

France & Colonies Philatelist



Published bi-monthly by the France and Colonies Group
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French Packet Mail from the Danish West Indies

By Robert G. Stone

From "The Posthorn" of April 1946,
by courtesy of the Scandinavian
Collectors Club.



CARACAS (Venezuela) to New York: carried privately to St. Thomas; there handled onto French ship by Danish office (whose mark will be noticed). Prepaid 60c in French stamps; French route mark, Type II B. Paid only to U.S. port of arrival.

THE FRENCH PACKET MARKS FROM ST. THOMAS

Types of markings ("cachets"):

- I. Anchor in lozenge shaped grid of dots, 8 x 8 mm., in black, which was the usual color, but also known in blue, and rarely in red, violet or magenta. (1865-76).
- II. Circular types (1865 to date): Colors black, blue or red.
 - A. A double-lined circle, variously inscribed, with **date** in center (2 or 3 lines), diameter 20 to 31 mm.

(Continued on next page)

- B. Outer octagon (22 mm in diameter) with inner circle, between which is inscription, date in center in 2 or 3 lines.
- C. Like type A, but diameter 23-24 mm., inner circle is sometimes dashed (1865 to present).
- D. Like type B, but 23 to 24 mm. diameter (1887—to present)
- E. Single outer octagon (27 to 29 mm. diameter), date inside and sometimes accompanied by fleuron (1908—to date).

Historical manner of usage:

The first packet (G. G. T. line) called at St. Thomas on April 17, 1865, and from that time on until sometime about mid 1876 the anchor cancel was almost always used to obliterate stamps, while the postmarks of types A or B were put either on the front or the back of the cover, and sometimes on both faces. However, from 1876 types A, B, C, D or E were used to cancel the stamps.

French stamps were for sale on ships by a specially employed Postal Clerk, which was usually carried by each boat, or else by the ship's Purser. The application of French stamps in a non-French country was of course possible at any place, if the postage of the country in question was prepaid, or where (before U. P. U.) unpaid letters were accepted for foreign destinations. At some places, in foreign lands, French consuls were allowed to operate post offices, where they would not only sell French stamps, but also perform all other duties of such an office, as receive and distribute letters, cancel or postmark the same, and also deliver and receive mail bags from French ships when in port. At St. Thomas the D. W. I. government would not permit this, and therefore the consul could only sell stamps and turn over any letters he had to the D. W. I. post office for delivery to the ships. At first, to about 1871, the government of the islands demanded that the 3c local fee had to be paid on all letters, which was not always done by application of a stamp, but could also be paid in cash.

The French mail ships calling at St. Thomas carried cancelling devices of the general types listed above, but with special inscription for marking letters posted on the boats at St. Thomas, or by the D. W. I. post offices, the local authorities endorsing their letters, put aboard, with its St. Thomas postmark. (See illustration). It seems doubtful from inspection of many covers, that the postal clerks always used the special cancels in exactly the manner they were intended to be used. Thus one may find letters put on board a French boat in Puerto Rico, cancelled with the cachet reading "St. Thomas," and vice versa. This would probably be due to delay in handling, or to carelessness. Likewise letters put on at St. Thomas were sometimes not endorsed with a cachet reading "St. Thomas", but only with the mark of the route (Ligne) of the boat, even though the former type of cachet was available. This was especially noted in the 1860's, when quite a few covers mailed on French packets were not prepaid in stamps, and only cancelled by Route markings.

Occasionally stamps of the general issue for the French Colonies were used on these packet covers, but such are exceedingly rare from St. Thomas, even tho not unusual from the Windward Islands, Guianas and Venezuela. Combinations of the French or French Colonial stamps with U. S., D. W. I., Cuban, St. Thomas-La Guaira, Hapag and British stamps are possible on letters from or forwarded through St. Thomas prior to 1880, but most of these are of the greatest rarity. Various forwarding cachets are not unusual on St. Thomas-French Packet letters—in fact, a great proportion of the letters with cachets of types A and B reading "St. Thomas" did not originate there, but brought to St. Thomas by private schooners from Curacao, Venezuela and Puerto Rico, and thence forwarded by one of the various firms at St. Thomas, to their destination. The commonest rates seen, prepaid in French stamps, are 60, 70, 80, 100, 120 and 160 centimes.

