



U.S.C.S. Log

Dedicated to the Study of Naval and Maritime Covers

Vol. 86 No. 10

October 2019

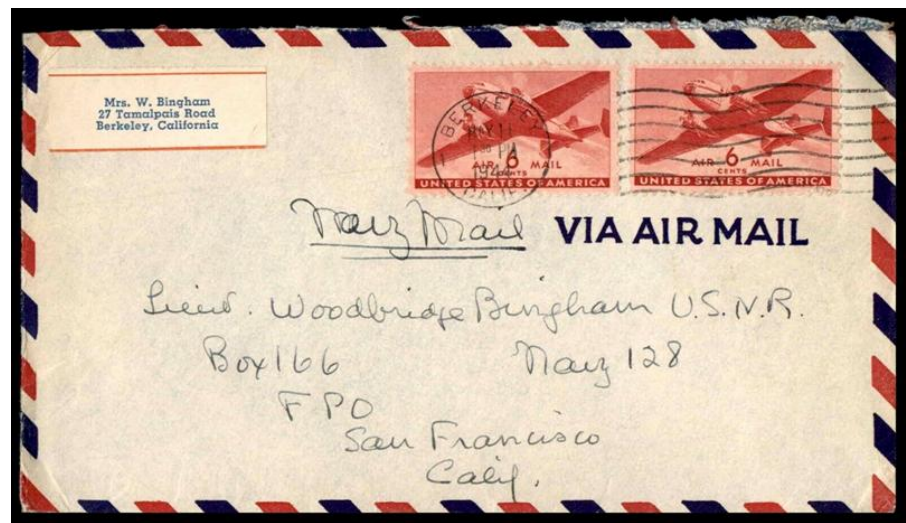
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Cover of the Month

Navy Number 128 – Pearl Harbor



Gregory A. Finnegan (9677) submitted this item as one of his illustrations for his Joy of Collecting article about covers from Navy Number 128 which was Pearl Harbor. This cover was mailed to LT. Woodbridge Bingham, USNR at Box 166 at Navy Number 128. Box 166 was Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area (JICPOA).

Greg proposes a study group to survey and document other Navy Number 128 Navy Box numbers. See Page 16 for details.

The **Universal Ship Cancellation Society, Inc.**, (APS Affiliate #98), a non-profit, tax exempt corporation, founded in 1932, promotes the study of the history of ships, their postal markings and postal documentation of events involving the U.S. Navy and other maritime organizations of the world.

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USCS Log Staff

Editor: Richard D. Jones, 137 Putnam Ave, Ormond Beach FL 32174; bmcjmjones@yahoo.com --Phone-386-672-2112

Associate Editor:

Printer: Minuteman Press, a Teelok Print Group Company, 5847 Secor Road, Toledo, OH 43623-1421.

Society Officers

President: Richard D. Jones, 137 Putnam Ave, Ormond Beach FL 32174; bmcjmjones@yahoo.com

Vice-President: John Germann, 12102 Whittington Dr. Houston, TX 77077-4911; jghist@comcast.net

Secretary: Steve Shay, 747 Shard Ct., Fremont CA 94539; shaymur@flash.net

Treasurer: Lloyd Ferrell, PO Box 7237, Aloha OR 97007-7237 uscstreasurer@aol.com

Immediate Past Pres: Don Tjossem; Tjossem@wavecable.com

Directors:

David Bernstein	nataska1@cox.net
Laurie Bernstein	seadragons@cox.net
Larry Brennan	lawrence.brennan7@gmail.com
Greg Ciesielski	lilski@ec.rr.com
Nancy Clark	nbc@meganet.net
Richard Hoffner, Sr.	pauscg@gmail.com
Stewart Milstein	sbmlstein@gmail.com
John P. Young	rkhoolligan@aol.com



From the Editor's Desk

My column last month has produced some results for my request for members to consider writing for the **Log** with new topics and material or new angles on older stories.

So far, I have had two requests for the two-page guideline that helps get you started. I look forward to the forthcoming articles. Consider it! Email me or write for the forms. Share your insights and knowledge with your fellow collectors.

I wish to thank the members who sent emails last month as we looked like we were going to get the Category 5 hurricane in central Florida. Luckily, we had only a few palm fronds and branches down this time. However, several more are heading from the coast of Africa. Makes life interesting!

For those who send for their own covers, you will notice that the latest deployers to the Med and 5th Fleet AOR are traveling without their carrier. While conducting work-up operations for the next deployment, USS HARRY S. TRUMAN (CVN 75) suffered a breakdown in her electrical distribution system. Since that work is in progress to get her back in the fight, her CGs and DDGs have deployed as an SAG (Surface Action Group) mid-September. Time to send for covers.

USNS COMFORT has been deployed to the Caribbean-Latin America countries since June. If you haven't sent for covers, now is the time.

Additionally, look at the upcoming commissioning dates on page 3. Several LCS ships will be joining the fleet before the end of 2019. Send to the local post office in the commissioning cities for cancels.

Each year the Stanton Honeyman Committee selects two-three of the best articles that appear in the yearly Volume of the **USCS Log**. With just two months left in the Volume 86 run, now would be a good time to submit an article for the November or December issue. The committee might recognize your writing talents with one of the Honeyman awards. Not finished with your research? We have 12 issues to fill for 2020. I am glad to have your writings to share with the membership.

Collect-Share-Enjoy your hobby.

Send for Your Own Covers

USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN CARRIER STRIKE GROUP
 USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN 72)
 USS LEYTE GULF (CG 55)
 USS BAINBRIDGE (DDG 96)
 USS GONZALEZ (DDG 66)
 USS MASON (DDG 87)
 USS NITZE (DDG 94)

USS BOXER AMPHIBIOUS READY GROUP

USS BOXER (LHD 4) Deployed 1 May 2019
 USS JOHN P MURTHA (LPD 26)
 USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49).

Surface Action Group

USS LASSEN (DDG 82) Deployed 12 September
 USS FARRAGUT (DDG 99)
 USS NORMANDY (CG 60)
 USS FORREST SHERMAN (DDG 98)

Recently/Currently Deployed

USS RAMAGE (DDG 61 BMD Deployed 20 August
 USNS COMFORT (T-AH 20) Caribbean-Latin America Deployed 6-14
 USNS MEDGAR EVERS (T-AKE 13) deployed 6th Fleet AOR, 25 Feb
 USS LEWIS B. PULLER (ESB 3) 5th Fleet AOR
 USCGC STRATTON (WMSL 752) Western Pacific Deployed 12 June
 USNS WALTER D DIEHL (T-AO 193) Western Pacific
 USS FLORIDA (SSGN 728) 5th and 6th Fleet AOR
 USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204) 5th Fleet AOR
 USNS ARCTIC (T-AOE 8) 5th Fleet AOR
 USNS CESAR CHAVEZ (T-AKE 14) 5th Fleet AOR
 USNS YUMA (T-EPF-8) 6th Fleet AOR
 USS ALASKA (SSBN 732) Eastern Atlantic
 USS KEY WEST (SSN 722) WESTPAC
 USS OLYMPIA (SSN 717) 6th Fleet AOR
 USS GRIDLEY (DDG 101) Flag SNMG1 North Atlantic-Canada-USA

JOIN A USCS CHAPTER THIS YEAR.



Out of the Past

Naval History and Heritage Command

1 October 1955 (Modern)

USS FORRESTAL (CVA 59), the first postwar super-carrier, is commissioned. In 1975, FORRESTAL is redesignated as (CV 59) until 1993 when she is decommissioned.

4 October 1943 (WW I)

Aircraft from USS RANGER (CV 4) attack convoys in the harbor of Bod, Norway during Operation Leader, sinking German tankers, steamships, and freight barges. This mission is the only Navy carrier operation in northern European waters during World War II. USS CORRY (DD 463) provided escort support.

9 October 1918 (WW I)

While escorting the British transport ship HMS AQUITANIA, USS SHAW's (DD 68) rudder jams just as she is completing the right leg of a zigzag, leaving her headed directly toward the transport. AQUITANIA then strikes SHAW, cutting off 90 feet of the destroyer's bow, mangling her bridge and setting her on fire. SHAW's crew brings her under control, though 12 lives are lost.

14 October 1965 (Modern)

The 1,200-nautical-mile range Polaris A-1 fleet ballistic missile is retired from service when submarine ABRAHAM LINCOLN (SSBN 602) returns to the United States for overhaul and refitting with 2,500-nautical-mile range Polaris A-3s.

17 October 1962 (Modern)

Operation Blue Moon—low-level reconnaissance flights over Cuba to help verify Soviet military deployments to that country—becomes operational. VFP-62 initially prepares ten photo variant RF-8A Crusaders with aerial cameras for high-speed, low-level photo missions, and places four of the jets on four-hour alert at NAS Cecil Field, FL, but subsequently shifts the Crusaders to NAS Key West, FL.

23 October 1983 (Modern)

A suicide truck bomb explodes at the Marine Barracks at Beirut Airport and kills 241 Americans (220 Marines, 18 Sailors, and three Army Soldiers).

25 October 1944 (WW II)

U.S. and Australian warships maul the advancing enemy with torpedoes and heavy guns during the Battle of Surigao Strait in the midst of the Battle of Leyte Gulf. The Japanese lose battleships FUSO and YAMASHIRO, plus three destroyers. The Battle of Surigao Strait marks the end of an era in naval warfare -- it was the last engagement of a battle line.

30 October 1941 (WW II)

The oiler USS SALINAS (AO 19) is torpedoed near Newfoundland by German submarine U-106. Without loss of life to SALINAS' crew, the vessel returns to New York for repairs.

Calendar of Events

Dates listed represent the best information available at the time of printing. Delay/change is beyond the control of the Log.

Send #10 SASE with a 55-cent or 'Forever' stamp to **Richard D. Jones**, 137 Putnam Ave., Ormond Beach FL 32174 for updated shipyard address list. **OR** request via e-mail: bmcjones@yahoo.com

Send only two covers per request and one request per event.

? notes a tentative or uncertain date.

signifies a change from previously published date.

October 2019

#5 PCU CINCINNATI (LCS 20) Commissioning, Gulfport MS

26 PCU INDIANAPOLIS (LCS 17) Comm, Burns Harbor, IN

Fall 2019

?? PCU DELAWARE (SSN 791) Commissioning, Norfolk NS

Spring 2020

?? PCU TRIPOLI (LHA 7) Commissioning, Pensacola FL

Late Spring 2020

?? PCU MINNEAPOLIS-SAINT PAUL (LCS 21) Comm, Duluth MN

Fall 2019

?? PCU OREGON (SSN 793) Christening ceremony, Groton

Thanks to: Dan Goodwin for providing the 2019 Anniversary updates, Mike Brock, & Rich Hoffner for ship event updates.

2019 Ship Anniversaries

35 YEARS – HENRY M. JACKSON SSBN-730, 10/6; OLYMPIA SSN-717, 11/17; **30 YEARS** – TOPEKA SSN-754, 10/21; CHANCELLORSVILLE CG-62, 11/4; ABRAHAM LINCOLN CVN-72, 11/11; NORMANDY CG-60, 12/9; **25 YEARS** – ZEPHYR PC-8, 10/15; CHIEF MCM-14, 11/5; HARTFORD SSN-768, 12/10; MITSCHER DDG-57, 12/10; **20 YEARS** – O'KANE DDG-77, 10/23; **15 YEARS** – VIRGINIA SSN-774, 10/23; JAMES E. WILLIAMS DDG-95, 12/11; **10 YEARS**– WAYNE E. MEYER DDG-108, 10/10; MAKIN ISLAND LHD-8, 10/24; NEW YORK LPD-21, 11/7; **5 YEARS**–AMERICA LHA-6, 10/11; NORTH DAKOTA SSN-784, 10/25;

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Naval News

Richard D. Jones (3933)
 137 Putnam Ave., Ormond Beach FL 32174
 bmcmjones@yahoo.com

USNS APALACHICOLA (T-EPF 13) First Metal Cut

The first cut of metal for the future USNS APALACHICOLA (T-EPF 13) start of construction happened 19 August 2019 at Austal USA in Mobile AL. EPF 13 is named in honor of Apalachicola, Fla., a historic city on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico with foundations rooted in the maritime industry and support for a strong Navy and Marine Corps team.



Photo courtesy SUPSHIP Gulf Coast.

PCU IOWA (SSN 797) Keel Laying

General Dynamics Electric Boat held a keel-laying ceremony for future USS IOWA (SSN 797), the 24th unit in the US Navy's VIRGINIA-class of nuclear-powered attack submarines.

IOWA is also the fourth US Navy ship to bear the name. The last ship to bear the name was the lead ship of IOWA-class battleships which saw action in World War II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars and the Gulf War.

Former USS IOWA (BB 61) is now a museum at the Port of Los Angeles.

The newest IOWA is being built under a teaming agreement between General Dynamics Electric Boat and Huntington Ingalls Industries' Newport News Shipbuilding division wherein both companies build certain portions of each submarine and then alternate deliveries.

The submarine will be delivered from GDEB's Groton, Connecticut, shipyard.

Expeditionary Sea Base Contracts for 6th and 7th

The US defense department has awarded General Dynamics NASSCO a \$1.6 billion contract for the construction of the sixth and seventh ships of the Expeditionary Sea Base (ESB) program.

The contract provides for the design and construction of the two ships, with an option for the third.

Work on the two new ships of the ESB program is scheduled to begin in the first quarter of 2020 and continue to the second quarter of 2023.

GD has so far delivered four ships in the class while the fifth, USNS MIGUEL KEITH (ESB 5), is to be delivered later this year.

The first two ships, USNS MONTFORD POINT (T-ESD 1) and USNS JOHN GLENN (T-ESD 2), are configured with a vehicle staging area, vehicle transfer ramp, large mooring fenders and up to three Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) vessel lanes to support its core equipment transfer requirements.

Future USNS PUERTO RICO Aces Acceptance Trials

The US Navy's eleventh expeditionary fast transport vessel has completed both builder's and acceptance trials in a single underway, becoming the first ship in its class to do so. The future USNS PUERTO RICO (EPF 11) carried out the combined trials in the Gulf of Mexico, enabling reduced costs and a shorter completion schedule. She returned to Austal shipyard on 22 August.

PUERTO RICO is scheduled for delivery to the US Navy before the end of 2019.

AECE Operations in Arctic Waters

Approximately 3,000 U.S. Navy and Marine Corps personnel participated in Arctic Expeditionary Capabilities Exercise (AECE) 2019 in areas of the Aleutian Islands, South-central Alaska and Southern California from 1-28 September.

