

A Practical Guide to Exhibiting Naval Covers

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So you've decided to put together an exhibit. Great! You will find the process creative, educational, instructive and perhaps at times frustrating. When you are all done, however, you will have a better understanding of your topic and great pride in your accomplishment. On to the next challenge.

Background

There are basically two levels of exhibiting - national and local. Guidelines for national exhibits are controlled by the American Philatelic Society (APS) which has rules for the show organizing committee and for judging the various classes of exhibits. While the APS rules are not directly applicable to local stamp shows, they do filter down since many local exhibitors and judges exhibit nationally. Thus, if you exhibit at a small local show, your exhibit will be evaluated much as it would at a national show although probably more liberally.

Exhibit frames are pretty well standardized at national shows to hold 16 regular sized pages (8 1/2" x 11" or 9" x 12") in four rows of four. It is noted that some shows still have odd sized frames which only hold 15 pages. And local shows may have 12 or 14 page frames. Be sure to check the show exhibit prospectus to find the exact size of its frames. Nevertheless, do plan your exhibit for 16 page frames since all shows are gradually moving in that direction.

There are two basic categories of exhibit - single frame and multi frame. The guidelines for each are similar but a multi frame exhibit obviously requires more material and considerably more research and effort to produce. Generally the discussion following applies to both categories; where there are differences, they will be noted.

Single frame exhibits are a good way to try your hand at exhibiting. For most USCS members who have been collecting for several years, it is fairly easy to assemble 16 pages of material and do the research and writeup. The learning experience is a good grounding if you want to move into multi frame exhibits. Exhibitors have discovered that single frame exhibits are ideal for topics of limited scope, so single frame exhibiting now has significant competition from experienced exhibitors. Don't let that deter you though. Judges will be glad to give a novice the benefit of the doubt and help him/her learn from the experience.

Definitions

For exhibit purposes, two major definitions apply to naval covers:

1. Philatelic - collector mail - covers sent to a ship for a particular postmark, cachet, event marking and the like. In the past, many judges looked down on collector mail, but new classes of exhibits authorized by the APS now put collector mail on an equal footing with non-philatelic mail.
2. Non philatelic or commercial - both terms refer to "real" mail, i.e., mail sent by a sailor to his family, friends, business or government entity or official ship's mail, so marked. Most war time covers are real mail as is mail addressed to the Navy Saving Bank or naval tailor, Julius Horowitz and other commercial organizations.

Classes of exhibits

In the recent past, the American Philatelic Society (APS) has added several new types of exhibits which can be displayed, a welcome expansion for exhibitors. The classifications suited for naval cover exhibits include: Postal History, Display, Illustrated Mail and picture post cards. We now have means to create an exhibit with collateral material and cacheted covers without being criticized by juries as had been the case in the past. These classifications are most appropriate to multi-frame exhibits but are also used with single frame exhibits.

Postal History

This is a more or less traditional type of exhibit of naval covers with covers mounted on all or most of the pages. An exhibit of postmarks or other markings, such as censor marks, corner card identification for ships without post offices, ship history, naval exercises, battles and operations would be entered in this class. Non philatelic covers will do better than philatelic covers in this class. A limited amount of collateral material can be included without penalty.

Display

This classification was adopted to encourage creativity and experimentation. A significant amount of collateral material - photos, cards, patches, memorabilia and the like - can be included along with covers to develop a story. There is no percentage limit of collateral material, but it should not overwhelm the covers. The real requirement is that collateral material, no matter what type, advance the story of the exhibit. Don't add collateral material just because it looks nice.

Illustrated Mail

This relatively new class adopted by the APS is one which is well suited for naval cover exhibits with cacheted covers. An exhibit of covers by a particular cachet maker would be an appropriate exhibit in this class as would an exhibit of holiday mail or a naval exercise or operation such as an Alaskan survey or a Presidential review. Certainly cachets are a popular area for naval cover collectors and this class allows plenty of opportunity to show those covers.

Postcards

The newest classification of exhibit adopted by the APS is for postcards. The class was first allowed at the APS winter show in February 2004 and has since been accepted in all APS level shows. This is an excellent class for USCS exhibitors who have naval related post card collections.

Special Study

This term was often used in the past for an exhibit which did not readily fall into one of the traditional classes. Currently, the display class can generally be used for an exhibit which crosses class lines, but the option is always available to call an exhibit a special study if it does not readily fit into a particular class. The jury will, however, place the exhibit in the class which it deems best.