Although French mail boats have continued to call regularly at St. Thomas, down to the present day, the use of French or French Colonial stamps on letters put on board at St. Thomas, was made theoretically illegal by the U. P. U., sometime not long after 1876, and such covers are apparently unknown with dates later than 1878. From that time on the French ships would accept and cancel D. W. I. stamps on "loose letters" put on board, or mailed on board, while a ship was in the harbor of St. Thomas. Even such pieces are rather rarely seen because the regular mails via closed pouches had become frequent and adequate by that time, and no advantage was gained by mailing on board, except for passengers and for shore people who wished to post during the brief time between the closing of the post office and sailing of the ship. On the high seas (between ports) a French mail ship is supposed to accept only French stamps for prepayment of letters.

Inscription in Circular-type French Packet marks used on letters from or via St. Thomas:

- I. The marks of Route ("Ligne") B (1865-90):—
 - (a) in Type A cancels:

"Ligne B. paq. fr. no 1" (also nos 2, 3 and 4, and perhaps 5 and 6)
 - (b) in Type B cancel:

"St-Thomas paq. fr. B. no 1" (also nos 2, 3 and 4, and perhaps 5 and 6)

"Ligne B. paq. fr. no 1" (also nos 2, 3, 4 and perhaps 5 and 6?)
 - (c) in Type D and D cancels:

"Ligne B. paq. fr. no 1" (also nos 2, 3, 4 and perhaps 5 and 6?)
- II. The marks of Route (Ligne) C:—Note—this route did not touch at St. Thomas, but passed through Martinique for South America. A mark was given it to use on letters received by it at Martinique, having come from St. Thomas by boats of Route "B" or Route "E." The cancel is Type B and reads:—

"St-Thomas paq. fr. C"

It may never have been used on stamps, which should have been cancelled by anchor or marks of Routes B, D, E or F; as a backstamp or a transit mark it has no special value in itself.
- III. The marks of Route D (1866-78):—
 - (a) in type A cancel:—

"Ligne D. paq. fr. no 1" (also nos. 2, 3 and 4, perhaps 5 and 6)
 - (b) in type B cancels:

"St-Thomas paq. fr. D no 1" (also nos 2 and 3)

"St-Thomas" (fleurion at bottom)
- IV. Marks of route ("Ligne") E (1865-):
 - (a) in type B cancel:

"St-Thomas paq. fr. E. no 1"
 - (b) in type D cancels:

"Ligne E. paq. fr. no 1"

"Haiti a Fort de France L. E. no 1"

"Fort de France a Haiti L. E. no 1"

V. Marks of Route ("Ligne") F (1878-):

- (a) in type A cancel:

"Ligne F. paq. fr. no 1" (or with no 1 omitted)
- (b) in type B cancel:

Note: none is reported, but it seems one might exist for this line reading; "St-Thomas paq. F. no 1", but it would be very rare as such inscriptions were not used after 1878!
- (c) in type D cancel:

"Ligne F. paq. fr. no 1" (also no. 2)

Note: the numbers inscribed in cancels of Types A-E, following the words "Ligne" and paq. fr., do not have any special significance for the philatelist, as they indicate merely the number of the die, each clerk (and hence each boat) having a different number.

(This article has been compiled by original research of the author and with the assistance of "La Poste Maritime," Boursalet, Gilbert, et al.)

AIRMAIL "EPREUVES DE LUXE"

From "The Aerophilatelist's News"
Feb. 1, 1948

By John J. Britt

A literal translation from the French of 'Epreuves de luxe' would be De Luxe Proofs. However, because of the circumstances surrounding their eventual disposition, they do not come within the proper category of an orthodox proof variety and are more in the nature of a 'Special printing'.

These 'De Luxe Proofs' are primarily printed as gifts which are to be presented to various officials in the French Government, as well as the ruling heads of foreign Governments and are peculiar to the French Postal System. By virtue of their being 'Presented', they have become commonly known in this country as 'De Luxe Presentation Proofs' and may rightfully be classed as another form of miniature sheet.