Major participating units included U.S. Pacific Fleet, Marine Corps Forces Pacific, U.S. 3rd Fleet, Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 3, and I Marine Expeditionary Force. Afloat units included USS SOMERSET (LPD 25) and USS COMSTOCK (LSD 45). Ashore units included Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group 1, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Expeditionary Support Unit 1, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 1, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 3, and Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 1.

TRUMAN CSG CGs and DDGs Deploy

US Navy cruisers and destroyers assigned to the HARRY S. TRUMAN carrier strike group formed a surface action group (SAG) to deploy from their East Coast homeports of Norfolk and Mayport, FL, Mid September.

The ships will be underway without the group flagship, aircraft carrier USS HARRY S. TRUMAN which is still in Norfolk undergoing repairs for an electrical issue in August.

USS LASSEN (DDG 82) departed Mayport 12 September, and was joined by USS FARRAGUT (DDG 99) and Norfolk-based USS NORMANDY (CG 60) and USS FORREST SHERMAN (DDG 98) days later.

The command staff of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 28 leads the SAG, which also includes embarked helicopter detachments from Helicopter Maritime Squadron (HSM) 72, from Naval Air Station Jacksonville.

USNS CODY (T-EPF 14) Named

Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer has announced the newest Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF) ship will be named USNS CODY (T-EPF 14).

The future USNS CODY is the first ship named in honor of the city of Cody, Wyoming.



Naming Graphic

USS NEBRASKA Tests Trident II (D5)

The U.S. Navy conducted four scheduled missile test flights of unarmed Trident II (D5) missiles from USS NEBRASKA (SSBN 739) off the coast of Southern California 4 and 6 September.

The first two launches took place 4 Sept., and the last two were 6 September. All tests occurred before sunrise.

President's Message

*Richard D. Jones (3933)
137 Putnam Avenue
Ormond Beach FL 32174-5331
(bmcjmjones@yahoo.com)*



Throughout the year, USCS is fortunate to receive a variety of donations –some in cash, some in covers and other forms of philatelic material from our members or from family members.

Recently, **Harold Towlson** donated several mint sheets of stamps of the 3-cent Navy stamp Scott #935 to USCS.

Also, **Capt. Tommy Stewart** sent in a very nice cash donation to the treasurer.

Additionally, Member-Dealer **Dick Keiser** has donated a large lot of nuclear submarine and destroyer covers for USCS use in the monthly auctions or for the convention auctions.

All donations are greatly appreciated. Treasurer, **Lloyd Ferrell** will have a detailed article in the November *Log* that will cover our various outlets for donated material.

For members who purchase the better quality blank envelopes for their cachets and sending to the ships for cancels, please note the changes to the envelope sales process on page 19. Additionally, each of the ads for the covers has been updated with the new ordering address. Our thanks to **Karl Zurn** for continuing this service for our members.

Vice-President **John Germann** has provided another update on the progress his committee is making on the revision of the USCS website. Truly, this is a massive process. I am extremely thankful that John stepped up and took the leadership role for this process. Each step has been carefully laid out and presented to committee members for comment and discussion then run by the website builder for additional technical insights before moving on to the next aspect of the site. We are quite fortunate to have a strong financial resource to put toward this project once we have the requirements identified. *See page 11 for John's update.*

I know that our next USCS Convention is a little over a year away, so face-to-face salesmanship become difficult. However, I urge you members to consider running for a position on the USCS Board. We were quite successful last election to bring new members on board and to bring some diversity with the election of our two ladies. If you have a glimmer of interest in serving in a board position, please let me or any other current officer or board member aware of your interest. With over 85 years of service to members who have a shared interest in this hobby, we need new leaders to step forward with new ideas and new energy to keep us strong. Think about it. Ask your questions. We need new candidates for the next election cycle.

USCS Auctions – take a look!


Japanese Pearl Harbor stamps 1st Day Cover
Royal Navy North American Squadron Happy
Easter multiple cancels



Just two of the covers featured in the October USCS Log auctions—check the listings on Pages 28 and 29.

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APS, NSDA, USCS, MPHS, TSDA, SRS, ARA

The Goat Locker

John Young (L-8219)
146 North Lincoln Street
Pearl River, NY 10965-1709
rkhooligan@aol.com



A Ship Named BEAR (Part V)

BEAR found new life after fifty, as Admiral Richard Byrd purchased the former cutter that was put up for auction. Oakland's city ordinances required that all public property be disposed of through auction. Before Byrd could bid the customary one dollar, a local junkman bid a thousand dollars. Byrd upped his bid to \$1050, while someone explained to the junkman why Byrd was purchasing the great ice ship. The city's auctioneer closed the bidding before anyone else could embarrass the city.

Renamed BEAR of OAKLAND (18 June 1932), she sailed for the Boston Navy Yard for overhaul and refitting with a volunteer crew. She received a refrigerator room, wireless room, science room, diesel-driven generator and a gyrocompass. LT Robert E. English, USN volunteered to skipper BEAR with Captain Bendik Johansen signed on as sailing master and ice pilot for Byrd's Second Antarctic Expedition.

Philatelic mail actually financed the expedition, as the Post Office Department offered collectors a chance to obtain Little America cancellations. Since the Department had no other means to transport the philatelic mail to Antarctica, arrangements had been made with the expedition to accept covers for cancellation, at a service charge of 50 cents per cover. Stamps of the regular or other commemorative stamps should not be used on the self-addressed envelopes, and covers bearing such stamps would not be forwarded.

Self-addressed envelopes along with a postal money order remittance of 53 cents for each cover had to arrive to the Byrd Antarctic Expedition c/o Postmaster, Norfolk VA by 8 October 1933, the announced sailing date of that port. The 3-cents Byrd (Sc #733) had its First Day of Issue in Washington DC on 9 October 1933.



Figure 1: Everett Wallster (USCS #14) printed covers documenting Admiral Byrd's ship historic voyage to the South Pole, posted on 25 SEP 1933 at the Boston Navy Yard's post office.

Wallster ran the Bunker Hill Cover Service and advertised the sale of his covers (25 cents each) in his monthly publication "*Seapost Collector*." He documented the ship's port calls with covers (20) at Bayonne NJ (28 SEP 1933) and Norfolk VA (28 SEP 1933.)

BEAR of OAKLAND departed the next day, but ran into Hurricane #18 along the North Carolina coast. After almost sinking, her pumps failed and the crew used a bucket brigade to relieve flooding. BEAR returned to Newport News Shipyard for needed repairs.

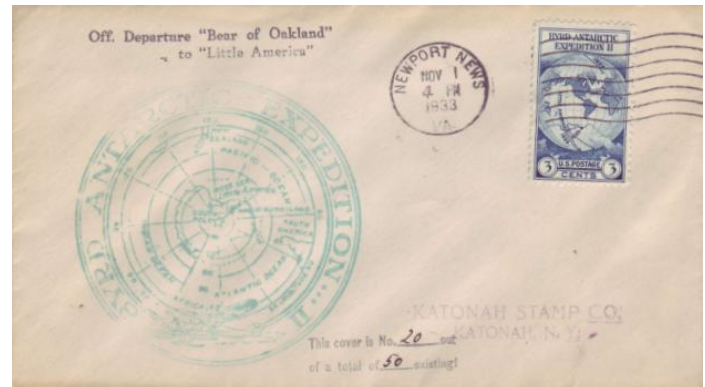


Figure 2: Circular Byrd II cachet (Heinmuller) & 2LK/ Off. Departure "Bear of Oakland"/ to Little America" m.c. on 1 NOV 1933 at Newport News VA. One of fifty sold by J.V.P. Heinmuller, who owned Katanoh Stamp.

She departed Newport News on 1 November 1933 bound for the frozen continent and arrived at the Bay of Whales on 30 January 1934. Byrd had arrived earlier aboard SS JACOB RUPPERT on 19 January 1934. During her first visit to Antarctic waters, BEAR made six transits of the Ross Sea and explored 40,000 uncharted square miles.

Amory Waite, a veteran of several polar expeditions wrote that 13 bags of Byrd II mail cancelled by Fred Clark was left on the dock. Days were lost, searching for it with long steel rods before BEAR departed on 26 February 1934. She would spend an Austral winter in Dunedin, New Zealand, while 56 men would winter-over in Little America.

Departing on New Year's Day 1935, BEAR arrived at Little America II (Bay of Whales) nineteen days later and completed charting of the Ross Sea. She removed Byrd's winter-over party on 7 February 1935 and returned Admiral Byrd to Washington DC on 10 May 1935. President Roosevelt, a renowned fan of historic ships came aboard and paid his respects.

Her next voyage to Antarctica came during the United States Antarctic Service Expedition. Commonly referred by many polar philatelists as "Byrd III", this expedition to the frozen continent was the first government funded in one hundred years. Admiral Byrd leased his BEAR of OAKLAND to the expedition for one dollar and he became its leader. Commissioned USS BEAR (AG 29) on 11 September 1939 with LCDR Richard H. Cruzen, USN,

Commanding, a post office was established aboard the Navy's newest Miscellaneous Auxiliary. Yeoman 1/c Joseph Wallace, USN was ship's mail clerk. The ship's first day of postal service was 1 December 1939.



Figure 3: Printed envelope (A.C. Roessler) depicts BEAR & aircraft in polar waters m.c. 31 JAN 1934 at Little America, Antarctica (7 wavy lines) with 3LK/ Delayed Mail to Egon Bernet (one of the names used by Roessler.) reverse has m.c. 25 MAR 1935 (slogan) Little America/ Mail Received

Wallace serviced covers for many naval cover collectors. In fact he joined the Universal Ship Cancellation Society in March 1940 (#A-1874), sponsored by Chester Knowlson. Chet was U.S. Naval Expedition expert and founding member of our society. Knowlson's writings to Wallace probably broke the ice for many fellow navophilatelists, as many covers are addressed to both USCS and ANCS (American Naval Cancellation Society) members.

Wallace placed the ship's location between the killer bars of the ship's postmark and indicated the ship's position in Antarctic waters on covers with the words LITTLE/AMERICA between the bars.

BEAR made two voyages to Antarctica- 22 NOV 1939- 5 JUN 1940 and 10 OCT 1940- 15 MAY 1941 with Admiral Byrd only making the first, as he was called back to active duty with the Navy because the War in Europe. BEAR wintered-over in the Navy Yard in the City of Brotherly Love. Wallace serviced Doc Hutnick event covers- one the keel laying of the battleship, NEW JERSEY.

After her return from Antarctica, USS BEAR (AG 29) was assigned to the newly established Northeast Greenland Patrol, with USCGC NORTHLAND (WPG 49) and the newly acquired USCGC NORTH STAR (WG 59) on 1 July 1941. With Denmark's fall to Germany in 1940, America (FDR) took over the defense of Greenland and to prevent the Germans from building weather stations there. In October 1941 BEAR sailed into Boston Harbor with the first naval capture of World War II- the Norwegian trawler BUSKO that was seized by Cutter NORTHLAND on 12 September 1941. The Germans had set up a weather station, 500 miles north of Mackenzie Bay along the east coast of Greenland.

BEAR, operating out of Boston continued to serve on the Greenland Patrol until she was replaced by the icebreaker, USS EASTWIND, CG (WPG 279.) She was

stricken off the Navy List in June 1944. Depending on which source I search, the old BEAR had her last day of commission on 18 March 1944 (*Dictionary of American Fighting Ships*) or 18 May 1944 (*USCS' Catalogue of Naval Postmarks.*) The latter has its post office closing on 15 April 1944.



Figure 4: Bruce Woodbury's printed cachet celebrates 150th birthday of U.S. Coast Guard, posted aboard BEAR on 4 AUG 1940 with ship's location PHILADEL-/ PHIA, PA. The cachet depicts sailor in foul weather gear, flanked by BEAR (left) and NORTHLAND (right) with panels below, the service's primary missions- Int'l Ice Patrol, Lifesaving and Search & Rescue. Mail clerk's signature J.W. Wallace below cachet

In February 1948, BEAR was purchased by the Shaw Steamship Co., Halifax from the U.S. Maritime Commission and returned to Nova Scotia. Renamed the ARCTIC SEALER, she remained at a dock in Dartmouth for fourteen years, until a Philadelphia businessman took an interest in her. His idea was to turn her into a combination museum and restaurant in Philly. Refitted to look like her old self, the old BEAR was under tow 250 miles east of Boston when she sank on 19 March 1963.

NAVAL COVER MUSEUM	<p>New Collection Added Special Collection No. 17 Greg Ciesielski lilski@ec.rr.com</p>
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Because of the very nice covers created by **Mike Brock** for the recent 50th Anniversary of the Apollo 11/1st Man on the Moon stamps, I decided to create a new Special Collection within the *Naval Cover Museum*. This is Special Collection No. 17 and is just a start, more covers and cancels will be added in the future.

https://www.navalcovermuseum.org/wiki/APOLLO_11th_50th_Anniversary



See more Apollo 11 covers at the link above,

For Beginning Members

Long John Silver, Ship's Cook

For those that might have an interest in postal history you might want to visit the ASPP website <http://www.polarphilatelists.org/> and have a look into its Antarctic Philately pages, especially the Byrd Expeditions. There's Byrd II (1933-35), Byrd III (1939-41) and High Jump (1946-47) with great examples of cancels, cachets and covers.

A postage stamp (Sc 733) helped finance Byrd's Second Antarctic Expedition and stamp collectors could obtain a cancellation from Little America. All they had to do was send a self-addressed envelope with a postal money order for 53 cents (50 cents handling fee and 3 cents for the stamp) to Admiral Byrd Expedition, Norfolk VA.



Scott #733

The philatelic requests (56,000 covers) were loaded aboard JACOB RUPPERT, a steel-hulled freighter that had a post office aboard from October 1933 to June 1935. Only the philatelic covers franked with the 3-cent Byrd stamp were to be canceled with a Little America cancellation. Remember President Roosevelt designed the 3-cent Byrd stamp that featured a map of the Western Hemisphere with the routes of Byrd's previous polar explorations clearly delineated.

Byrd and JACOB RUPPERT arrived at Bay of Whales on 17 January 1934 and almost immediately established Little America. Mail bags were unloaded and post office with mail clerk, Leroy Clark and a Columbia canceling machine with 7 wavy line killers.

Well, Murphy's Law prevailed on the frozen continent as Clark ran into trouble.