Getting Started

One of the first hurdles you must negotiate is deciding on a topic. There are all sorts of choices - a favorite ship or ships, ship type, class of ship, cachet maker, or type of cancel; a Navy operation of interest or significance (Desert Shield/Storm), an historical event, a holiday or holidays, a personal association with the Navy (yours or a relatives), lighter-than-air or heavier-than-air development, Marine corps, Coast Guard, merchant ships, the range of topics is huge and without limit. If you've

been accumulating covers for five or more years, you undoubtedly will have enough material for a beginning exhibit.

You may not have everything you need for the perfect exhibit. But don't let that deter you. You'll be surprised at how much help you'll receive from members, especially dealers, when they know that you are interested in a particular subject.

If you are a beginner or are fairly new to exhibiting, plan an exhibit of limited size, either a one frame or perhaps up to four frames of material. Four frames—64 pages—is respectable and not too challenging for an exhibitor of limited experience.

To start an exhibit, pull all the covers which might be considered for your topic from their binders or storage box. Assemble the covers and collateral material in the rough order that they will be displayed to make sure you have enough for the number of pages you have chosen. Remember that quality sells - if you have duplicates select just the best ones. Put aside worn, torn or damaged covers unless, of course, they are so rare that they are the only ones practically available.

I have found it helpful to make a photocopy of the covers, one per page, in a special collection which is to form an exhibit. You can make notes on the sheet and sort or arrange the pages without doing any damage to your covers. You can put two or more covers on a page by stapling the sheets together or cutting a pasting on the master sheet. I'll cover the exhibit organization in an section of its own.

It is important to realize that preparing an exhibit is an iterative or trial and error process. Your final product will be different from your first draft, but that's part of the learning process. As you develop and sharpen the exhibit, you will gain a great deal of knowledge about your topic and, with each discovery, a sense of enjoyment.

So, decide on a topic, draft your title and photo copy your covers as a start.

Getting Organized

A common failing of exhibitors is lack of organization of their exhibit. Rather than just a display of album pages showing various covers in your collection, your exhibit should tell a story. Exactly how you tell that story is key to success and an appropriate award level.

Your exhibit should have a beginning, a logical development of your theme in the middle, and an ending. For example, if I were showing covers from a particular ship, I'd start with keel laying or launch covers, as available, then show covers over the life of the ship, and decommissioning or loss as an ending. Quite likely, covers in the middle of the exhibit would be arranged chronologically according to events—shakedown cruise, port visits, crossing the equator, changes of command, battles--in which the ship participated. Taken as a group, the covers would tell the story of the life of the ship.

I can't emphasize enough that you must give serious thought as to how you will present your material to judges and viewers in your exhibit. I attend the exhibit critique at a stamp show whenever I can simply to hear what the judges have to say. Invariably, one or more judges will tell an exhibitor that he/she could not figure out exactly how the exhibit was organized.

For a naval cover exhibit, a logical way to organize the material might be chronologically by date. That works very well if your exhibit follows the life or history of the subject. Another way might be by hull number. That would work well if you are showing ships of a certain type or class, say CVEs or FLETCHER Class destroyers. You might organize by ship name and arrange your covers

alphabetically by ships name. For example, I've thought of doing an exhibit titled "Fancy U.S. Navy Cancels Navy from A to Z" which could be any length from two to ten frames. Alphabetically might also be the best arrangement for an exhibit of ships involved in a certain battle or ships with the type one cancel.

You might even have a choice. If one were lucky enough to be able to do an exhibit of 1908 Navy ship cancels, the pages could be arranged alphabetically by ship name or chronologically by date with duplicate dates arranged alphabetically. I think I'd do the exhibit chronologically since showing the earliest, then the mid range, and latest dates tells the story in the most significant manner.

An exhibit of cruiser development would make a fascinating exhibit. Start with armored (also called protected) cruisers, work through scout, auxiliary, light, heavy, battle, anti-aircraft cruisers into modern nuclear powered and Aegis types.

An exhibit of Locy type cancels would logically start with the type 1, its variants, then type 2 and variants up to the most recent types illustrated in the Postmark Catalog. A possible bonus would be to show the very latest types appearing in the fleet which not yet have had a classification assigned.

