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U. S. NAVY SHIP CANCELLATIONS.

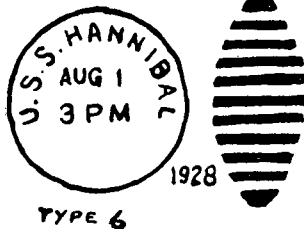
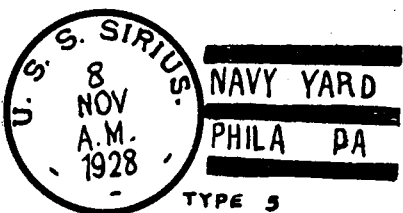
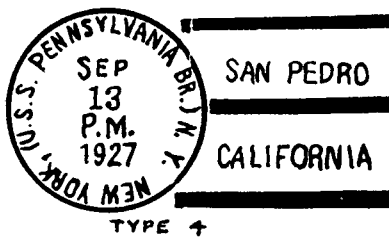
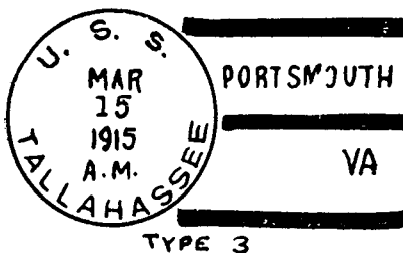
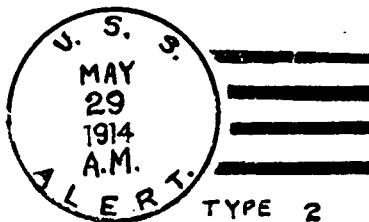
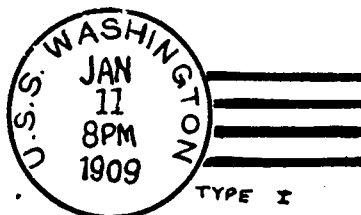
By DR. F. E. LOCY.

For the past three or four years there has been a rapidly growing interest in covers of all kinds. A share of this interest is now turning toward the collection of covers sent through the postoffices on board the ships of our Navy. This is an interesting side line to the collection of the stamps of the United States. It is on these covers that frequently we may find U. S. stamps used abroad. Cancellations which show the location of our ships in the ports of China, Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua and Europe are quite common.

In the early days mail was sent and received through the post offices of the various seaports. When abroad, the mail was despatched either through the local U. S. Consul or the local foreign post office. In the early '40s the librarian of the U. S. Naval Lyceum in the Brooklyn Navy Yard despatched mail sent in his care to the officers of the Fleet.

By the Act of May 27, 1908 congress authorized the establishment of a postal service aboard the various ships of the Navy. Soon after Navy Mail Clerks and Assistant Navy Mail Clerks were appointed from among the enlisted men by the Secretary of the Navy. They received, as they still do today, extra compensation for this work. Vessels with a complement of over 650 men were entitled to a Navy Mail Clerk and an assistant. Vessels or flotillas having complements of 125 to 650 had one Navy Mail Clerk. In the fall of 1908 all vessels having complements of over 35 were allowed a mail clerk. During the past twenty years nearly 700 ships have had post offices aboard. The current volume of the U. S. Postal Guide, which may be found in any post office, gives the current list of ship's post offices.

The earliest type of postmark found on letters from Navy ships is similar to Type 1, shown in the illustration. The cancellation stamp was of rubber and had removable type to show the date and hour. As with all rubber stamps after long and hard usage, the outlines would often become distorted and portions broken off or worn down. A common variation from the type illustrated is with the name of the ship in letters with serifs. Types 1 ay and 9 v were also used in the early days of the Navy Postal Service.



A few years later, probably in 1911, Type 2 appeared. This and Type 1 are often found with the bars removed. Type 3 appeared about fifteen years ago and remains today the commonest type of cancellation on letter mail. The cancellation stamp Type 3 has grooves between the killer bars where rubber type may be placed to indicate the location of the ship or occasionally to express some sentiment such as "JOIN THE NAVY". Very frequently the letters between the bars are left out. This leads to distortion of the bars, and they become curved, twisted out of parallel and frequently are broken and one or more of them found missing. While the ship's name is usually found with block letters, letters with small serifs are not infrequent, occurring about one in four of this type.