Depending upon several stories- the ink froze, the machine failed or the mail clerk had a breakdown only 6,000 were cancelled. For whatever reason, Clark had changed the date in the data circle (dial.) They had promised FDR's birthday and a day that Byrd flew over the South Pole. There are three varieties of the 7 wavy line killers: 30 JAN 1934 8:30PM, 30 JAN 1934 8 PM and 31 JAN 1934 8:00 PM.

Messages of problems from the expedition forced the Post Office Department to send Charles Anderson (cancellation expert) and the new Universal machine (six wavy line killer) during the second season. Anderson arrived at Little America on 20 January 1935 with 62,000 covers for the second cancellation. He also found 35,000 un-serviced covers, as well as the 15,000 covers with the wrong date.

BEAR OF OAKLAND had left the mail bags on the ice pier. Only 6,000 covers with the first cancellation were received by collectors in May 1934. Anderson had made a three-line cachet denoting DELAYED MAIL of the cancelled mail and a penguin cachet for the Second

Cancellation Mail. There are four varieties on the penguin cachet and two different delayed mail stamps.

"Penguin" cachet.



Once again, there are two varieties of the 6 wavy line killers: 31 JAN 1934 8:30 PM (35,000) and 30 JAN 1935 12 AM. Only the second season requests have the special penguin cachet. Probably the seven wavy lines, cancelled 30 JAN 1934 is the scarcest.

Letters to the Editor

From: Todd Creekman <ccreekman@verizon.net>

To: jakewilhelm@mail.com

Cc: bmcjmjones@yahoo.com

Aug 30 at 11:39 AM

Jake,

I enjoyed your article in the September *USCS Log* about USS VESTAL. You may not be aware that the ship was in the news several years ago when its bell was found stored away in the furnace room of a Baltimore-area church! See the articles at <https://pearlharbor.org/bell-uss-vestal/> and <https://baltimore.cbslocal.com/2016/05/13/bell-from-navy-ship-bombed-at-pearl-harbor-found-in-baltimore-co/>.

It actually took the Navy several months and the involvement of the police to get the bell back into Navy custody. While the church may very well have obtained the bell legitimately after VESTAL was scrapped, they realized the historical significance of the bell and contacted the Naval History and Heritage Command through me--at the time I was executive director of the nonprofit Naval Historical Foundation, which among other projects, supports the Navy's history programs and command. The Navy was all set to pick up the bell when it went missing. Apparently someone associated with the church mistakenly assumed they had custody of the bell and the right to dispose of it, so it ended up in the hands of a dealer who alertly and correctly turned the bell over to the authorities when he was contacted. So the long odyssey of the VESTAL bell ended back in 2016, in time for it to be featured in a Pentagon ceremony commemorating the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 2016—see

https://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=97982.

Best regards,

Todd Creekman

Jacob Wilhelm <jakewilhelm@mail.com>

To: Richard Jones

Sep 5 at 3:07 PM

Richard - I'm glad to see people like the article! I'm glad to see some part of the old girl remains in circulation! - Jake

West Coast Navy News

Ted Minter (9017)

18765 Florida St., Apt #312
Huntington Beach CA 92648



USS OHIO Completes Overhaul

US Navy guided missile submarine USS OHIO (SSGN 726) will soon be ready for a return to operations after completing a 27-month overhaul at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility.

Originally the lead ship of the US Navy's OHIO-class ballistic missile submarines, the submarine was converted into a guided missile platform. The conversion ended when OHIO returned to service as an SSGN in 2006.

OHIO's maintenance period began on April 25, 2017, when – fresh off a 20-month Pacific deployment – the ship arrived in dry dock for the start of its availability.

Changes of Command

USS CHUNG-HOON (DDG 93) held a change of command ceremony at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on 16 August.

CDR Stephen J. Henz relieved CDR Brent S. Jackson becoming the ship's 11th commanding officer.

The amphibious assault ship USS AMERICA (LHA 6) held a change-of-command ceremony in the ship's hangar bay while in port at Naval Base San Diego on 6 September.

During the ceremony, Capt. Luke A. Frost relieved Capt. Daniel A. Nowicki as AMERICA's commanding officer.

USS OLYMPIA Concludes Final Deployment

USS OLYMPIA (SSN 717) returned to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on 8 September, concluding her final operational deployment.

The 35-year-old boat successfully wrapped up seven months of operations that took her on a trip around the world, in support of national security.

Now the submarine is home, she will start preparations for a transit to Bremerton, Washington, for inactivation.

OLYMPIA currently holds CDR Richard O'Kane's lucky cribbage board. In 1943 onboard the GATO-class submarine USS WAHOO (SS 283), WAHOO's executive officer CDR O'Kane was dealt the highest possible hand. That night, WAHOO sank two Japanese freighters and the luck continued.

Years later, the cribbage board moved to USS TANG (SS 306), and has been passed on to submarines ever since. Next it was USS KAMEHAMEHA (SSN 642), then USS PARCHE (SSN 683), USS LOS ANGELES (SSN 688), USS BREMERTON (SSN 698), and now it's in OLYMPIA. They will turn the cribbage board over to the next oldest fast-attack submarine in the Pacific before they decommission.

OLYMPIA is the second ship of the Navy to be named after Olympia, Washington. She is the 29th ship of the LOS ANGELES-class fast-attack submarines. Her keel was laid by Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company on 31 March 1981. She was commissioned on 17 November 1984.

FAIRWINDS

2019 Show Schedule

October 4-6 INDYPEX

Noblesville, Indiana

October 19-20 Wichita International

Postcard Show

Wichita, Kansas

October 26-27 Springfield Postcard

and Paper Show

Springfield, Missouri

November 15-17 NOJEX

East Rutherford, New Jersey

November 22-24 CHICAGOPEX

Itasca, Illinois

December 13-15 FLOREX

Kissimmee, Florida

2020 Show Schedule

January 10-12 Florida East Coast Book,

Paper, and Postcard Show

Melbourne, Florida

Jan 31-Feb 2 Southeastern Stamp Expo

Atlanta, Georgia

February 7-9 Sarasota National Stamp

Expo

Sarasota, Florida

Contact us for lists of WWII and

Korean War Cruise Books

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POSTCARD COLLECTIONS!**

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Fairwinds66@live.com

Norfolk Navy News

Darrell Millner (9859)
106 Maxwell Lane,
Newport News VA 23606



USS RAMAGE Deploys

The guided-missile destroyer USS RAMAGE (DDG 61) deployed from Naval Station Norfolk 20 August to conduct maritime security operations and provide ballistic missile defense for U.S. Navy fleet and combatant commanders.

Trained and ready to deploy, RAMAGE crew participated in the HARRY S. TRUMAN (CVN 75) Carrier Strike Group composite training unit exercise earlier this year. While the ship and her crew of approximately 300 Sailors departed on an independent deployment, they are fully certified and capable of operating with other units including carrier strike groups.

RAMAGE previously deployed to support and provide ballistic missile defense to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet area of responsibility in 2015.

USS TENNESSEE Enters Drydock

The ballistic missile submarine USS TENNESSEE (SSBN 734) entered the Trident Refit Facility drydock at the US Navy's Kings Bay, GA submarine base on 13 August.

USNS SACAGAWEA Overhaul

Detyens Shipyards Inc., North Charleston, South Carolina, was awarded a contract for a 75-calendar day shipyard availability for the regular overhaul and drydocking of USNS SACAGAWEA (T-AKE 2). Work will be performed in North Charleston, SC, and is expected to be completed by 20 December 2019.

PCU DELAWARE Sea Trials

Newport News Shipbuilding successfully completed the initial sea trials of the U.S. Navy's newest VIRGINIA-class fast attack submarine, the future USS DELAWARE (SSN 791).

The submarine, in the final stages of construction, spent three days at sea proving all of her systems, components and compartments. DELAWARE submerged for the first time and performed high-speed maneuvers on the surface and underwater.

The submarine is scheduled to undergo a round of acceptance trials before she is delivered to the Navy when she will become ninth submarine delivered by Newport News and the Navy's eighth/last VIRGINIA-class Block III submarine.

UNITAS LX

Sailors and Marines, assigned to USS CARTER HALL (LSD 50), participated in a sports day while in Rio de Janeiro, 21 August. The crew took part in various sports and concluded the day with a barbecue alongside partner nations during UNITAS LX (60).

CARTER HALL is currently in port in Rio de Janeiro to participate in UNITAS LX.

UNITAS is an annual, multinational exercise that focuses on strengthening our existing regional partnerships and

encourages establishing new relationships through the exchange of maritime mission-focused knowledge and expertise during multinational training operations.

USS WASP Headed back to Norfolk

USS WASP (LHD 1) left the 7th Fleet — its home for more than 1½ years — on 4 September as she shifts homeports from Sasebo Naval Base in Japan to Naval Station Norfolk, VA.

During her time in the 7th Fleet, the amphibious assault ship made history as the first to deploy with the Marine Corps' fifth-generation F-35B Lightning II stealth fighter, which is capable of short takeoffs and vertical landings.

WASP in January 2018 replaced the USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6), which spent six years in Sasebo before returning to the U.S. to reconfigure her flight deck to handle the new stealth fighter.

The F-35B-capable amphibious assault ship USS AMERICA (LHA 6), accompanied by the amphibious transport dock USS NEW ORLEANS (LPD 18), will replace WASP at Sasebo later this year, the Navy announced in April.

TRUMAN Returns to Norfolk for Repairs

US Navy aircraft carrier USS HARRY S. TRUMAN (CVN 75) suffered a breakdown in her electrical distribution system, as the ship is preparing for an upcoming deployment.

As reported, the malfunction occurred within the ship's electrical distribution system. The extent of damages, and whether the carrier's deployment plans would be affected, are yet to be determined.

HARRY S. TRUMAN CSG got underway from Norfolk on 5 July to start the month-long composite training unit exercise (COMPTUEX), which is designed to test the strike group's ability as a whole to carry out sustained combat operations from the sea.

The carrier's deployment would be the second one since it returned home in December 2018 after operations under the landmark "dynamic force employment" concept.

The electrical issues are the first issue the carrier strike group has been faced with since the COMPTUEX started in July. Shortly after getting underway for exercises Ticonderoga-class cruiser USS Normandy had to break off from the drills due to what navy officials said were maintenance issues. The ship was forced to return to port for rectification work but was able to return to drills.

USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN 72) is the only US-based aircraft carrier deployed while the USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN 69) could be ready by the end of the year.

USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN 69) Ammo Onload

USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN 69) conducted an ammunition onload with both USS JOHN C. STENNIS (CVN 74) and the dry cargo ship USNS ROBERT E. PEARY (T-AKE 5), 12-15 August.

The ammunition onload represents a major milestone for Ike, putting it one step closer to deployment.


Regards,
Darrell

Progress Report #2 from the USCS Website Revision Committee
John Germann, Chairman
 jghist@comcast.net

The Committee has been very busy, discussing not only what we want in a top-notch website but also looking at our current website to see what needs to be retained, altered, or eliminated. This will be a **SERIOUS** revision. Among the changes we are already going to recommend will be the addition of a Forum, all but the most recent **Logs, Log Auction** listings, links to features like the Sales Circuit and Heirs & Estates services, a Membership Directory, etc.

We have also become aware of the need for numerous updates and consolidations. It is an ambitious effort, but one that is vital to the welfare and future of our society. We will need a lot of assistance from USCS members to pull it off. We will need, for example, help establishing and maintaining a membership directory, updating and keeping updated the different portions of the website, establishing and monitoring the forum, and the like. If you have an area of interest that you would like to help us with, please contact me at jghist@comcast.net.

Foreign Navy News
Phil Schreiber (9110)
 123 S. Adelaide Ave., Apt 3B
 Highland Park, NJ 08904



Royal Canadian Navy HMCS REGINA post card mailed during an eventful deployment to Persian Gulf, Western Pacific and then back to her homeport at Esquimalt, British Columbia. The card (**Figure 1**) has two postmarks: (1) the ship's postmark which shows a 2011 year date, and another postmark used during her foreign deployment dated in 2019). I sent this card to HMCS REGINA after having read of her exploits on the HASHISH HIGHWAY in the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf where she seized 9000 kilograms from the "dhow" smugglers while doing maritime security and anti-piracy patrol duty. After which, while returning to her homeport she was "buzzed" in the East China Sea by Russian Sukhoi-30 fighter jet planes of the Communist China "Peoples' Air Force."



Training Cruise pictorial postmark (**Figure 2**) of the Argentine Navy Training Tall Ship "LIBERTAD," during her sixteenth "Voyage of Instruction." LIBERTAD makes frequent worldwide cruises and often uses a pictorial postmark plus her official ship's rubber stamp cachet. I've

found the best way to contact LIBERTAD is by sending a request via Correo Filatelia (Philatelic Post Office) in Buenos Aires, Argentina. LIBERTAD is a 3765-ton steel hulled full rigged vessel built in Argentina and commissioned 28 May 1963.



Figure 2

USCS member Muneo Hagino (**Figure 3**) shown here near the docked Japanese submarine TAKASHIO at the Yokosuka Naval Base Summer Festival. He mailed me his cachet (**Figure 4**) to which he also obtained the TAKASHIO's rubber stamp cachet as well as the naval base's own pictorial postmark.



Figure 3



Figure 4

Fleet Week at Germany's ROSTOCK "HANSA SAIL" hosted many visiting ships, including the Mexican Navy sail training ship "CUAUHTEMOC" (**Figure 5**) which was shown on the event's pictorial postmark sponsored by the local philatelic group. As with the Argentine Navy's sail training ship LIBERTAD it makes frequent worldwide cruises during which they invite the public to visit them and service covers with their cachets.

The Portuguese Navy is a regular participant with other navies' maritime security worldwide deployments. Shown here is the ship's cachet of the Portugal Navy Ship BARTOLOMEO DIAS (**Figure 6**) which is currently undergoing a periodic re-fit at the shipyard which built her at Den Helder, Netherlands. It's nice to get a cover with a cachet and postmark from a ship from where ever it is and whatever it's doing. One way to check out what's going on with foreign navy ships is to **google: NAVALTODAY.COM**. Many thanks for news and covers from **Walter Ernst, Jr., Muneo Hagino and Walter Frieswinkel**.



Figure 6: A cachet from the Portuguese Navy Ship BARTOLOMEO DIAS. It features a circular design with the text 'BARTOLOMEO DIAS' and 'MARINHA PORTUGUESA'. Below the cachet is a handwritten signature 'Walter Ernst, Jr.' and the address '7234 Range Drive, San Jose, CA 95131, USA'.

