest in stamps, postal history, exhibiting and research. These common bonds led to growing friendships among fellow philatelists that will last a lifetime. We all need a way to meet new people, why not through our fantastic hobby?

### *The Presentations*

This year we are trying something new—a group of eight presentations covering a variety of subjects. It is my fond hope that this will set a standard for future annual meetings. It will allow us all to gain new knowledge and appreciation of French area philately. Our speakers have many years of experience in collecting, exhibiting and research.

### *Synergy*

Experience shows us that missing information may suddenly appear from the most unlikely sources. For example, a presentation about a single colony might give you information on how a particular proof item that you own may have originated; or how an overprint variety came to be; or where to get information about a particular subject. This is the intent of presentations like the ones that you will see at our meeting in Denver.

### *Please Try to Attend*

The FCPS meeting is a grand opportunity to come and share your love of French area collecting with many other members. Many experienced exhibitors and authors will be present to help answer any questions you might have. Please consider attending this exciting event if you can, it will definitely broaden your horizons.

*I Hope to See You All in Denver!*

# The French Military Post Offices in the Second Opium War (Second Campaign)

Robert Schneider and Jeffrey S. Schneider

[Interasia Auctions Ltd. of Hong Kong will be offering a specialized collection of French Military and Civilian Post Offices in China and Indochina in its 25-26 July 2009 auction.

The Editor invited them to provide some background for this area of study. The resulting article provides a brief history of French postal operations during the Second Campaign of the Second Opium War (Second China War) and draws upon items from this collection to illustrate the campaign and workings of the postal service.]

The French were relative latecomers to the Western commercial and political expansion into China. However, by the 1850s, they had become active participants and joined Britain in the First Campaign of the Second Opium War in 1857-58. This campaign intended to gain further concessions in China. In June 1858, Britain and France forced a defeated China to enter into the onerous Treaty of Tientsin which provided for the opening of eleven additional ports to Western trade.

The Chinese subsequently refused to ratify the Treaty. The French, along with the British, amassed a new expeditionary force at Hong Kong in the first part of 1860 to initiate a Second Campaign. They had prematurely withdrawn their forces after the Treaty of Tientsin, and a smaller British assault at Taku (near Tientsin) in June 1859 had failed. Fig. 1 illustrates a remarkable December 1859 envelope from France to a naval officer on a French warship bound for China as part of this extensive military build-up. Addressed to him at the Cape of Good Hope, the letter followed him across the Indian Ocean to Hong Kong, arriving in May 1860, and then on to Shanghai. The many cancellations on the reverse of the cover are shown in Fig. 1b.

The joint Anglo-French expeditionary force from



Figure 1a. 1859 (Dec.) envelope from France to ship bound for the Campaign at Cape of Good Hope, routed on to China.



Figure 1b. Reverse of cover in Fig. 1a, showing cancellations of Cape of Good Hope, Hong Kong (Bureau A and British colonial) and Bureau Central, Shanghai, where it was redirected.

Hong Kong included 11,000 British under General Grant, 6,700 French under General Cousin-Montauban, and 173 ships. This force captured the port cities of Chefoo and Dalian to seal the Bohai Gulf in the summer of 1860. It subsequently landed near Tientsin on August 3, and moved inland during a short six-week campaign to Peking, decisively defeating the Chinese

forces before Peking at the Battle of Baliqiao and entering Peking on October 6, ignominiously looting and burning its legendary Summer Palaces. China was forced to enter into the Convention of Peking on 18 October 1860, ending the Second Opium War. This allowed part of the French Expeditionary Corps to move to the Cochin China (Indochina) campaign.

The French established military field post offices in China for the China Expeditionary Corps beginning in February 1860.<sup>1</sup> The first of these was at Hong Kong, the initial staging point. There were four post offices or bureaux in China (called *Bureaus A, B* and *C* and *Bureau Central*), with *Bureau Central* being the post office attached to the Corps headquarters. Desrousseaux ascribes the other bureaux by geographical location:

- ◆ *Bureau A* was located at the original staging center Hong Kong
- ◆ *Bureau B* was located in the North China theater of operations. This is the area in which forces landed in June 1860, and where the Campaign's hostilities occurred.
- ◆ *Bureau C* was established at Canton, where it is thought some supply and medical units were stationed.<sup>2,3</sup>

The individual post offices each had their own cancellers. This was the usual lozenge of dots with C E C (*Corps Expéditionnaire de la Chine*) followed by the bureau letter or designation. Also included was a double-ring circular date stamp. The office locations changed on occasion as troops moved and relocated.