The printings are generally limited to either 50, 100 or 200 sets and are always issued in 'Presentation Sheet' form. Invariably a single imperforate impression in the same color as the issued stamp is imprinted in the center of a sheet of paper varying in size from 4 7/8 inches by 6 1/8 inches to 4 3/4 inches by 6 1/4 inches, and may come either horizontally or vertically in format, depending on the design of the stamp. The paper ranges in color from white to buff and in texture from smooth to coarse, there evidently being no standard grade of paper specified for these emissions.

These 'De Luxe Presentation Proofs' may readily be recognized by the following characteristic markings appearing on the sheet:

1. Inscription of the 'Atelier de Fabrication des Timbres-Poste-Paris', on right bottom part of the sheet.
2. By the 3 odd shaped punched holes, also at bottom of sheet, but usually in the center.
3. By the small seal of the 'Institut de Gravure, Paris,' at bottom of sheet and in the center.
4. By the large circular seal of the 'Secretariat d'Etat Aux Colonies', which may be found on the top or bottom of sheet.
5. By the large circular seal of the 'Ministere de Colonies', which may also be found on the top or bottom of sheet.
6. In some cases, a combination of several of the above markings.

While these emissions have a definite place in Aero-Philately, little attention has been paid them by the collectors in this country, although in France, no Frenchman considers his collection complete unless it contains some of these items. Recently an increased interest in these issues has made itself apparent and because of this, the Editors of the Sanabria Air Post Catalogue have decided that they are worthy of being listed and will appear under a separate section, in the next edition of the catalogue.

The writer is well aware of the fact that the list which follows is not complete, however, a good start has been made in compiling a list of all known items in this particular category. Because of the special nature of the subject in question, it is necessary that they be listed only as complete sets, except where only one stamp was issued by itself.

ALGERIA

1945—I Value with overprint
1946—Regular issue, set of 6

CAMEROONS

1945—I value, regular issue
1946—I Value, Victory issue
1946—Chad to Rhine, set of 6

DAHOMY

1942—Vichy Gov't, set of 8

FRANCE

1930—I Value (Carmine)
1930—I Value (Deep Ultramarine)
1934—I Value, Bleriot issue
1936—Regular issue, set of 7
1936—I Value, regular issue
1936—Commemorative issue, set of 2
1936—I Value, Pilatre De Rozier issue
1937—Mermoz issue, set of 2
1938—I Value, Clement Ader issue
1940—I Value, Guynemer issue
1942—I Value, Pro-Aviation issue
1946—Regular issue, set of 4
FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA
1944—I Value, regular issue
1946—I Value, Victory issue
1946—Chad to Rhine, set of 6
FRENCH GUIANA
1942—I Value, Regular issue
1945—I Value, Regular issue
1946—I Value, Victory issue
1946—Chad to Rhine, set of 6
FRENCH GUINEA
1942—Vichy gov't, set of 8
FRENCH INDIA
1946—I Value, Victory issue
1946—Chad to Rhine, set of 6
FRENCH MOROCCO
1939-40—Regular issue, set of 7
FRENCH OCEANIA
1945—I Value, regular issue
1946—I Value, Victory issue
1946—Chad to Rhine, set of 6
FRENCH SUDAN
1942—Vichy Gov't, set of 8
FRENCH WEST AFRICA
1946—I Value, Victory issue
1946—Chad to Rhine, set of 6

GUADELOUPE

1946—I Value, Victory issue
1946—Chad to Rhine, set of 6

INDO-CHINA

1946—I Value, Victory issue
1946—Chad to Rhine, set of 6

IVORY COAST

1942—Vichy Gov't, set of 8

LEBANON

1940—Regular issue, set of 8
1941—Independence issue, set of 2
1944—Regular issue, set of 6

MADAGASCAR

1945—I Value, Regular issue
1946—I Value, Victory issue
1946—Chad to Rhine, set of 6