An exhibit of a cachet maker's designs might start with his earliest and proceed to his final design. If the cachet maker employed different techniques - rubber stamp, printed, thermograph, carved blocks, hand done - his output could then be divided into chapters with the final chapter devoted to the last process used.

An organization of holiday cachets could show cacheted holiday covers from New Year's Day through Christmas. Alternately, one holiday such as Navy Day could be selected with the exhibit arranged chronologically by date or by alphabetically by cachet maker in a single year.

There are many ways to organize an exhibit. The point to keep in mind is that your exhibit should be constructed in a logical fashion to tell your story. It is also important that you tell the viewer up front on the title page how the exhibit is organized. (More later on that).

Prepare an Exhibit Plan

Whether you are doing a single frame or multi-frame exhibit, you should absolutely prepare a written plan. For a one frame exhibit, I start with a lined page, number each line and then write exactly which cover(s) will be mounted on that page. I arrange my photo copied pages accordingly, insert them (or the covers) in a page protector in the exact order in which they will appear in the exhibit. For a one frame exhibit, your plan should be incorporated in the writeup on title page.

For a multi-frame exhibit, I prepare the plan using a computer word processor (or spread sheet) on which it is easier to make changes as I assemble the exhibit. I find it helpful to break the exhibit into sections or chapters like those of a book, complete with section/chapter title. I note where the next frame will start since in some exhibits it makes sense to begin a brand new section/chapter on page one of the next frame. As I go along, I put the covers or photo copies in a page protector in page order in a three ring binder and separate the frames with tabbed card stock. This method insures that your presentation will have the correct number of pages per frame from start to finish with nothing overlooked or missing. In a multi-frame exhibit, your exhibit plan should appear on page two.

Research and Writeup

It would be nice if all we had to do is mount our covers on sheets of paper and be done with the exhibit. But that's not the way it works. You need a writeup to go along with your pages. But what do

you say? That's key to a successful exhibit.

Presumably you have a reason to pick every cover, photo, or collateral item or post card that you plan to include in your exhibit. That's the starting point. Your exhibit should tell a story and the items in the exhibit should support the story line. Basically, your research and writeup should inform the viewers either specifically or inferentially why each particular item is included in the exhibit.

Naval covers have a philatelic history as well as an association with the ship's history. The philatelic history might include the cancel type, the franking if unusual, or information on how the cover got from the sender to recipient, if that is pertinent. The ship association is what the ship was doing when the cover was posted. You can discuss either or both aspects of the cover. One way which works for me is to discuss the philatelic aspect in one area on the page and the ship historical aspect on another. That way, the viewer can read whichever appeals to him/her.

You have many sources for basic research--the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, the *USCS Catalog of U.S. Naval Postmarks*, the *USCS Naval Cover Cachet Makers' Catalog*, are just the beginning. Don't neglect ship histories, welcome aboard pamphlets, ship's Log books, history/non-fiction books, and personal correspondence/discussions as other viable sources. Dig into these and extract the most pertinent information available for your cover writeup.

Conventional wisdom is that your write up should be brief, not more than four or five lines of text. As noted above, by splitting the information presented for a cover, you can actually increase how much you have on a page without seemingly having too much.

In describing the cover, you need not spell out the obvious. You needn't say that the cover has a Fourth of July cachet, for example. That's obvious. But do mention the cachet sponsor or artist. Ditto with the postmark. If nice and clear, you don't need to spell that out, but do indicate the (Locy or other) type cancel as appropriate. By all means, demonstrate your philatelic knowledge; that's the real purpose of an exhibit.

If a cover is scarce or rare, mention that. But don't say "Rarity R-1" or "R-4" using the code of the Postmark Catalog. Those are meaningless terms to the judge or average viewer. Spell out the scarcity in words, for example, "one of five recorded examples" or "less than 50 known."

There are some don'ts to consider. Remember this is a philatelic exhibit, not a history book or a welcome aboard pamphlet. While, as collectors of ship covers, the statistics that describe a ship or a class of ships may be important to us, that sort of information is superfluous to a stamp or cover exhibit. Who really cares that the ship had 16" naval rifles or a top speed of 32 knots? Certainly not the jury. The size of the crew may be important, especially if the ship is small, say an early submarine or destroyer, to provide some indication as to why a cover is scarce, so crew size might be pertinent to your write up. But spare the viewer a recitation of non-essential information - just tell us in so many words, why that particular cover is on that particular page of this philatelic exhibit.