Figure 6

The Story Behind the Cover...

SS HALEAKALA in 1947: Erich Porges on a "Hell Ship" to Australia

Lloyd Ferrell (L-12082)

PO Box 2086

Beaverton, Oregon 97075

uscstreasurer@aol.com



Several years ago, I purchased this 1947 letter written by Erich Porges, a passenger on board the steamer HALEAKALA. It was quite fascinating, and became even more so after discovering there was a great deal of mystery about the voyage. This might be worthy of an article, I thought, but the project took a back seat until something unexpected happened—while watching a PBS documentary I heard the name “Erich Porges”!



The cancel shows 14 July 1947, Cairns North, Queensland, Australia, postal stationery mailed by HALEAKALA passenger Erich Porges to Melbourne.

The program, hosted by Ann Curry, is called “We’ll Meet Again.” Episodes focus on reuniting an individual with someone who had an impact on their life long ago, as they share their story. This story centers on Jewish immigrants who managed to escape from Germany to Shanghai, endured hardships there during the war and later relocated. Now, some 70 years later, someone was looking for the family of Fritz and Stella (Porges) Adler who had gone to Australia. Erich was Stella’s brother. I instantly recognized him as the passenger on HALEAKALA who wrote the letter, and the documentary helped me to better understand his background.

Erich Porges

Before boarding HALEAKALA in June 1947, Erich Porges had lived in Shanghai for about eight years. He was originally from Austria, born in Vienna in 1907, where the Porges family was a well-known, aristocratic family. Erich had a younger sister, Stella, and it appears their father was vice president of a company. Not much is known about

Erich’s early years, except that he was a talented pianist. He was accompanist for a men’s quartet called the Comedy Harmonists, a probably a spinoff of the better-known Comedian Harmonists. They were known for tight harmonies, and often performed on programs with classical artists. Erich may have even toured with the group outside of Europe.

Because of his Jewish heritage, life changed dramatically for Erich and his family with the rise of Hitler in the late 1930’s. When Germany incorporated Austria, matters got only worse. In November 1938, during the event known as Kristallnacht (night of broken glass), local synagogues in Vienna were destroyed, Jewish businesses were smashed and looted, some 6500 were arrested, and others were beaten and murdered. After this, many Jews made the decision to leave, not just Austria, but Europe entirely.

Exactly when Erich Porges left Austria is not known for certain, but it appears he arrived at Shanghai in early 1939. Being an open port, Shanghai became the destination of some 20,000 Jewish immigrants escaping from Europe. With Erich was his sister, Stella, and possibly their father (who I think may have died in Shanghai). Stella later married Fritz Adler. Erich probably worked there as a tailor, which he later listed as his occupation. Life in Shanghai, however difficult, was still better than if they had remained in Austria, but even here they couldn’t escape the war. The city was already occupied by Japanese, but about 1942 various restrictions of foreign immigrants began. In early 1943, Jewish foreigners were moved to a confined area that became known as the “Shanghai Ghetto.” Conditions were poor, it was overcrowded, and resident deaths were common. It was here that Erich and Stella Porges survived for two years.

View of the Shanghai Ghetto as it looked in 1943. (Wikipedia)



Photo of Erich Porges from his 1947 Australian Immigration papers. The other photo is his sister Stella (Porges) Adler, who was one of the featured persons in a PBS television documentary.

After the war, most refugees in Shanghai opted not to return to Europe, where conditions were still not good. It was possible for refugees to stay in Shanghai, but that was problematic with the ongoing civil war and the rise of communism. With the establishment of Israel, some moved there. Erich Porges set his eye on Australia. By now he was nearly 40 years old, and after an unsettled life he was looking for a stable future. Prospects there seemed promising.

Traveling Aboard SS HALEAKALA

The steamer HALEAKALA was once a majestic ship that carried passengers and freight out of Honolulu during the 1930's. But now aging and worn, her glory days behind her, HALEAKALA operated out of the Philippines with sometimes questionable cargos and an array of seedy and colorful individuals. In charge was Captain Cornelio Joaquin, an interesting character, who claimed to be father of the Philippine Navy.



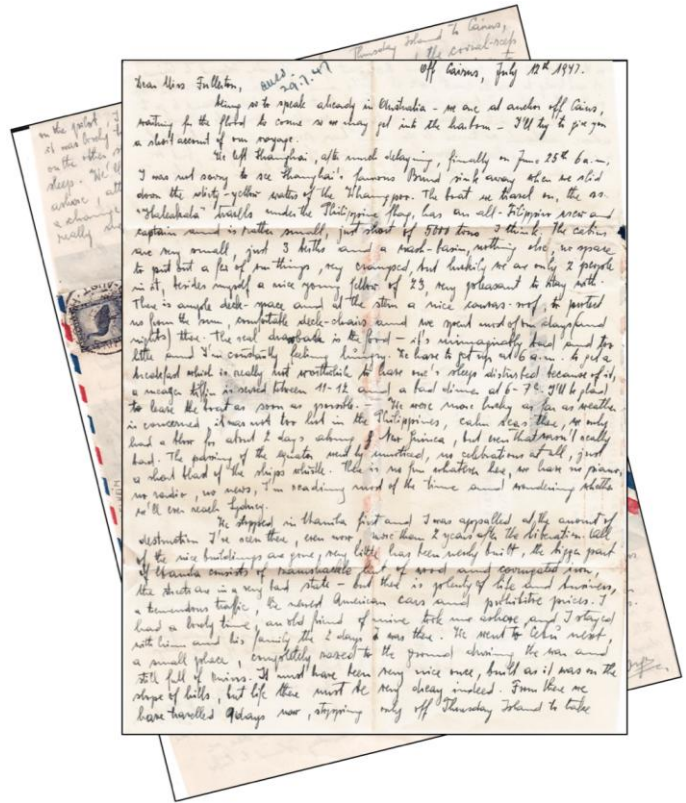
A 1930's post card of HALEAKALA. In late 1941 she was chartered by the Army, and was at Hickam Dock at the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor. (personal collection)

In early June 1947, HALEAKALA first created headlines when she failed to arrive at Brisbane as expected. Concern escalated when local agents could not contact her, but the next day the mystery was solved when word was received that the ship was in Manila. There had been a mix up; HALEAKALA wasn't to go to Australia until July. With that, the ship made her way from Manila back to Shanghai.

On the morning of 25 June, Erich Porges boarded HALEAKALA and began his journey to Sydney, Australia. In the letter he says, "I was not sorry to see Shanghai's famous Bund sink away when we slid down the dirty-yellow waters of the Whangpoo [Hoangpu]." The Bund was where the Shanghai Ghetto had been located, and where Erich had lived even after the war.

About HALEAKALA, he says "she travels under the Philippine flag with an all Filipino [sic] crew, including the captain." The flag probably drew his attention because the Philippines had only recently become an independent nation, so it was something unusual to see at that time. He describes the ship as "rather small," as were the cabins for passengers.

The cabins were cramped, with three berths, a wash basin, and "no space to put out a few of our things." Luckily, he says, he's sharing his cabin with just one other passenger. On the stern deck are comfortable chairs and a canvas roof for sun protection, where he spends much of his time. The real drawback, he says, is the food. "It's unimaginably bad and too little and I'm constantly feeling hungry." It even disturbs his sleep, and he can't wait to get off the ship. They don't even have a piano on board for recreation, he doesn't have a radio, and gets no news; most of his time is spent reading.



Both sides of the postal stationery and letter written by Erich Porges. He says "The boat we travel on, the ss 'Haleakala' travels under the Philippine flag, has an all-Filippino [sic] crew and captain..."

After leaving Shanghai, HALEAKALA stopped at Manila, where Erich stayed two days with an old friend. He describes the appalling destruction he saw there, even two years after liberation. The ship next went to Cebu, and was then at sea for nine days before reaching Thursday Island, at the northern tip of Australia. He says they were lucky with the weather, with calm seas in the Philippines. "The passing of the equator went by unnoticed, no celebrations at all, just a short blast of the ships whistle." Along New Guinea they had "a blow" for a couple of days. At Thursday Island HALEAKALA took on a pilot and continued southward, following the scenic coastline and coral reefs. Originally, the ship was supposed to go directly to Brisbane, but with water running short, they had to stop sooner than expected at Cairns.

It was while HALEAKALA was off Cairns on 12 July, that Erich Porges wrote this letter. He says, “*we are at anchor...waiting for the flood to come so we may get into the harbor.*” According to newspapers, the ship was actually aground on a mud bank, and had to wait for high tide to get clear. They made it into the harbor after a three-hour delay. While the ship took on water, some passengers were able to get off the ship at Cairns. Because of his alien status, Erich had to remain on board. He was hoping to go ashore “*to have something good to eat for a change,*” and says “*please excuse my talking of food so often, but we really are hungry.*” Someone going to town must have mailed the letter for him.

Rumors of a Hell Ship Begin

It was while HALEAKALA was at Cairns that newspapers first got wind about the poor conditions on board. In his letter, Erich Porges mostly talks about the bad food and cramped quarters. Most likely he was in a first-class cabin, and may not have been fully aware of conditions in the lower classes.

Reporters came on board and talked to passengers, and then published stories about what they’d seen and heard. At first, it was mostly that water for washing and bathing had been rationed. Then it was complaints about high fares and bad food. To fill space, they gave a lot of information about the 173 passengers on board, many being displaced persons from Russia, Poland, and Germany. Some were White Russians (political refugees) bound for Brisbane. There were three Filipino boxers on board, a former Army Air Corps pilot, and a horse racing executive from Manila, who’d had enough of HALEAKALA and opted to get off at Cairns. Newspapers identify some of the refugees on board, including “Eric” Porges. They refer to him an Austrian tailor destined for Sydney, who had formerly had been a piano accompanist. One even adds that “*He left Germany before the war to escape Hitler’s anti-Semitic activities and was interned in Shanghai.*”

**‘HELL-SHIP’
CHARGE**

**169 Migrants
From East**

BRISBANE, Wednesday.—
Passengers on board the migrant ship Haleakala, which reached Brisbane to-day from Manila, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, complained of “hell-ship” conditions.

*Australian newspaper
17 July 1947. Just one
example of many
incendiary headlines
printed about conditions
on HALEAKALA after
she reached Brisbane.*

On 15 July, HALEAKALA reached Brisbane, and there were more problems. As she came into the harbor, an elderly passenger collapsed on deck, hit his head, and died. Later it was determined he died of heart failure. When the ship docked at Brisbane, once again Erich was not allowed to go ashore, something he’d wondered about in the letter. Except for several White Russians, whose exit here had been planned, all the refugees had to stay on board. The three Filipino boxers, who were hoping to get matches in Australia, were refused entry.

Local reporters at Brisbane, who’d heard about conditions on the ship, had a field day with their own articles. HALEAKALA was now referred to as a “Hell Ship,” with passengers having to endure filth and cramped conditions. One small area, they said, housed 48 people, with no privacy, had 4-tier canvas bunks, inadequate ventilation, baggage scattered on the floor, and only a galvanized iron bin for drinking water. Even some of the first-class passengers signed a document protesting high fares for a 3-berth cabin, bad food, and poor hygiene (water rationing). Some passengers claimed the voyage had been advertised as a luxury cruise, but captain Joaquin said that wasn’t true, “*the ship was an immigrant vessel—not a luxury liner.*”

FOR MANILA, HONG KONG.
S.S. “HALEAKALA.”
Sailing from SYDNEY and BRISBANE
about First Half July.
First-class 2-berth Cabin Accommodation available.
Fares and all particulars available
on application
to
**MESSRS. BIRT AND COMPANY (PTY.)
LIMITED.**
4 Bridge Street,
Sydney. Tele.. B0529.

Advertisement for passage on HALEAKALA for the return trip to Manila from Sydney. Published 30 June, the local agent did not yet know exact date of arrival or departure.

The final destination of HALEAKALA was Sydney, where they arrived on 20 July. Here Erich Porges and the other passengers were finally able to disembark. By now the stories about HALEAKALA being a “Hell Ship” had tailed off, and newspapers said problems had been exaggerated. However, while at Sydney two cases of typhoid fever were discovered on the ship, one a Chinese boy, and the other a refugee. Medically, they were already beyond the critical stage so no quarantine for the ship was required. HALEAKALA began preparation for the return voyage to the Manila and Hong Kong. Passengers were taken on board, but before leaving Sydney, customs made a surprise inspection looking for contraband. What they found was “*toilet and washing soap,*” which, at the time, was highly sought after in the black market of the Orient. Two Chinese passengers also got into trouble for attempting to bribe customs officers, and were removed from the ship. On that note, HALEAKALA finally got underway.

Loose Ends

When Porges arrived at Sydney in 1947, it was not without previous planning. Refugees to Australia were required to have a permit for entry, a process that took 6-12 months. To my knowledge, he had no relatives in Australia at that time.

Interestingly, the return address Erich uses on the letter is “c/o Bettelheim” at an address in Rose Bay, near Sydney. Research shows this was probably Richard Bettelheim (1880-1950), who also was originally from Vienna. It appears Erich lived with him at Rose Bay for two months, and then both were associated with another area of Sydney called Bronte. The letter is addressed to Miss Evelyn Fullerton (1909-1983) of Melbourne. Born in Shanghai, Evelyn spent much of her early life in Hong Kong where her father was a businessman. She later studied in Europe, spoke four languages, wrote three books, was a teacher, and was regularly called on to do translation work. It’s not known how Erich knew her, but from the tone of the letter it’s pretty clear that they were just friends.

In 1949, Erich’s sister Stella, along with her husband and daughter, were able to relocate to Sydney. Erich himself got married about this time to Hedy Sametz (1923-2013). She was also originally from Vienna, and was at the Shanghai Ghetto with her family before coming to Australia. In the 1950’s, Erich is listed as a “traveler” (salesman), probably related to his occupation as a tailor. However, I did find one instance in 1957 of his playing the piano for an event. Erich died at Sydney in 1992 at the age of 84.

The letter Erich Porges wrote in July 1947 from HALEAKALA documents one of the most intriguing voyages in the ships’ history. More importantly, it also leads to the greater story of human beings escaping Europe with their lives, later enduring the Shanghai Ghetto, and finally finding refuge in Australia.