*Bureau Central* (the Corps Headquarters) was originally organized in Hong Kong in February 1860, but was transferred, along with the relocation of the Headquarters, in May 1860 to Shanghai, closer to the eventual North China theater of operations, where it remained until it closed in late March 1862. Fig. 2 shows a cover from the Corps Headquarters (*Bureau Central: C E C B. C 4*) after its relocation to Shanghai.

*Bureau A*, a usage of which is shown in Fig. 3, was organized at Hong Kong in May 1860 and remained at this important staging point until its closing there at the end of November 1860.<sup>4</sup> It was subsequently reopened in Saigon,

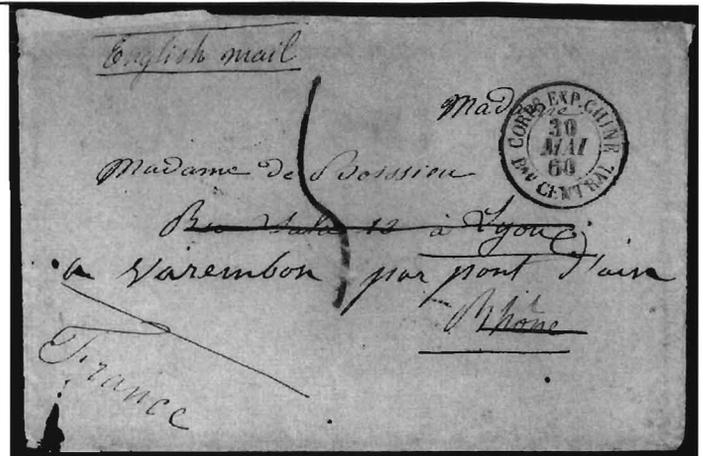


Figure 2. Unfranked officer's letter from Corps Headquarters (*Bureau Central*), after its relocation to Shanghai, with "English Mail" endorsement reflecting carriage by P&O Line, taxed "5" (*décimes*)

Cochin China, where part of the Corps had been moved. However, the China Expeditionary Corps cancellers were still used in Saigon. *Bureau A* operated at Saigon from late February 1861 until April 1862.<sup>5</sup>

*Bureau B* was originally placed in Chefoo after its capture in June 1860, and letters are recorded from 11 June to 25 August 1860. The office was subsequently relocated to Tientsin (with *Bureau B* correspondence originating there recorded from November 1860), where it remained until its closing in October 1861 upon withdrawal of the troops.

*Bureau C* remained at Canton from its organization around October 1860 until the withdrawal of forces there in November 1861 and may have then been moved to Hong Kong (or



Figure 3. Franked officer's letter from Bureau A (*Hong Kong*) during the build-up there preceding the North China assault

possibly Macau), operating there until its closing around late May 1862.

According to Desrousseau, the relative scarcities of the respective offices (in ascending order from the least scarce to rarest) are: *Bureau Central* at Shanghai, *Bureau B* at Tientsin, *Bureau A* (Hong Kong); then *Bureau Central* at Hong Kong and *Bureau C* at Canton of approximately the same rarity; and finally *Bureau B* at Chefoo.

The military postal system provided for separate rates not only for enlisted men and officers but also in effect for franked and unfranked mail. The rates were 20 centimes for soldiers and 40 centimes for officers (Fig. 4) for franked letters weighing 7.5 grams. Unfranked mail was, in contrast, taxed at 30 centimes (Fig. 5) and 5 *décimes* (equal to 50 centimes) (Fig. 2), respectively, at such weight. Franked soldiers' (non-officers) mail is much rarer than unfranked soldiers' mail or franked or unfranked officers' mail.

The bulk of the mail was, as would be expected, to and from France, which was carried by the British P & O Line under the Anglo-French December 1859 postal accord, since the normal French concessionaire *Messageries Impériales* did not have a route to China at the time. The military postal system also serviced mail between troops in the theater. Fig. 6 shows a rare surviving example of this. Dated October 1861, this envelope from *Bureau B*, addressed to a Naval Captain, was redirected to Saigon, reflecting the rotation of forces to Cochin China in connection with campaigns there.