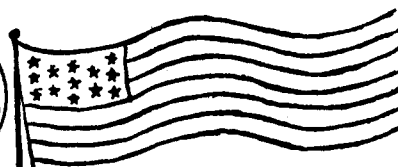
Type 4 appeared a few years ago but was never put into general use. It is of course similar to Type 3 except that the name of the ship is in parentheses and is shown as branch of the post office at New York, N. Y. This cancellation stamp caused confusion in that letters were frequently addressed to the ship care of the postmaster at New York even though the ship might be in the Pacific Ocean and letters would go much more directly when sent via one of the post offices on the West Coast. On the U. S. S. Pennsylvania, which bases usually at San Pedro, California, the words "BR. NEW YORK, N. Y." and the parentheses were removed from the cancellation stamp. Type 5 is also a rubber stamp and appeared first in the fall of 1928. Recent requisitions for new stamps are being filled with this type. Type 6 is a steel hand stamp similar to those used for many years in civilian post offices ashore. There are three major variations of this canceler. It has been in use on the larger ships for the past four years. Types 7, 7t and 8 are machine cancellations and are in use only in the larger ship post offices. Type 9 or 9u is found on practically all ships and is commonly seen on all classes of mail matter. The larger offices also use Types 9v, 9w and 9x.

Occasionally while some ship has been in a foreign port a cancellation stamp has

probably in 1911, and Type 1 are removed. Type bars ago and rest type of cancellation as between the type may be tion of the ship some sentiment "Y". Very fren the bars are distortion of the ed, twisted out are broken and missing. While und with block serifs are not one in four of



Type 7



Type 8



Type 9

been lost or broken. To fill an urgent and immediate need one has been made on shore in some cases. In this way we may get such startling markings as were used by the U. S. S. MacLeish between 1925 and 1927 and on the U. S. S. Raleigh last summer. These cancellations are not included in the classification as they are probably unique and not officially issued. While the official ink for cancellations on 1st class mail is black, either from necessity or vagary the mail clerks frequently use red, blue and purple and occasionally violet and green. During the World War, in an effort at secrecy, many of the ships names did not appear in their cancellation stamp. It is probable that many ships temporarily taken over by the Navy during the war, although having had a post office aboard, never had a cancellation stamp showing the name of the ship. The words "U. S. NAVY" were substituted for the ship's name in cancellation types 1, 2, 3, and 9.

The sources of supply for the current cancellations is by purchase from some one of the many dealers handling these items or by sending self-addressed envelopes with two cents postage on each letter, to the mail clerks of the various ships, requesting that the letters be cancelled and returned through the mails. Older types of cancellation and those from ships now out of commission may be gotten by purchase, trade or from one's friends who have been in the Navy in times past.

It is difficult to estimate the relative frequency of occurrence of the various cancellations and very little has been published on this subject. 44 different covers that have come to my attention, dated 1908 to 1918 fall into the following classes.

Type 1	9	Type 2	5	Type 3djs	1
Type 1a	2	Type 2a	2	Type 3s	1
Type 1ay	1	Type 3	16	Type 9v	1
Type 1s	3	Type 3b	1		

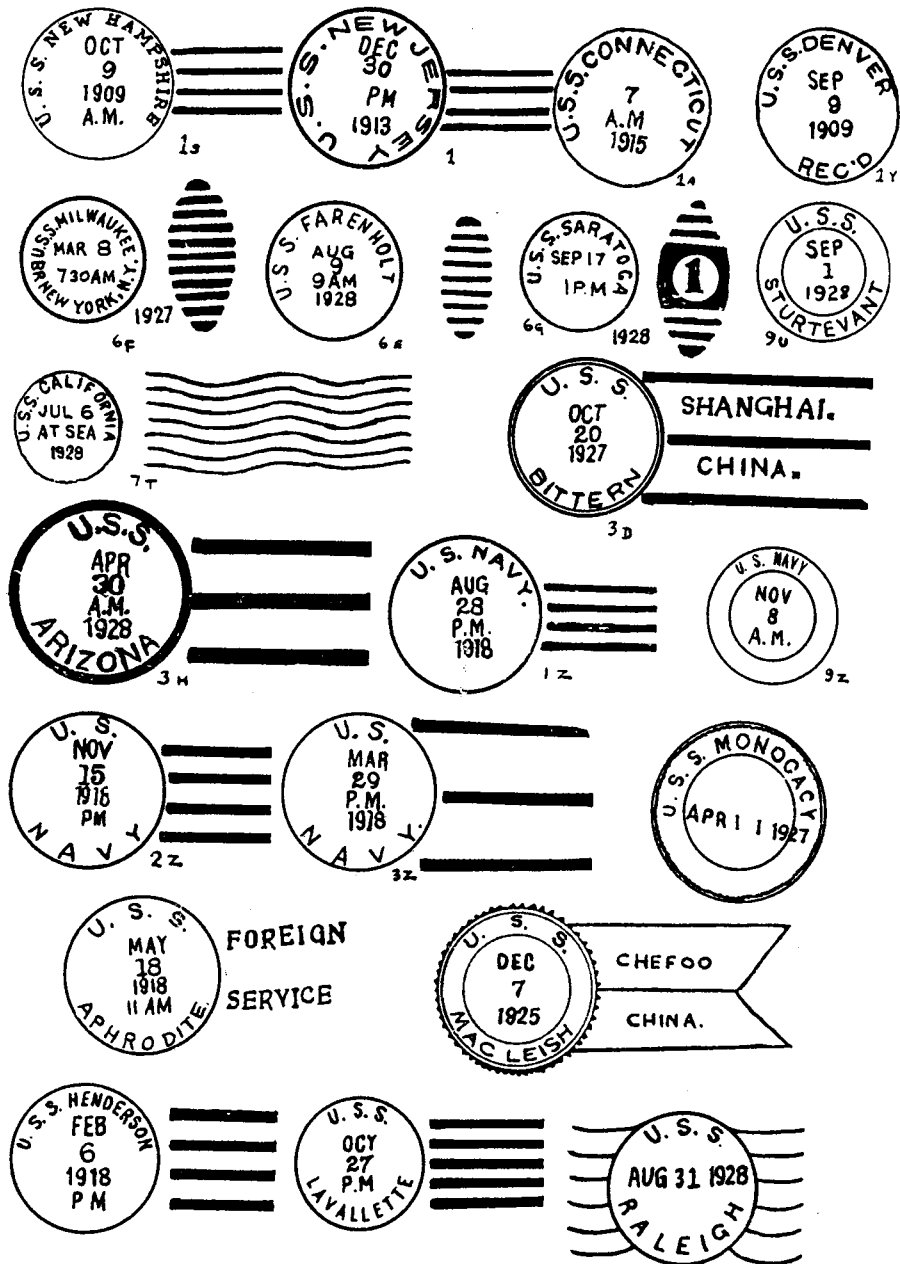
Of the war time varieties showing the words "U. S. NAVY" instead of the name of the ship, I have 33 varieties in my collection which fall into the following classes:

Type 1z	23	Type 2z	4	Type 3z	5	Type 9z	1
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In the writers collection, 311 covers dated 1919 or after show the following varieties:

Type 2	2	Type 3s	79	Type 7t	3
Type 2a	1	Type 4	3	Type 8	5
Type 3	117	Type 4c	1	Type 9	20
Type 3a	1	Type 5	7	Type 9u	4
Type 3b	4	Type 6	28	Type 9v	7
Type 3bs	1	Type 6e	1	Type 9w	1
Type 3d	2	Type 6f	1	Type 9x	1
Type 3hl	1	Type 6g	1	Type F (fancy or	
Type 3m	2	Type 7	4	unique)	1

years ago but use. It is of except that the parentheses and is t office at New on stamp caus- were frequent- of the post- ough the ship an and letters tly when sent on the West ylvania, which ro, California, K. N. Y." and ved from the is also a rub- in the fall of or new stamps pe. Type 6 is to those used 1 post offices or variations en in use on st four years. hine cancella- in the larger ou is found on ommonly seen . The larger and 9x. ship has been on stamp has



Variations of Standard Types.

See Key on Following Page.

Occa
the ship
ceiving s
cruising
delphia
Destroye
is confin
this artic
Evans, M

Annual
Annual
Evans. D
Evans. D
Hammers
Hornbee
Instruc
Ships De

A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
J
L
M
S
T
U
V
W
X
Y
Z



Occasionally stamps are cancelled on packages or letters with the name of the ship in a single line, either alone or in a box. These are not illustrated. Receiving ship cancellations are not considered in this article because they are not cruising ships—in fact many are not ships at all. The Receiving Ship at Philadelphia is a handsome three story brick building. Fleet, Squadron, Flotilla, Train, Destroyer and Submarine Division post offices are not considered as this article is confined to post offices of individual ships. Assistance in the preparation of this article is gratefully acknowledged by me to Mr. W. M. Lester, Dr. William Evans, Mr. C. S. Williams, Jr., Mr. Harry Konwiser and Mr. Albert E. Gorham.

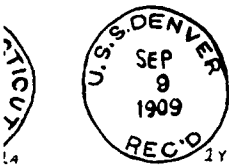
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KEY LETTERS TO VARIATIONS.

(See preceding page for illustrations.)

- A bars on killer removed.
- B one or more bars removed.
- C Type 4 with (BR. N. Y. NEW YORK.) removed.
- D double line circle.
- E Type 6 with year date inside and smaller grid.
- F Type 6 with "B. NEW YORK, N. Y." added inside circle.
- G Type 6 with numeral in grid.
- H whole design heavier.
- J whole design lighter.
- L whole design larger.
- M whole design smaller.
- S name in letters with serifs.
- T same as Type except "U. S. S." and ship's name all at top of circle.
- U same as type except "U. S. S." at top and ship's name at bottom.
- V word "REGISTERED" added in circle.
- W same with "M. O. B." added.
- X same with "PARCEL POST" added.
- Y same with "RECD" added.
- Z "U. S. NAVY" in place of ship's name in circle.



SHANGHAI.

CHINA.