MARTINIQUE

1946—I Value, Victory issue
1946—Chad to Rhine, set of 6

MAURITANIA

1942—Vichy Gov't, set of 8

MONACO

1942—Regular issue, set of 6
1945—Surcharged set of 5
1946—Prince Louis, set of 2
1946—Regular issue, set of 4

NEW CALEDONIA

1945—I Value, regular issue
1946—I Value, Victory issue
1946—Chad to Rhine, set of 6

NIGER

1942—Vichy Gov't, set of 8

REUNION

1942—Vichy Gov't, set of 8
1944—Centenary issue, set of 6
1946—I Value, Victory issue
1946—Chad to Rhine, set of 6

ST. PIERRE & MIQUELON

1946—I Value, Victory issue
1946—Chad to Rhine, set of 6

SENEGAL

1942—Vichy Gov't, set of 9

SOMALI COAST

1943—Anniversary issue, set of 2
1946—I Value, Victory issue
1946—Chad to Rhine, set of 6

SYRIA

1937—Regular issue, set of 8
1940—Regular issue, set of 7
1941—Independence issue, set of 2

TOGO

1942—Vichy Gov't, set of 8

WALLIS & FUTUNA

1946—I Value, Victory issue
1946—Chad to Rhine, set of 6

Page For "France" Is Bileski's Newest

The newest of the well known "Title Pages" has been released to the public by K. Bileski, Station B, Winnipeg, Canada. The present page is dedicated to France and has as its motif, scenes, persons and historical details connected with that country. By now, even those who have never seen the pages are well aware that they are the work of the top miniaturist of the world today, the artist Arthur Szyk. Incidentally, the name is pronounced "shick."

Four of the famous personages of France are depicted on the page, these being Lafayette, Moliere, St. Joan of Arc and Pasteur. Then the shield of the country is shown against a colorful background at the top of the page, and the coat of arms near the bottom. All through the design are the various coats of arms of the provinces and cities of the country. A picture of the Eiffel Tower and the Cathedral of Notre Dame are included in the design also.

The present page is available from Mr. Bileski at the above address at \$2.10 postpaid. It is one of a series that he has offered to collectors and the public both, and the series price of which can be obtained from him on request.

--Linn's, Feb. 9 1948



"Hold still till I cancel this stamp."



Paris Heroic Week Postmark and the Facteur Mark

By an unfortunate misunderstanding, these two pictures were mishandled in processing at the printery in No. 32 of the Philatelist. They are now rerun to get them showing correctly and in full.

G. C. Paper By the Editor

The catalog statement about "G.C. paper", that was used for French stamps printed around 1919, leaves much to the imagination. An explicit statement on the matter is asked by some of the members.

"G.C." means "Grande Consommation", and was used as name for the stamp printings made in the days of the final effort that won World War I. Margins of many stamp sheets printed then carry these letters, usually in very large bold face.

The paper obtainable for stamp making during this time was not uniform. It came from a fair number of different makers. It is typical "war time stuff," manufactured with the economy of material and processing we know so well on some products made during World War 2.

G.C. paper sometimes is brown, sometimes is a dirty dull gray, sometimes is yellow-gray-- and sometimes is almost as white as regular stamp paper. The only real problem is to recognize a whitish G.C. paper.

The key characteristic is the presence of a number of short bits of what appears to be straw in the paper.

These are straight, rigid little rods of hard fiber. They are actually slivers of wood, which were not freed of lignin like most of the paper fibers. They are blackish or yellow brown. The length is usually 1 to 2 mm. Normally, four to six show in one stamp; but there may be as few as one or two. They rarely are visible on the front of the stamp.



Constant Plate Flaw in 70c Mercury

Mr. George Tisserant has shown us the 70c Mercury of 1939 (Scott No. 371, in magenta) with what he finds is a constant plate flaw on numerous copies. The top line is doubled and irregular, and at the right corner it is broken. The picture shows the flaw--a damaged electro. Position on the plate etc. not known.



Copy of Letter from H. L. Lindquist to
Secretary Stringham after Ciper 1947

June 17, 1947

Dear Mrs. Stringham:

Now that the Centenary International Philatelic Exhibition has gone into history as one of the most successful stamp exhibitions ever held, I want to thank the France and Colonies Group for the splendid cooperation that it rendered, both as a unit and through their individual members.