Most of the French expeditionary troops were withdrawn from China by 1862, with elements

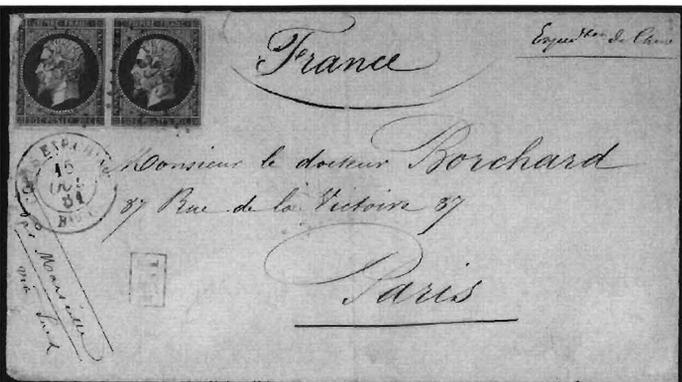


Figure 4. Franked officer's letter from Bureau C (Canton)

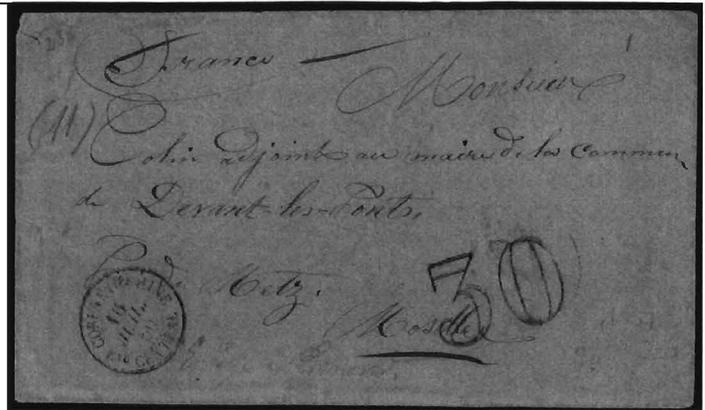


Figure 5. Unfranked soldier's letter from Bureau Central, countersigned on reverse by Commanding Officer, taxed "30" (centimes)



Figure 6. 1861 (15 Oct.) intra-theater officer's letter from Bureau B (Tientsin) initially sent to Bureau Central and sent on to Saigon, reflecting the rotation of forces to the Cochin China campaign.

having also assisted in putting down outbreaks during the Taiping Rebellion of 1850-64. The China Expeditionary Corps was officially disbanded during 1862.

Please contact *Interasia Auctions* (Suite A, 13/F, Shun Ho Tower, 24-30 Ice House Street, Central, Hong Kong, tel.: + 852 2868 6046, fax: + 852 2868 6146, email: [info@interasia-auctions.com](mailto:info@interasia-auctions.com)) for further information about its July 25-26 sale or to receive a catalogue. The sale catalogue will also be available on *Interasia's website* ([www.interasia-auctions.com](http://www.interasia-auctions.com)) approximately three weeks before the auction.

### End Notes and References

1. The dates of operation and movement of the military post offices are all approximate, being based on earliest and latest dates of surviving correspondence recorded by Desrousseau in his seminal work on French post offices and mail in the Far East. Desrousseau, J., *Postes et Courriers Français en Extrême*

*Orient, Livre 1*. Paris, 1991.

