

Paquebot and Seapost Cancellations

By R. C. Bach

BATTLESHIP CANCELLATIONS

By WILLIAM HORNBECK, in "Philatelic Opinion."

(EDITOR'S NOTE:—Mr. Hornbeck is one of the founder members of the Philatelic Club of Los Angeles and we are glad to have the opportunity of illustrating one of the pages from his most interesting and artistically arranged collection, through the courtesy of Mr. B. W. Poole.)

In the past few years the collecting of United States stamps has become more and more popular, and as time goes on each U. S. collector usually branches off the regular issues and starts to specialize in some sideline pertaining to the stamps of our country. Some go after shades, some blocks of four, some air mails, and others plate numbers, and so on.

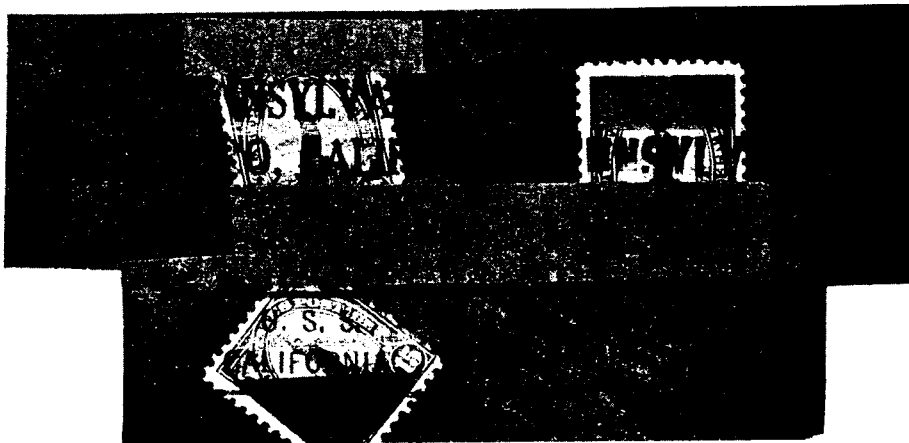
It was quite a problem to me to find something to specialize in—something that would be different and still be interesting. Then one day I received a letter from a friend who was with the Navy. His envelope caught my eye at once with a most unusual magenta cancellation. It had the ordinary 2 cent stamp, but was nicely cancelled with the U. S. S. NOA hand-stamp and the port of SHANGHAI, CHINA, between two bars.

This little missive was the originator of my plan to start a collection of battleship postmarks, and at that time I thought it an original idea, but have since found out that there are many collectors going after these.

I find that these marks are very interesting to hunt for, although the larger ships are fairly common, as much mail is sent daily from them. At present there are 69 branch post-offices listed as being aboard U. S. naval vessels. However, the most fun comes in finding a mark from a ship that is out of commission, and is no longer in use. My collection now numbers 188 postmarks, and I have mounted them quite successfully in the Poole loose leaf albums. Whenever possible I place the data pertaining to the ship's life together with the ship's picture along side of the postmark.

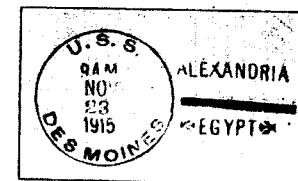
The first special cancellations from naval vessels date from 1908, in which year the Secretary of the Navy was authorized to appoint 64 clerks and 29 assistants for service aboard vessels.

The number of vessels having their own post-offices has varied from time to time, and as interest in these special cancellations is of quite recent



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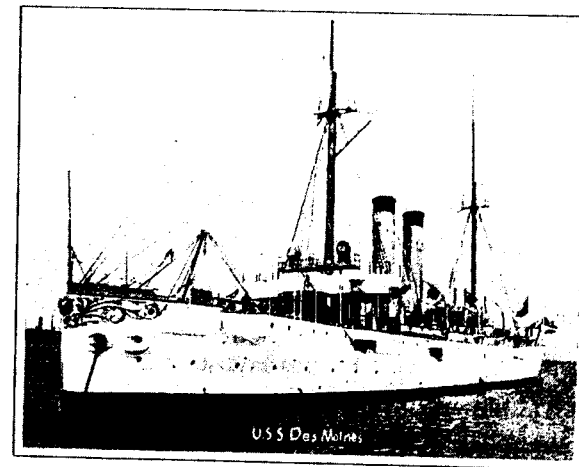
a Page from the
William Hornbeck Collection



U. S. S. Des Moines.

The light cruiser DES MOINES was first commissioned March 5, 1904, and had quite an uneventful career. During the World War it was used on escort duty with the transports. In 1919 she was the flagship of the naval forces in Northern Russia and was in Archangel most of the time.

This vessel was decommissioned April 9, 1921 and has remained in that status up to date.



Illustrating an interesting use of the Poole Improved Blank Album.

date it is extremely hard to find cancellations from some of the older vessels which have been out of commission for some years.

Very few cancellations dated prior to 1914 are known, but as interest in this side line grows, there is a possibility of finds being made.

The hunt for battleship cancellations is interesting—many of the big battle wagons use several kinds of cancellations. Here are three from the U. S. S. Pennsylvania, kindly supplied by Al Gorham, Washington, which show some of the styles used. These are in black. The circular registered cancellations used on the various U. S. Warships can be found in a number of colors—black, red, purple, etc.