The fact that many of your members carried off the leading awards in their groups, is self-evidence of their importance as philatelists, and purely aside from their philatelic displays, many of them were on the Executive Committee which made the show possible.

(Here follow mentions of the specific tasks handled by members Ben Reeves, Brainerd Kremer, Herman Schloss, S.G. Rich and Raoul Lesgor. To save space we omit these paragraphs).

Please extend my sincere thanks to your entire group and I hope they all feel well repaid for the time and effort that they put in to make the show so successful.

Sincerely yours
H.L. Lindquist, Chairman.

Postmarks of the French Navy

Our member, Mr. L. Lamouroux, of Toronto, Ont., in a most interesting letter, calls some aspects of this to our attention. He refers to No. 25 of the Philatelist and Mr. Hertzberg's article on page 3 of that number.

The term "Cuirassé" alone, he tells us, on a postmark, means a battleship.

The term "Croiseur Cuirassé" means a battle cruiser.

This clarifies the meaning of each of these terms, and carries our information beyond what was known in 1936 when Mr. Hertzberg wrote the article which we had reprinted.

Mr. Lamouroux further informs us that what Mr. Hertzberg took for "a training base on river service on the Rhine" really is a schoolship called the "Rhin" and which operated at sea.

We reprint the pictures of the postmarks on which this new information applies.

COCHIN-CHINA POSTMARKS
From Les Annales de Philatélie.



SECRETARY'S REPORT

Feb. 10th to 20th, 1948

NEW MEMBERS: Welcome ---

- 310 Minnigerode, Meade, Essex, Conn. (France Series issue 1849-76)
311 Ipp, John A., 701 East State St., Trenton 9, N.J. (France; Cape of Good Hope)

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

- 101 Lyon, Robert J., to 521 Fifth Ave., New York 17, N.Y.

CHANGES IN LIST: Some are typographical errors which were corrected in ms. on most copies sent out of Philatelist No. 31:

- 307 Jones, Claude E. (name misspelled)
298 Lidman, Mrs. Karen (given as "Mr.")
289 Parkinson, A.E. Collects French Africa; also Great Britain and British Empire
304 Rager, Rudolph R., address is 304 Woodland Ave., Valley City, N. Dak
53 Thieffels, Rev. Henry P., address is Saint Emma Military Academy, Rock Castle, Va.
299 Wyche, Benjamin, address is Winston-Salem, N.C. (part of city name left out by the printer.)

DUES for 1948 are now payable: \$2.00 for "Parent Chapter" resident members; \$1.00 for all others. Please make checks or postal notes payable to "France and Colonies Group" and send to the secretary at the address on masthead (front page)

BACK NUMBERS OF THE PHILATELIST:

A limited number of sets of all numbers of

BACK NUMBERS OF THE PHILATELIST:

A limited number of sets of all numbers of the Philatelist except No. 1 are still available. Any member may obtain information from the Secretary, Mrs. Helen A. Stringham, 35 Franklin Pl., Montclair, N.J., or may send her \$1.00 for each volume (six numbers) desired. Any single number may be had for 25 cents.

THE NEW SERVICE

Want or exchange notices: 25 words or less, one or two insertions only for each notice. Members only; no charge. Members may insert more than one notice at a time and may send in new notices as often as they desire. Please do not offer other material than that asked for to any member who has a notice here.

Yes, I will buy almost any Imperf. Pair of a France 20th Century stamp, in fine condition. In sending, price each item. Brainerd Kremer, 211 Glenridge Ave., Montclair, N.J. (Member 8)

Formula post cards of France with attached 20c Type Sage adhesive wanted--not 20c rate made up of other stamps. Submit with price, please. S.G. Rich, Verona, N.J. (Member 2)

I need Zululand No. 12 or 12a on cover, alone or in multiple or in combination. Submit with price, please. S.G. Rich, Verona, N.J. (Member 2)

Postmark of the
U.S. Army
in France
in World War I.