Snapshots taken by a passenger aboard HALEAKALA in Hawaii c. 1930. (Personal Collection)



Main Sources

Various resources at *Ancestry.com*, *Newspapers.com*, and *Fold3.com*
 Porges.net; *Wikipedia* (various); encyclopedia.ushmm.org; forward.com
 PBS program “*We’ll Meet Again*” (2018), Season 1, Episode 1.
 Immigration Papers, Erich Porges, National Archives of Australia, NAA:SP11/2, Austrian/Porges E

Newspaper Articles (Main ones)

“Philippine Freighter Here With Father of Island’s Navy,” *Boston Globe*, 28 March 1940, p.5; “Mystery Luxury Vessel Bringing Migrants Here,” *Telegraph* (Brisbane), 10 June 1947, p.1; “Migrant Ship Lost & Found,” *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 11 June 1947, p.3; “Refugee Ship Aground on Mud Bank,” *Telegraph* (Brisbane), 12 July 1947, p.1; “54 More Jews Here on Immigrant Ship,” *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane) 13 July 1947, p.1; “European Jews Arrive in Cairns from Shanghai,” *Cairns Post*, 14 July 1947, p.1; “Immigrant Ship From East Berths At Cairns,” *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton, Queensland), 15 July 1947, p.4; “Shanghai Barber is a Linguist,” *Telegraph* (Brisbane), 16 July 1947, p.6; “Hell Ship Charge,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 July 1947, p.1; “Mystery Death on Migrant Ship,” *Norther Star* (Lismore), 17 July 1947, p.5; “Hell-ship Charges Denied by Migrants,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 July 1947, p.5; “Outward baggage raided,” *Argus* (Melbourne), 22 July 1947, p.20; “Porges, Erich” (obit), *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 August 1992, p.43; “Adler, Stella” (obit), *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 June 1998, p.32

Pictorial Cancellations
 Rich Hoffner, Sr. (H-4456)
 Wolfgang Hechler (9392)

 25th Anniversary Sta. Sep 16, 2019 Norfolk, VA 23513	 Commissioning Sta. Sep 26, 2019 Honolulu, HI 96818
 Commissioning Sta. Oct 5, 2019 Gulfport, MS 39503	 35th Anniversary Sta. Oct 6, 2019 Groton, CT 06340
 30th Anniversary Sta. Oct 21, 2019 Groton, CT 06340	 15th Anniversary Station Oct 23, 2019 Groton, CT 06340
 5th Anniversary Station Oct 25, 2019 Groton, CT 06340	 Commissioning Day Burns Harbor Sta. Oct 26, 2019 Chesterton, IN 46304
 75th Anniversary of Commissioning Sta. Nov 1, 2019 Atlantic Beach NC 28512	

The Joy of Collecting: NAVY 128 Box Numbers

Gregory A. Finnegan (9677)
688 57th Street
Oakland CA 94609-1642
g.finnegan@comcast.net



It's well known that Navy Number 128 was Pearl Harbor. But what, exactly, did that mean? Many of us have in our collections cancels from 3 pre-war Pearl Harbor post offices: Navy Yard, Naval Air Station, and Submarine Base. All three were branches of the Honolulu PO, rather than branches of New York City's, as shipboard PO's were. Indeed, whenever we produce a shore-station postmark catalog, it'll include a fair number of other Oahu Navy facilities that had a postmark as a branch of the Honolulu PO—not to mention a 1916 cover face I have (and a 1915 picture post card **Lloyd Ferrell** has) with a postmark from "Pearl Harbor, Hawaii."

The Pearl Harbor Chapter No. 112's group project to list and scan "late-date" pre-Pearl Harbor covers, for inclusion in the *Naval Cover Museum*, is off to a great start, thanks to Lloyd Ferrell, and demonstrates how much easier it is for USCS members to cooperate online than in the old days of catalog and data-sheet compilation.

I wish to propose a similar Pearl Harbor-related project, which involves deepening the detail found both in our own *Data Sheet 3, Navy Numbers*, and George Cosentini and Norman Gruenzner's *United States Numbered Military Post Offices: Assignments and Locations, 1941-1994*, published in 1994 by the Military Postal History Society. The latter sometimes shows sub-units under a given number, but has none for Navy 128. But those are rarely labeled as "Boxes" and equally rarely have more than 3 or 4, and often fewer, sub-listings.

When the Navy Number system was put into use relatively early in WW II (do we have a date? Neither source cited here gives one.) it seems as though all 3 of those post offices operated as Navy 128. *Data Sheet 3* lists 12 Navy Numbers with Oahu locations. One of them, 48, is the Coast Guard PO in Honolulu Harbor. Most of the others are scattered around the island, tho' several are in various parts of Honolulu. Only two show as Pearl Harbor; 128 and 603. But 603, Mobile Hospital #2, is noted as using 128. In addition, Navy Number 10, the Aiea Navy Receiving Barracks, was in the greater Pearl Harbor complex.

Data Sheet 3 gives 3 sub-units under Navy 128, none "Boxes":

Camp 1, Monalua. [see below] That's located between the present location of Tripler Hospital and Fort Shafter.

Camp 2, Waiawa Located near Scofield Barracks, in the interior of Oahu.

Camp 3, Iroquois Pt. Puuloa Naval Reservation, near Ewa Beach.

I became interested in 'the boxes' question because in my 1999 exhibit about my father, *Covering a Naval Career, 1922-1980: Postal History of Captain Joseph Finnegan*, I have a 2 February 1945 V-Mail letter (**Figure 1**) to him from his mother, addressed to

Com'DR. Joseph Finnegan, U.S.N.
Commandant, Navy #128
Box 103
c/o Fleet P.O.
San Francisco, Calif.

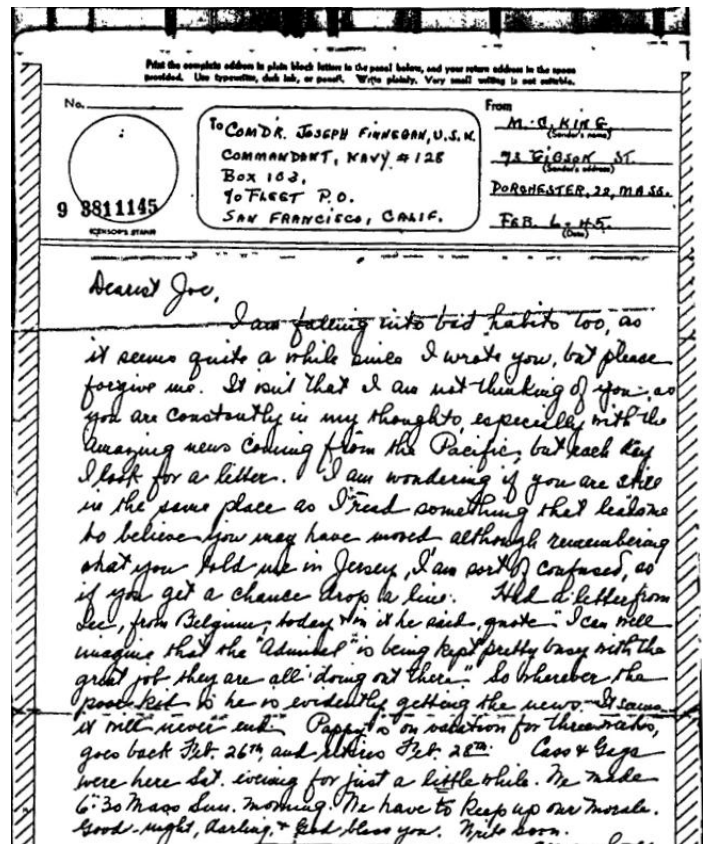


Figure 1: 11 Jan. 1945 V-Mail. Like most surviving incoming mail to Finnegan over his 30 year Naval career, this message devotes much space to complaining about his not writing.

On 7 Dec. 1941, Joe Finnegan was Flag Lieutenant to Commander, Battleship Division Two, in TENNESSEE (BB 43,) tho' on weekend liberty and hence not aboard during the attack. However, by the end of the day, in his capacity as a Tokyo-trained (1934-37) Japanese Language Officer, he'd been unofficially moved to 'Station Hypo,' later "Fleet Radio Unit, Pacific" (FRUPAC), the Pearl Harbor codebreaking unit where he spent the rest of the War. The other covers I have to him during the War are to his apartment address in Honolulu, aside from a Fort DeRussey Officers Recreation Center cover from 5 Nov. 1945, addressed to him at "United States Pacific Fleet Radio Unit, Navy 128, c/o Fleet Post Office."

But the address his mother used on the V-Mail seems right, including "Commandant." Even tho' FRUPAC effectively functioned as part of the staff of FADM. Nimitz, to the point of having a hotline scrambler phone to Capt.

Edwin Layton, CinCPac Intelligence Officer, and daily contact with ComSubPac by Jasper Holmes, a Submariner, the unit formally reported to COM14, the Commandant of the 14th Naval District.

Because of this significant aspect of my father's career (added to by my mother having been a civilian clerk for the Army at Fort Armstrong from early 1941 throughout the War, and my having been born in Honolulu) I've collected Hawaiian postal history in general and Pearl Harbor in particular. Over time, I acquired other covers with Navy 128 corner cards. Some had a box number added; others had a unit title. Few to none had both.

In the absence of a list of Navy 128 box numbers, coupled by the likelihood that there may have been over a thousand of them (see below,) I am inspired by the example of Lloyd Ferrell's "Late Dates" Pearl Harbor Chapter 112 project regarding late pre-war-dated covers from ships present during the attack to propose a parallel Chapter 112 project to compile a list of known, or at least probable, units with a Navy 128 box number. I imagine this as under the auspices of Chapter 112, but am publishing this in the *Log* in order to reach the entire USCS readership.

It was clear from the V-Mail that Box 103 was FRUPAC. I was able to add evidence when I acquired a cover (**Figure 2**) sent from Box 103 to a fraternal lodge in Boston MA. The corner-card is from "Wm. Nowell Sp(Q) 3/c, Box 103 Commandant, Navy 128, c/o Fleet P.O. San Francisco, Calif."

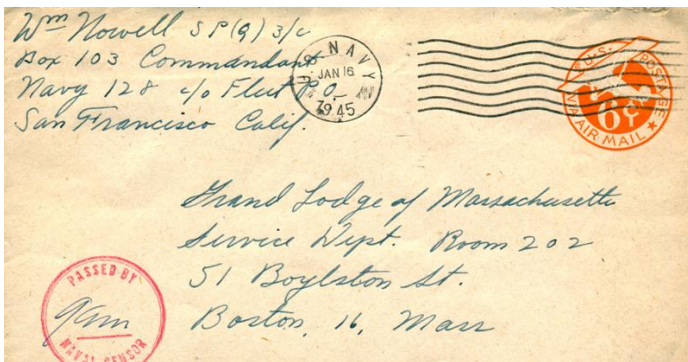


Figure 2: 16 Jan. 1945 cover from Communications Specialist 3/c William Nowell, with similar return address.

Nowell had an unusual rate, one added during the War, and one appropriate to FRUPAC: "Communications Specialist." It was one of 16 ratings whose symbol consisted of a letter in a diamond—in this case, a Q. ("T" was "Punched Card Accounting Machine Operator," of which there'd have been many at FRUPAC.) Since there were already rates for Signalmen and Radiomen, a Communications Specialist clearly did something else. I took the figure of 16 from a valuable reference tool, the compilation of a number of *National Geographic Magazine* wartime articles on insignia and decorations of the US Armed Forces. But a longer list, Malin 1970, online, from the Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC,) lists some 60 such Specialists.

Those obviously include more-than-one-letter codes, presumably not all crammed into diamonds under a 'crow.' But the larger list suggests that Specialist Nowell was indeed doing things appropriate for a 'crypto' unit:

- Sp(Q)(CR) - Specialist (Cryptographer)
- Sp(Q)(IN) - Specialist (Radio Intelligence)
- Sp(Q)(RP) - Registered Publications Clerk
- Sp(Q)(TE) - Specialist (Technician)

[A USCS/MPHS-relevant rating is listed immediately above the Q's:

- Sp(P)(VM) - Specialist (V-Mail)

Specialist (M) was Mailman, but had been replaced before the NGS book was compiled by the familiar "postmark" symbol.]

So Specialist (Q) would seem to be an ancestor of the several varieties of "Communications Technician" in the postwar Navy.

I was able to acquire a third "Box 103" cover that is plausibly, but not certainly, FRUPAC-connected. (**Figure 3**) The hand-written corner-card for it reads:

Brian A. Cooke Y2/c USNR
Box 103, Navy Yard
Pearl Harbor T.H.



Figure 3: 25 Jan. 1945 cover from Y 2/c Brian Cooke, with different version of corner-card.

There's no Navy 128, but that can be assumed from the PH line. And there were plenty of Yeomen in FRUPAC too. Lloyd Ferrell has a cover with the same corner-card as Figure 3, sent by a Reserve LCDR who isn't mentioned in the unit histories, but who was a radio engineer in civilian life, so could plausibly have been in FRUPAC, which intercepted and took bearings on Japanese radio traffic as well as decoding and translating it.

Thanks to Lloyd, I've acquired a cover he located, from another PH Intelligence unit: JICPOA: Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area. Capt. Jasper Holmes, in his book about both FRUPAC and JICPOA, states that

In January 1945 JICPOA had a complement of 500 officers and 800 enlisted men. FRUPac, separately organized and administered, probably had as many more. During 1944, JICPOA had been reorganized and expanded to meet new situations and conditions as the war moved westward [CincPac and part of

JICPOA moved to Guam.] The Enemy Bases Section was merged with the Photographic Interpretation Section and reorganized into the Geographic Section and the Reference Section... (p.196)

In this example, **Figure 4**, the fact that the addressee was an officer enabled finding him in a book about JICPOA, confirming that Navy 128 Box 166 was that unit, or at least its Pearl Harbor staff. (Dingman pp. 106, 121) Lloyd has another Box 166 cover, from an Army Reserve Captain. Both the Army sender, and the USNR LT to whom my cover was sent, had extensive pre- (and post-) war experience in Japan and China, respectively, one as a missionary and one as a scholar, making JICPOA a logical unit for their service assignments. So we now know 2 box numbers, with a fair separation between their numbers.



Figure 4: 11 May 1944 cover to LT. Woodbridge Bingham USNR, at Box 166, JICPOA.

I've also acquired other Navy 128 Box xxx covers, but none specify units. **Figure 5** is from a Machinist's Mate 2/c at "Box 1331 U.S. Naval Air Station, Navy No. 128 c/o Fleet P.O. San Francisco Cal."