2. Major Pratt, the China postal historian, states that the Order of Battle laid down before the Corps left France provided for a field post office to be included for each division (and a separate one for the corps headquarters) and incorrectly, in this author's opinion, ascribes that *Bureau A* was attached to the Corps' First Division and *Bureau B* to its Second Division. While the authors have not reviewed any French military history sources, they are inclined to concur with the well-respected Desrousseaux's characterization that makes no mention of any specific divisional attachment for *Bureaus A* and *B*. It seems odd that a division's post office would not be open during the build-up of the units in the theater and would rather only be first opened in the actual zone of operations after the division's landing there, as Pratt's interpretation requires as to *Bureau B*. Likewise, Pratt's view implies that at least a significant portion of the First Division remained in Hong Kong and was not part of the force that actually fought the campaign, as its post office remained in Hong Kong, which again seems unlikely, particularly since even the Corps headquarters was moved from Hong Kong to Shanghai a month before hostilities began. Similarly, the Corps had a third bureau denoted by letter in China (*Bureau C*), which was not attached to a division, nor does Pratt ascribe it to any particular unit and which seems to be based on its geographic location. Pratt, interestingly, also incorrectly places *Bureau A* at Saigon, without noting its earlier placement in Hong Kong, notwithstanding correspondence originating there recorded by Desrousseaux. Pratt, Major Richard, *Imperial China. History of the Posts to 1896*. London, 1994.
3. There was also *Bureau D* that was opened in Singapore in February 1861 and is thought to have handled mail related to the campaign in Cochin China, placing it outside the scope of this article. The C E C D canceller is slightly thicker than the Corps' cancellers employed in China, with the very few genuine examples apparently applied to letters originating in Saigon.
4. Desrousseaux claims that the troops at Hong Kong were moved to Shanghai in 1860 in preparation for the assault on North China. This may be an inelegant reference to the transfer of the headquarters to Shanghai, or just an incorrect statement. Our information indicates that the assault force remained in Hong Kong until embarking for the North China landings, which would be the most logical way to undertake the campaign.
5. Thereafter, Indochina army cancellers were used and the China Expeditionary Corps forces there were formally absorbed into the Cochin China force.
6. Kong, Wen-Sun, "The Military Post History of French Expeditionary Force in China During 1860-1862," *The Postal History Research Magazine, 5th Anniversary Special Issue, No. 7 (Taipei, 1993)*, pp. 52-57.
7. Herron, I., *The Savage Empire. Forgotten Wars*, Stroud, 2000, pp. 112-144.

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## We Get Letters

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Editor

I have been reluctant to endorse the proposal to send the FCP via email. Based on how well the web site has been maintained (last update 31 July 2007 with the majority of pages not since 2004!), I wonder just how technically challenged the membership really is —both senders and receivers. I often read publications where there is no computer or even laptop, and to be told that I simply can print the journal seems a little presumptuous.

I am in full agreement with Peter Kelly's letter in the current journal. I further consider the possibility of no more occasional contributions from Peter as reason enough to continue the current distribution method. Why not just raise dues, or am I being too presumptuous? Sincerely,

**Ralph Wilson (FCPS 1122)**

*As noted in the January issue, the notion of an electronic FCP has been tabled and will be further discussed at the upcoming annual meeting.*

*Mr. Wilson rightly levels criticism at the FCPS website. It has been totally ignored and we hope to change this in the coming months.*

Editor:

Relative to the *Salon du Timbre*, the information I was sent by *Secretariat France Sevrin* on 18 November 2008 gave the dates of the show as 5-8 November 5-8. This is Thursday to Sunday.

**Jack Dykhouse (FCPS 1624)**

*I would like to thank Jack for correcting information that I had sent to some members indicating that this wonderful show was being held from 6-9 November.*

## Treasurer's Report for 2008

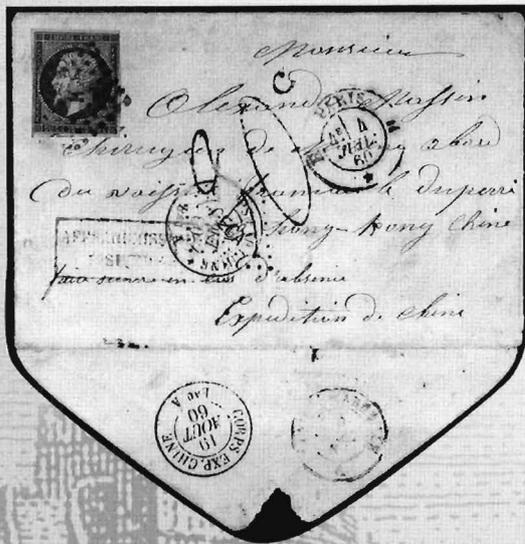
Due to a lack of space in this issue, the Treasurer's Report will appear in the July FCP. Hopefully this will not be an inconvenience.

# July 25-26 Auction in Hong Kong

Our July auction contains a specialized collection of French Military Mail in China and French Post Offices in China and Indochina 1860-1922, including Second Opium War, 1884-85 French Expedition in Formosa, Kouang-Tchéou-Wan Expeditionary Force, Boxer Uprising and Maritime mail, consisting of over 150 lots.



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