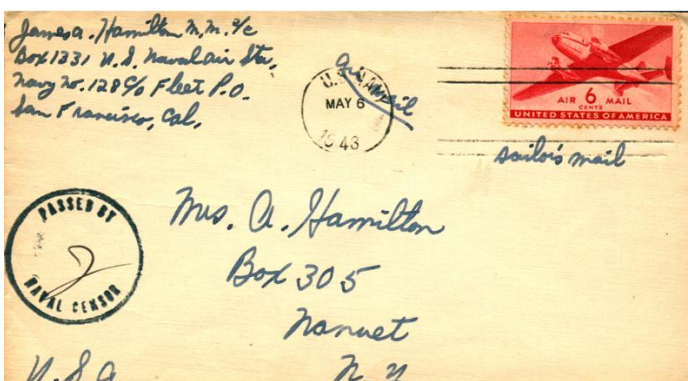


Figure 5: 6 May 1943 from Navy 128 Box 1331, at Naval Air Station, Ford Island.

Figures 6-8 are from one sender, a Radioman who was successively S/2, then 3/c and 2/c in the span May 1942-July 1943. He varied his address slightly:

U.S. Naval Air Station	Box 1374 N.A.S.
Pearl Harbor T.H.	Navy #128 (one two eight)
c/o N.A.S. Post Office	c/o Fleet Post Office...
Box 1374	

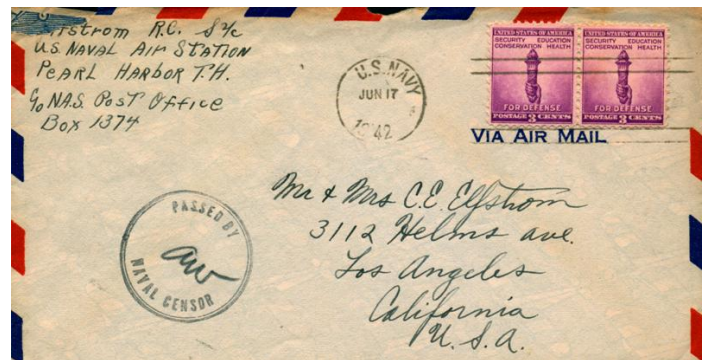


Figure 6: First of 3 covers from Box 1374, Naval Air Station, Ford Island, but without Navy Number 128 added.



Figure 7: Second cover from Box 1374, same corner-card format.

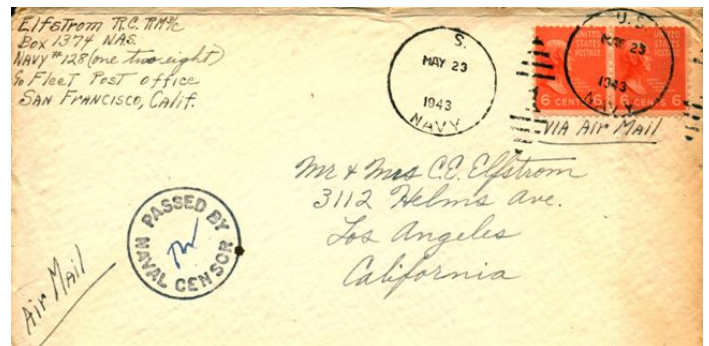


Figure 8: Third cover from Navy 128 Box 1374, 23 May 1943, with different corner-card format, now including Navy Number 128.

It's interesting that all three of his covers have the same box number, but only the 1943 cover specifies Navy No. 128—and takes the trouble to spell it out as well as with numerals. Perhaps that might mean that Navy Number 128 (and the others?) were newly in use around May 1943? Note also that the "Naval Cantonment" cover in the sidebar, from 16 June 1942, also lacks either a Navy Number or a Box Number.

So there were at least two box numbers under Navy 128 associated with Ford Island. Unless there was simply a jump to a block of numbers for the air station (like the 4-digit 8xxx numbers for Marine Corps Branch Numbers,) their being both in the 1300's suggests a fairly staggering number of boxes to both locate and decode!

The Joy of Collecting: NAVY Number 128 Sidebar

Gregory A. Finnegan (9677)
688 57th Street
Oakland CA 94609-1642
g.finnegan@comcast.net



When going through the Oahu section of the second volume of *Building the Navy's Bases*, I found an explanation for this cover, which, since it bears neither Navy Number 128 nor a Box Number, is outside the scope of my main article. But it's interesting in being a Naval Cover from a Civilian. P. 136 of *Building*... has a section headed "Housing," noting that "housing was built to accommodate civilian employees of the yard, contractors' employees, and naval personnel on duty in the area or on a transient status. Altogether, five separate housing areas were built, each planned as an independent community, with schools, fire protection, and recreational facilities." (Area Five, "set apart as officer housing," besides 104 houses "and 5 barracks, ...contained the administrative headquarters for CincPac, a radio station, and two large office buildings housing Navy Intelligence." This was Makalapa, in Makalapa Crater; the two intelligence buildings housed "Fleet Radio Unit, Pacific" (FRUPAC,) my father's cryptanalysis unit, and JICPOA, both mentioned in the main article. My father, however, lived in a Honolulu apartment.)



Figure 1: Naval Cantonment, Honolulu cover: 16 June 1942.

Only one of these 5 projects was labeled as a "cantonment," a word I usually associate with India and China: "Area Four, a 2000-man cantonment, erected to house the bachelor employees of the contractors, was also a complete community." Note that the handwritten corner card on the reverse bears no rating or service information, as a cover from a Sailor or Marine would have. So I conclude

that Mr. Heinen was a civilian who was living in "Area Four" and used a Naval Post Office that was subject to Naval censorship. (The cover still contains its letter, which is entirely devoted to family information—it's headed "Dear Mom"—and gives no indication of what the writer was doing, appropriately for a censored letter.)

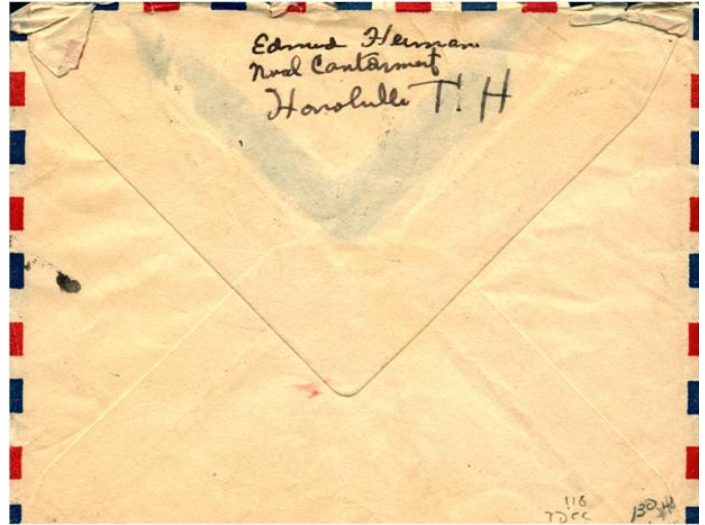


Figure 2: Navy Cantonment, reverse.

Changes to Envelope Sales Process

Lloyd Ferrell
uscstreasurer@aol.com

For several years **Karl Zurn** has been handling the sale of envelopes for cachets, and we've offered them through the USCS website. Recently we implemented some changes, and Karl is now going to handle all sales himself, either through his own website, or orders mailed to him.

Thanks to Karl's generosity, however, USCS will still benefit from his sales. Below is a notice that I posted to the Home Page of the USCS Website.

NOTICE - Effective September 2019, USCS is no longer selling envelopes for cachets directly. However, you can still purchase them directly from Karl Zurn, and USCS will still benefit from the sale.

His website is located at: www.karlscovers.com

You can also mail orders to: **Florida Research Instruments, 1890 N. Atlantic Ave., Suite 520, Cocoa Beach, FL 32931**

Thank you for having been a customer in the past for the envelopes, and I encourage you to continue to buy them from Karl. Thank you -- let me know if you have any questions.

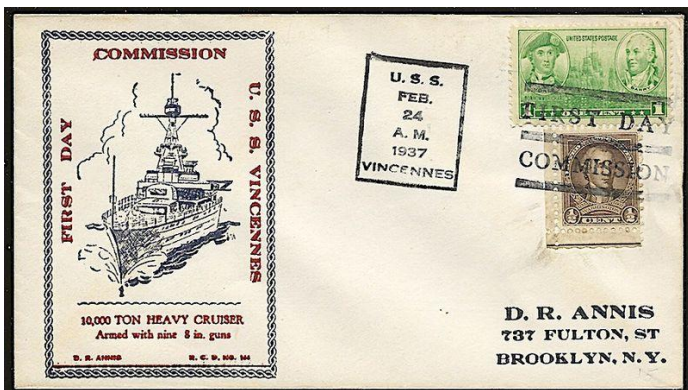
P.S. There are still a couple of recent envelope orders that we processed from the USCS website. Not to worry, there is no problem with those orders.

Sacrificed Treasure USS VINCENNES (CA 44)

Jake Wilhelm (12,411)
PO Box 481, Coquille, OR 97423
jakewilhelm@mail.com

She helped preserve the future of France and Belgium. She fought with distinction in the first battles of the Pacific War. But VINCENNES' (CA 44) own strength and grit could not protect her from a cascade of mistakes that claimed her in the First Battle of Savo Island.

VINCENNES was a recent-model ship when the world was thrust into conflict. Her keel was laid 2 January 1934 at Bethlehem Steel's Fore River Plant in Quincy, Massachusetts. She was launched 21 May 1936, sponsored by Harriet Kimball, the daughter of the mayor of her namesake, Vincennes, Indiana.



A David R. Annis commissioning cachet welcomed VINCENNES to the waters in early 1937. Despite the verbiage, VINCENNES was not a 10,000-ton cruiser, but came in at 9400 long tons displacement. A Locy Type FDC cancel crosses Scott 790 (Navy Heroes) and the 1932 George Washington ½ cent, Scott 704, to pay the 1 ½ cent unsealed letter rate to Annis USCS #1341, himself. (Image Naval Cover Museum)

She was built as an ASTORIA-class heavy cruiser. Falling under the parameters of the Washington Naval Treaty that gave cruisers a strictly minimum amount of armor and a limit of 10,000 tons, the nine-gun cruiser was a lightly armored vessel displacing 9400 tons. She was built alongside QUINCY (CA 39), whom would join VINCENNES in her grim death.



USS VINCENNES
underway at high
speed, circa
February 1937

Mid 1937 saw VINCENNES on her shakedown cruise, visiting ports in Sweden, Finland, France and England. In her very short pre-war career, VINCENNES was stationed off the East Coast until a modernization in 1939. She was released in time for America to declare neutrality in the European conflict. As part of America's Neutrality Patrol, she prowled the waters of the East Coast and Caribbean, escorted several convoys through U-boat infected waters, and took part in war games that were not just games but a nation preparing for war.



VINCENNES celebrated her first Thanksgiving courtesy of this National Aiglon Society (ANCS #16) cachet by C. Wright Richell. A Locy 3 (A-BTT) with BOSTON NAVY/YARD MASS between the bars crosses a Scott 793 (Navy Heroes 4-cent), which more than paid the freight to San Francisco. (Author's collection)

In May of 1940, she was tasked with a crucial mission. Since 1939, France had been sending the bulk of her gold reserves to safety in the US. So was Belgium. As Hitler marched through France and Belgium, VINCENNES helped get 200 tons of the two nations' gold out of danger when she was sent to Casablanca with two destroyers to bring the precious cargo to America. On 10 June 1940, as France was falling, VINCENNES delivered the gold. The delivery meant more than even her sailors understood. The Nazis were well known for looting the gold reserves of the countries they invaded - and roughly a third of Hitler's war machine was funded by looted gold. With that 200 tons of gold, worth about \$8 billion today, who knows what he could have afforded?

To drive that point home, that gold is worth scads, VINCENNES was soon again on gold conveyance duty in March of '41, bringing from South Africa gold used by the United Kingdom to purchase war materials from America.

VINCENNES was escorting freighters loaded with war materials when the world changed again on December 7, 1941. That night she was riding out a bad storm, so bad that a recon plane was torn loose from its mounts and carried overboard - an ill portent for things to come.

VINCENNES was sent to the Pacific to operate from a still smoldering Pearl Harbor, detailed to provide protection for aircraft carriers. She screened HORNET (CV 8) during her shakedown cruise, and was with her when the Doolittle Raid took flight from HORNET'S decks in April 1941, becoming the first Americans to bomb Japan's mainland.



This 1940 Christmas cover from VINCENNES put the cap on a busy and mostly classified year of business for the cruiser. A *Locy 3 (A-BTT)* crosses an early usage of the *Torch of Enlightenment* stamp (Scott 901). The cover went to John Gillespie, USCS #284 (Naval Cover Museum)

In June of '41, VINCENNES was scrambled to the Battle of Midway. VINCENNES was tasked with protecting the damaged YORKTOWN (CV 5), helping to thwart a wave of Japanese bombers intent on finishing off the carrier. VINCENNES, however, was unable to protect her from a torpedo fired by the submarine I-168 that took down YORKTOWN.

Guadalcanal would be VINCENNES' last stop. Tucked in the eastern edge of the Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal was a threat to the Allied cause. The Japanese were building airfields capable of being used to attack the key US-to-Australia shipping lanes. More importantly, Allied seizure of the island could be the jumping off point for the battle to retake the Solomons and thus begin a march towards the Japanese mainland.

Much blood and treasure was spilled in the effort to determine who would win the island. VINCENNES would be one of those sacrifices.

Under control of British Naval Rear Admiral Victor Crutchley, as part of an Allied force commanded by USN VADM Frank Fletcher, VINCENNES was on station 7 August screening transport ships unloading Marines and bombarding the shore as amphibious teams stormed the beaches. At 1320 hours, the Japanese Navy sent planes to counter the invasion, targeting the transports. VINCENNES was among the first escort ships to fire back, splashing two oncoming planes in the process.

On 8 August, VINCENNES was again on the job, providing cover at Transport Area X-Ray. A heavy Japanese response came at 1158 as a wave of 27 torpedo bombers hurtled in 25 to 50 feet above the waves. VINCENNES fired all her guns, quickly snatching at least seven bombers from the sky. She also dodged a torpedo and evaded a bomb. The air strike only damaged one ship, the destroyer JARVIS (DD 393).

When night fell, things were quiet. But mistakes were being made.

THE FIRST BATTLE OF SAVO ISLAND

As night fell, sailors were being released to Condition II, with about half the men at battle stations. The brass expected a quiet night. Just in case, a spread of Allied ships were released to conduct box formation maneuvers around the occupied coastline of Guadalcanal.

Nothing was expected to happen. Vague reports of a Japanese battle force coming down from Rabaul was nothing to worry about – these reports gave the impression the Japanese boasted two mere sea plane tenders escorted by three cruisers and three destroyers. This light group surely would not attack until the morning; it was time to take a break...

On northern patrol, VINCENNES, QUINCY, their fellow ASTORIA-class mate ASTORIA (CA 34) and two destroyers were patrolling the area between Savo Island and Florida Island, with VINCENNES as group leader. To their south, patrolling Savo Island, were the Australian cruiser HMAS CANBERRA and the US cruiser CHICAGO (CA 29), plus two destroyers. To the east was another two cruiser/two destroyer group and to the west a pair of radar-equipped American destroyers swept for enemy movement, presumably the seaplane tender force.

A crucial error was committed even before nightfall. Crutchley and the Australian cruiser HMAS AUSTRALIA had initially been assigned to the southern patrol. Crutchley instead left his post to check in with the transport division nearby.

The cascade continued. Captain Rode of CHICAGO was supposed to have his radar going full-time, but instead rationed the sweep of the radar to single bursts at a time; afraid the radar would tattle-tale his position. And, unknown to all, the radar equipment aboard the western patrol destroyers were incapable of discerning ships from the landmasses around them.

Savo Island was blind.

Then, there was the fact that Fletcher has ordered his carrier fleet out of the area. He later reported targets of opportunity on Guadalcanal had diminished, as had the ability to defend the carriers because they had lost 21 planes that day.

The worst error? The Japanese "seaplane tender force" was actually five heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and one destroyer under the command of Rear Admiral Gunichi Mikawa. Coming from the west, the battle force spotted the radar destroyers and smoothly danced around them, coming in from the south.

In an instant, Mikawa jumped the southern task force. Minutes later, CANBERRA and CHICAGO were ablaze. CANBERRA would sink, CHICAGO limped away. Captain Bode of the CHICAGO would catch heat for two things that led to many deaths – he sped from the scene and he forgot to take time to let other patrols know a bad thing was on the way.

At 0145, spotters aboard VINCENNES saw and heard the battle to the south. Meanwhile, the ship was at rest, Captain Frederick Riefkohl was in bed, having been on duty since 0445 the previous day and told not to worry about the night ahead. When Riefkohl was roused from bed just before the battle, he had no idea that when Admiral Crutchley left his station, he was now tactical officer-in-command for the western patrol. If he had known, Riefkohl might have been already been on station and able to save his group. Instead, the following chaos had no one in charge. In fact, he thought the destruction to the south was a diversion to pull the VINCENNES group into the fray, leaving nearby transport ships vulnerable to the actual attack. His mission, after all, was to protect the transport group.

Instead, the enemy approached...fast. The destroyer PATTERSON (DD 392) spotted them and radioed a warning to all cruisers – however, the message wasn't relayed to the VINCENNES commanders. It was only when her lookouts cried out a warning at 0147 that VINCENNES was instantly under General Quarters, bringing Riefkohl to the bridge much too late. The Klaxons also sounded too late for everyone else.

Mikawa had shirked his earlier orders and bypassed the juicy transports and freighters to attack the new target of opportunity – VINCENNES and her sisters. His battle force's deadly equipment soon flanked VINCENNES GROUP and began firing. The cruiser KAKO came close enough to shine a spotlight on VINCENNES. Things were still too muddled aboard the ship, and orders to shoot out the light were rescinded because Riefkohl thought the light came from AUSTRALIA or another friendly vessel.

Friends don't shoot, though. KAKO opened fire at 0151. Her first shots fell 500 yards short. The second salvo straddled the doomed cruiser, hitting the bridge and killing the XO, CDR W.E.A. Mullen. Shells carried on, striking Battery II, the carpenter's shop, directing guns and the antenna stacks.

Riefkohl called for a sharp turn to port and unknowingly brought her right between the Japanese battle formation. VINCENNES fired her first salvo at 0153, which stopped 500 yards short of Mikawa's flagship, the cruiser CHOKAI. Shots from KAKO and her fellows walked across VINCENNES at 0153 ½, killing hundreds in their wake and taking out Turret II and power to other batteries was briefly cut.

When the guns turned back on at 0154, VINCENNES' guns took out the steering of the cruiser KINUGASA, forcing her from battle.

By now, QUINCY and ASTORIA were already enduring their fatal blows. Each ship was on her own. Their destroyer escorts tried their best, but their best was just flea bites no one cared about and the Japanese force barely deigned to pay them any attention.

At 0154, his amidships afire, Riefkohl rang for 25 knots and a hard turn starboard. The engines failed to wind up and she turned at a crawl in time for two torpedoes from CHOKAI to slam into her portside at 0155. Meanwhile, eight and five-inch shells had pounded VINCENNES' sea plane deck into a fireball and stomped through the machine shop, forward mess hall, radar room, and gun control systems, reducing most remaining guns to hand power.



VINCENNES was off Guadalcanal when this, one of her last photographs, was taken by a passing ship. (US Navy photo)

Shots ripped away VINCENNES' colors. Riefkohl ordered the colors replaced. The flag was run up on the last remaining halyard. It was a heroic gesture; unfortunately, the Japanese thought this meant an admiral was aboard and they redoubled their fire. VINCENNES tried to get off another six-gun salvo at 0159, but the shot control system finally failed. VINCENNES took fire from all quarters, even machine gun fire, and her engine rooms were flooding.

Then – as suddenly as he had begun - Mikawa terminated the attack. Three cruisers burned in his wake as the Japanese battle force fled west at 0200 without attacking the patrol to the east. In fact, they fled the area, a decision proving the Imperial Japanese Navy could also make mistakes.

Mikawa had gained the advantage for his emperor. With so many crucial ships knocked out of action, Mikawa could have continued his attack, taking out transports and buying time for Japan to recapture Guadalcanal. Instead, at 0216, Mikawa met quickly with his officers and debated whether to stay or go.

What happened was democracy in action. Mikawa had many reasons to flee. His ships were scattered, and it would take too long to regroup. They also needed to reload their torpedo tubes, which meant they would soon be operating in daylight and daylight equaled American aircraft attacks. A few staffers wanted to remain and battle. Mikawa and the majority overruled them and set course for Rabaul.

If Mikawa had known the US carriers were too far away...

Future speculations like that no longer mattered for VINCENNES. By 0215 the burning hulk listed to port. At 0230, Riefkohl ordered abandon ship. He remained on board until a wave washed him over the side at 0240.

VINCENNES sank a mile from QUINCY'S final resting spot and two and half miles east of Savo Island. VINCENNES vanished beneath the waves at 0230, taking with her a treasure worth so much more than the gold she had ever carried – 332 American men.



Also from the Naval Cover Museum is this hard hitting cover. Postmarked ten days after the sinking of VINCENNES, our imaginations might let us think this cover contained assurances to his church family in New Brunswick that the sender, ENS Robeson Peters, had survived. However, the censor mark most likely destroys the theory that Peters referred to his ship sinking. Peters, a survivor, most likely mailed the letter on another ship or a shore station that used a Locy 3z (BBT) across an airmail stamp (Scott C25). (Naval Cover Museum)

AFTERMATH

According to post-battle reports, VINCENNES took 56 known large caliber hits – but probably took 85 actual heavy hits. Her casualties were counted among the 1000 other men that died that night. Along with VINCENNES, the Allies lost CANBERRA, QUINCY and ASTORIA. No transports were affected during the battle.

Post battle, the transports and warships were withdrawn from Guadalcanal before all supplies could be landed. Marines were left holding the bag, but not for long. When the ships returned, they were stronger and better. Smaller transport fleets were backed by carriers and land-based aircraft, plus a greater percentage of escort vessels. As a result, the Japanese Navy not only lost the ability to recapture the island, a stronger Allied presence reduced them to sending in supplies in unsustainable, tiny numbers, numbers that equaled a weak force by the end of the year, forcing Japan's abandonment of the island in 1943.

On 10 August, USS S-44 spotted the retreating fleet and sank KAKO. Seventy-one men went down with KAKO, the triumphant battle force's only major loss.

Despite all the men in line to take punishment for the events leading to the First Battle of Savo Island (there were more battles to come), Bode of CHICAGO was the only one censured. He killed himself rather than face a tribunal. Riefkohl, his spirit broken by losing VINCENNES, never again commanded a ship.

The area just off Savo Island was renamed Ironbottom Sound. Many more ships tumbled to the depths there before

the island officially became American's jumping off spot for recapturing so much lost territory.

With their namesake gone, the surviving ASTORIA-class cruisers left on the high seas were reclassified as NEW ORLEANS-class. And so the war continued.

SOURCES

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 Naval Cover Museum
 USCS Yearbooks

American Society of Polar Philatelists



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INDYPEX

**USS VELLA GULF (CVE 111)
in World War II**
*Al Raddi (12,247)
1360 Glenwood Court
Milford, MI 48381-2673*

USS VELLA GULF (CVE 111) was the seventh of 17 COMMENCEMENT BAY-class escort carriers (hull classification symbol CVE) built by the Todd-Pacific Shipyard in Tacoma, WA and commissioned. Following the bays and battles naming convention for the "baby flattops", she laid down on 7 March 1944 at Tacoma, WA as USS TOTEM BAY – after a bay on the south coast of Kupreanof Island in southeast Alaska that was named in 1886 by the Coast and Geodetic Survey because the pillars on its western shore resembled Indian totem poles. However, on 26 April 1944, she was renamed VELLA GULF – after the Battle of Vella Gulf in the Solomon Island in August 1943 in which six American destroyers ambushed four Japanese destroyers and sunk three with no damage to the American ships [Figure 1]. She was launched on 19 October 1944 [Figure 2], commissioned with Captain Robert W. Morse in command on 9 April 1945 [Figures 3-5] and joined the Pacific Fleet [Figure 6].

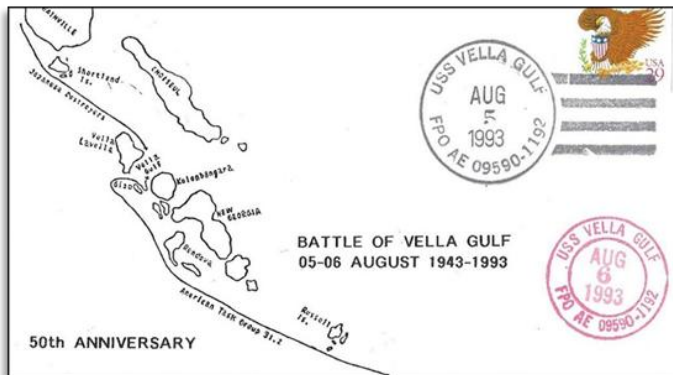


Figure 1: Cover commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Vella Gulf postmarked 5 and 6 August 1993 on the second USS VELLA GULF (CG 72).



Figure 2: Cover commemorating the launching of VELLA GULF hand signed by Elmun R. Fetteroff. Chair of the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce. postmarked 19 October 1944 in Tacoma, WA.



Figure 3: VELLA GULF Captain Robert W. Morse as he appeared in the 9 April 1945 issue of the ship's magazine, the "Vella Guff".

Figure 4: Invitation from prospective Commanding Officer Captain Robert W. Morse, the officers and the crew of VELLA GULF to the ship commissioning ceremonies on 9 April 1945.

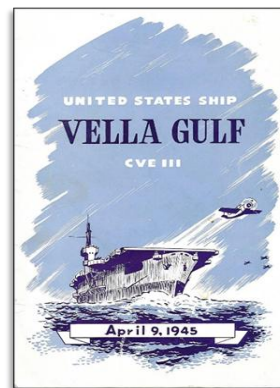
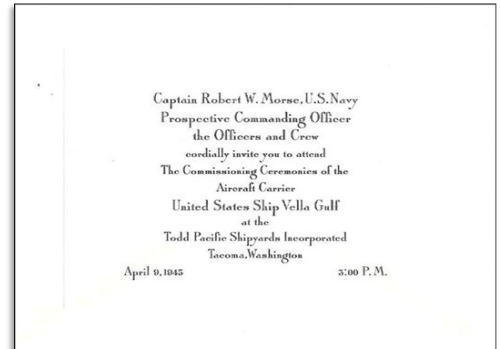


Figure 5: Cover of the program for the commissioning ceremonies for VELLA GULF.

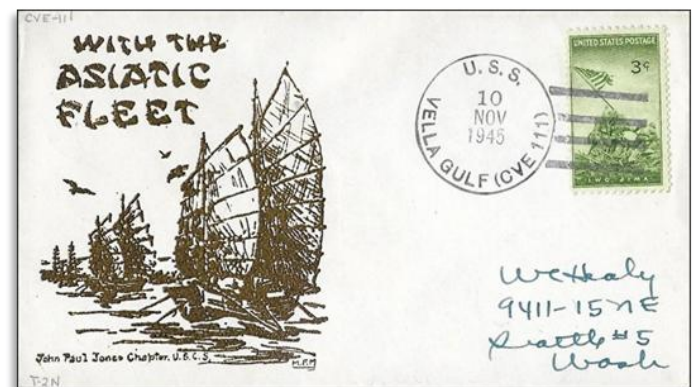


Figure 6: Cover produced by the John Paul Jones Chapter of the Universal Ship Cancellation Society (USCS) postmarked 10 November 1945 aboard VELLA GULF with Locy Type 2(n).

Because the Todd-Pacific Shipyard COMMENCEMENT-class carriers were built late in the war, they saw little action, so the service history of VELLA GULF during World War II is short and straightforward. After being commissioned in April 1945, VELLA GULF sailed to San Diego where she picked up her air complement (which would turn out to be the last Marine Carrier Air

Group assigned to the Pacific). On 17 June 1945, she sailed to the Mariana Islands, by way of Hawaii and Guam, and conducted strikes against the Japanese on Rota and Pagan Islands. In August, she flew off her planes to Saipan then participated in the occupation operations of the Japanese home Island [Figure 7]. After embarking 650 men at Okinawa for passage back to the United States in September, she sailed back the United States, by way of Hawaii and arrived in San Francisco, CA on 14 October 1945.



Figure 7: VELLA GULF on her way to Japan in 1945 (photo from the National Naval Museum).

VELLA GULF operated on the west coast as a training ship until being placed out of commission in August 1946 after having been in active service less than a year and a half. She was subsequently reclassified as a Helicopter Carrier then as an Aircraft Transport Vessel, but she never returned to active service. In 1970, VELLA GULF was sold to the American Ship Dismantlers, Inc., of Portland, OR on 22 October 1971 and scrapped.

At sea, her complement of 1,066 sailors on the “Three Aces” (a nickname derived from the 111 hull number of VELLA GULF) with hometowns from Fullerton, CA and Sedro-Woolley, WA to Deerfield, NH and Cape Coral, FL did their duties and passed their days in the usual ways, including writing letters home [Figure 8-10] and publishing the ship’s paper named the “Vella Guff” [Figure 11]. On leave they also passed their days in the usual ways. An annotated hand drawn map of the voyage entitled “Life of the ‘Eager Beaver’ (USS VELLA GULF CVE 111) 17 June 1945 to 9 September 1945” notes that Eager Beaver “swam on the beach at Waikiki” and “drank cold beer at the Breakers” in Hawaii and also “drank three cans of beer” in Guam [Figure 12].

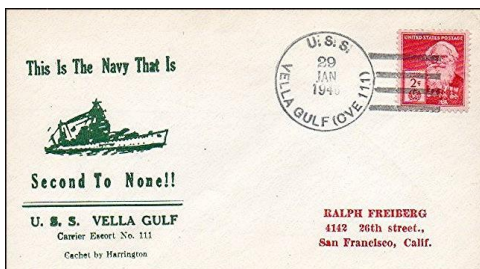


Figure 8: Cover by Ted Harrington of St. Francis, WI postmarked 29 January 1945 aboard VELLA GULF.



Figure 9: Letter from Ensign R. W. Coakley postmarked 6 February 1946 aboard VELLA GULF.

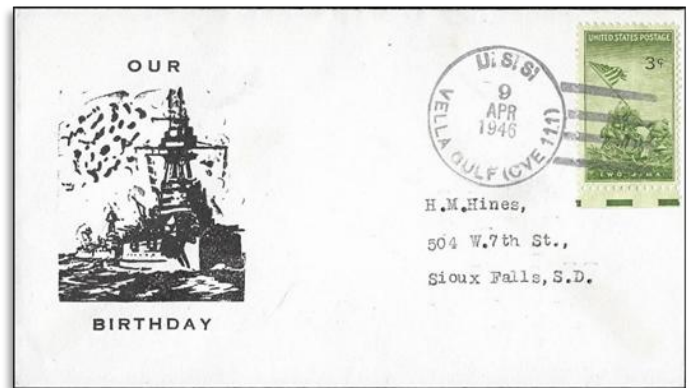


Figure 10: Cover commemorating the ship’s “Birthday” – one-year anniversary of the commissioning of VELLA GULF – postmarked 9 April 1946 aboard VELLA GULF.



Figure 11: The 9 April 1945 (Volume 1, Number 1) edition of the “Vella Guff”.

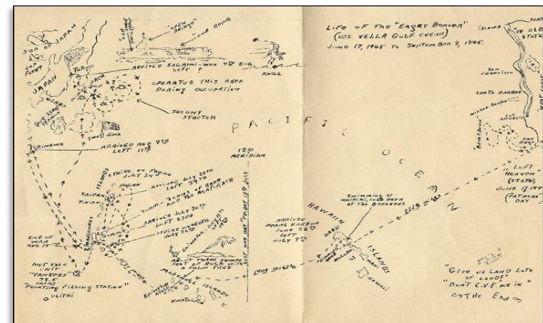


Figure 12: Unofficial voyage map created by/for “Eager Beaver” from the estate of Lt. George M. Bernard, the ship’s Communication Officer.

The commissioning prayer by Chaplin Lt. J. P. Foley that VELLA GULF be “guarded from dangers of the sea and violence of the enemy” seems to have been answered. She didn’t lose any of her men, was not damaged by the enemy, and none of her Vought F4U Corsairs, Grumman F6F Hellcat photographic aircraft, and Grumman TBM Avenger bombers were damaged by the enemy in the 24 sorties against Pagan Island and the 21 sorties against Rota. She received the American Campaign Medal, the Asian Pacific Campaign Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, the Navy Occupation medal and one service/battle star.

In September 1993, the second ship named for the Battle of Vella Gulf was commissioned, the TICONDEROGA-class guided missile cruiser VELLA GULF (CG 72). She is still in service over a quarter of a century later [Figures 13 and 14].

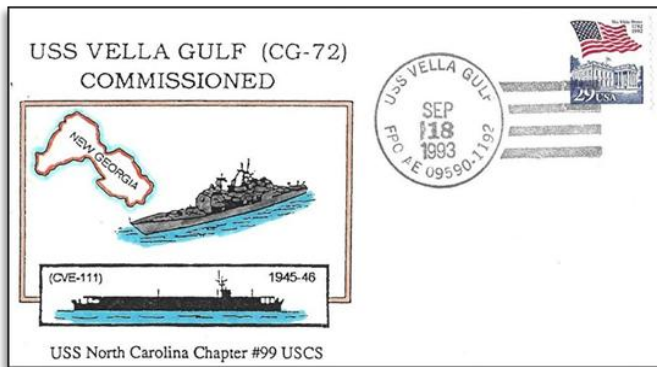


Figure 13: Cover by the USS NORTH CAROLINA Chapter of the USCS depicting VELLA GULF (CVE 111) and VELLA GULF (CG 72) commemorating the commissioning of the latter postmarked 18 September 1983 aboard VELLA GULF (CG 72).

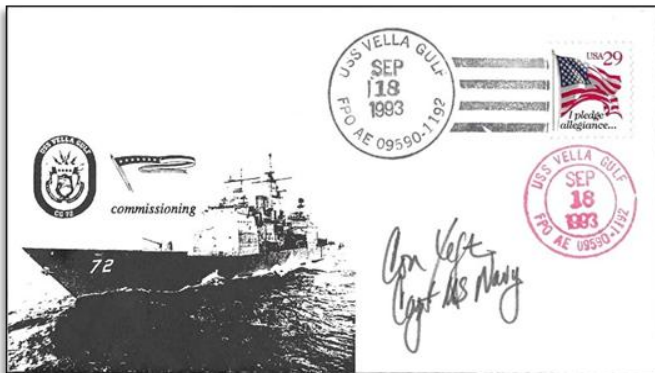


Figure 14: Cover commemorating the commissioning of VELLA GULF (CG 72) hand signed by her Captain Constantine L. Xefteris postmarked 18 September 1983 aboard VELLA GULF (CG 72).

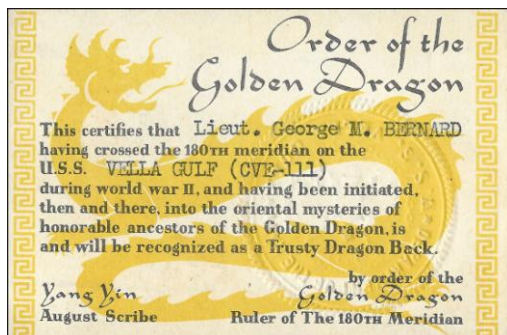


Figure 15: Order of the Golden Dragon card for Lt. George M. Bernard

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U.S. Marines: Beirut, Lebanon

36th Anniversary

Phil Schreiber (9110)

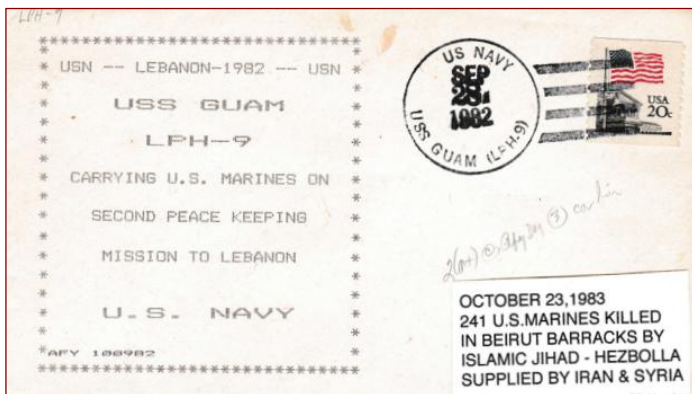
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October 23, 1983 is the 36th anniversary of the Iranian backed Terrorist Attack on the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. More Marines were killed there than in most of their World War II battles. If you happen to be in Iran on this day this year can celebrate it by visiting the Teheran Memorial Plaque honoring the Iranian backed Terrorists who successfully carried out the attack on the U.S. Marines.

The cover shown here, postmarked in USS GUAM (LPH 9) brought the Marines to Beirut during the second peace keeping mission to Lebanon.



USS GUAM (LPH 9) carrying Marines to Lebanon
Locy Type 2-1(n+)(USN,US)

This was not the first time U.S. Navy ships brought Marines to Middle East trouble spots. In 1950 I was a radioman 2nd class assigned to the Flag Division of Transport Division 24 (TRANSDIV 24) aboard USS CAMBRIA (APA 36) which was engaged in Korean War exercises training elements of the 5TH Marine Regiment based at Camp Lejeune NC. Instead of sending TransDiv 24 and its Marines to Korea, orders were received to immediately get underway to the eastern Mediterranean Sea GAZA area, another trouble spot not far from Beirut, and still a trouble spot featured in today's daily news. At that time in my Navy career I was wearing two hash marks, and my second enlistment had been involuntary extended for another year. That year would end with TransDiv 24 arrival at GAZA. I never got there because the Commodore didn't want to stretch his budget by flying me back home for discharge. So he put me ashore at Naval Operating Base Norfolk, his port of departure for the Mediterranean, and shortly afterwards I was handed my USN Honorable Discharge papers.

But the war in Lebanon goes on yet, as it has for about five thousand years as its history is gleaned from the internet. Many of the nations that invaded it have themselves, as well as their names disappeared. But some, somewhat familiar names remain. Such as the Canaanites and Phoenicians who invaded Lebanon in 2500 BC. The Egyptians invaded it 1550 BC. And then the Hittites in 1600 BC, followed by the Babylonians in 605 BC; Persians in 538 BC, Greeks in 332 BC, Romans in 64 BC, Arabs in 636AD, Tripoli in 1099 AD, Ottoman Turks in 1516 AD, France in 1920 and Syria(in 1958.

Gaza, where USS CAMBRIA was headed has an equally long history of conflict. And in between Lebanon and Gaza is Israel where since its establishment in 1948 it has known no peace with its neighbors. It is so tiny that it does not appear on maps, or just can't be seen on them. My son David lives there, but when his mother wrote him a letter, the U.S. POSTAL SERVICE had difficulty locating it as evidenced by the cover shown here marked "MISSENT TO IRELAND."



Cover sent to author's son in Israel but missent to Ireland.

So let us pay tribute to the U.S. Marines who gave their lives in Lebanon 23 October 1983, and in their memory fly our flags at half mast.

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 S10-14 SS MAYAGUEZ (merchant ship) 1-29-76 ship seized by Cambodia, US attack to free ship MB \$25
 S10-15 PORPOISE (SS 172) 8-15-35 GOW NG recomm. Very hard to find MB \$40
 S10-16 CIMARRON (AO 22) 4-21-30 Mueller cachet w/oil rigs, MB \$3
 S10-17 PLATTE (AO 24) 6-2-44 sailor mail w/censor mark MB \$2
 S10-18 CLARK (DD 361) 10-6-43 #10 penalty with r/s cc MB \$2
 S10-19 GRAYSON (DD 435) 9-24-43 #10 penalty, typed cc MB \$2
 S10-20 WESSON (DE 184) 1-14-46 speeding DD r/s cachet MB \$2
 S10-21 SHANNON (DD 737) 6-24-44 launch cachet, PM Bath MB \$2
 S10-22 SHEA (DD 750) 5-28-44 launch PM Staten Is MB \$2
 S10-23 BOOTH (DE 170) 6-21-43 lau cachet, named in honor ..., PM Kearny MB \$2
 S10-24 BOOTH/CARROLL (DE 170/171) 6-21-43 double launch by Neumann, PM Kearny MB \$2
 S10-25 BUCKLEY (DE 51) 8-22-43 #10 penalty, no ships name but DE 51, printed cc MB \$2
 S10-26 REYNOLDS/GILLIGAN (DE 440/508) 2-22-44 twin launch by Federal Shipblg, PM Kearny MB \$2
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 S10-30 SELFRIDGE (DD 320) 10-27-37 registered, Navy Day Wilmington DE by Buchwald MB \$2
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 S10-32 SIGSBEE (DD 502) 12-7-42 different launch cachet, PM Kearny MB \$2
 S10-33 SIGSBEE (DD 502) 12-7-42 a different launch cachet, PM Kearny MB \$2
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 S10-38 HUDSON/CHARRETTE (DD 475/458) 6-3-42 twin launch by Bakula, PM Boston MB \$2
 S10-39 HENLEY (DD 391) 4-21-43 V mail from sailor, sunk MB \$2
 S10-40 HAYNSWORTH (DD 700) 4-15-44 lau cachet, named for... PM Kearny MB \$2
 S10-41 HAYNSWORTH (DD 700) 4-15-44 lau cachet, drawing of ship, PM Kearny MB \$2
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 S10-50 Rec'g Ship Brooklyn 10-27-33 Navy Day by Farragut Ch MB \$2
 S10-51 DSV STAR 2 & STAR 3 5-3-66 lau cachet by DPS 31, PM New London MB \$2
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 S10-68 SHUBRICK (DD 2568) 11-19-40 Received marks as cachet, LDPS, PM Boston, F50 MB \$2
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 S10-213 SS NIEUW AMSTERDAM (liner) 5-9-38 Maiden voyage printed photo, PM Rotterdam MB \$7
 S10-214 GENESSEE (AT 55) 5-24-36 USS PANAY cachet by JP Jones Ch, kb Olongapo, sunk MB \$8
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 S10-216 J W "Buck" Ireland 7-19-97 Ace from VMF 211 autograph on FDC of aircraft stamps MB \$15
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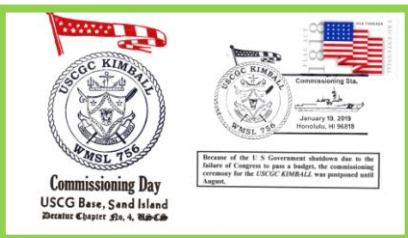
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 September 2019
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 12574 Jeff Hall, 530 Luther Dr Apt 3, Byron IL 61010-1401
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Change of Address

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