In years past, if you were exhibiting naval covers in a postal type of exhibit, it was expected that you would indicate the Locy type classification of the cancel. Some exhibitors continue to do that regardless of the exhibit topic or exhibit class. The Locy type surely would be pertinent in a postal history exhibit, but not necessarily in a display class and surely not in an illustrated mail exhibit. If your exhibit features cachets and cachets only, the Locy classification of the cancel is superfluous, so why bother to include that information? The point here is to provide information in your write up which directly supports your exhibit; any other information is not just unnecessary but distracting.

In sum, the more carefully you research and describe a cover in your exhibit, the better your exhibit will be received by both the jury and viewers. Remember you are not writing a book, but discussing just the salient points of your exhibit.

Paper/Layout/Mounts

What type of paper should you use to mount your material? Some exhibitors use quadrille pages with a light lines, some use plain white paper and some use a paper with a light pastel color and a matte finish. Paper with a border is not necessary and, in fact, limits the layout unnecessarily. The paper, as long as it does not blind the viewer, is not critical. Use whatever type and shade sets off your covers. Use a 24/ 60 pound weight which, when in an acrylic page protector, stands up well in the frames. Do use acid free paper which is readily available now in many stores and print shops. Do not use dark, especially black, or brightly hued pages which really detract from the covers on display. Fluorescent paper may be fine for flyers, but they are definitely not recommended for a cover or stamp exhibit. Do not use pages with a heading already printed - plan to use your own page headings.

Use only clear 1 ¼" corner mounts to attach your covers to the exhibit page available from Subway Stamp Shop of Altoona, PA (www.subwaystamp.com) . These come in both gummed and self stick. I strongly suggest the gummed mounts. The self stick are difficult to work with and, if you drop one with the sticky side down on a cover, you may damage the paper in removing the mount. Do not use the smaller clear mounts basically made for mounting photographs. These do not hold the covers well so you will need to use them on all four corners, extra work. And the only ones I've seen are self stick, bad news around covers.

You may mount one, two or even three covers per page, depending on what you wish to show, but generally, do not crowd the page with more material than absolutely necessary.

In mounting your covers on the page, try to avoid the railroad track look, i.e., two covers per page mounted one over the other identically page after page. Do vary the appearance by mounting one left of center, the other right of center and alternate on succeeding pages. A significant cover, one which is key in your exhibit, should be mounted by itself in the middle of the page. That way, it stands out to the judges and viewers as something needing special attention. Alternately, you can mat or outline the key covers in ink to make them stand out from the rest. Legal size covers - #9, #10 or larger - don't fit horizontally on the usual 8 ½" x 11" page. You can mount them vertically or diagonally. Judges are split on that subject. I think a diagonal mounting is best since it provides room for writeup in both the upper left and lower right portion of the page. However, do what works best for you - neither will gain or lose points as long as the mounting is neat.

However, if your exhibit consists solely of #10 size covers, consider using oversized pages, 10" x 11" and mount your covers horizontally on each page. Of course, that means you need to find a printer to handle the oversized sheets or type the information separately on paper, then cut and paste on the oversize page. For oversize pages, plan to buy or make proper sized page protectors.

You can add a little pizzaz to your single frame exhibit by mounting your covers on an acid free paper mat and then attaching the mat to the page with a touch of glue stick. Choose a mat color which is neutral, not flashy, which offsets your covers. For example, if your covers are all brown manila, a mat of cream would be a good match. If your covers are stark white, a light grey or brown or pale blue or green would offset well. Cut the mat so that it provides a thin border of about 1/8" all around the cover. It's not necessary to mat your covers, but it does add to the overall appearance of the exhibit. I've occasionally just outlined covers in ink which provides a bit of relief for the eye. You may have to

reduce your writeup or adjust your margins if you mat your covers since the matting does take a bit of extra space on the page.

Page headings

In years past, many exhibitors included the title of the exhibit at the top of each page an arrangement which is no longer favored by experienced exhibitors. Instead, use the page heading to describe the content of the page and, thus, decrease the need for some verbiage. If your exhibit has chapters with sub headings as might be the case in a multi-frame exhibit, position the chapter heading on one portion of the page and the sub head on the line below or on the opposite side of the page. Bold both so the viewer can easily follow the story as it unfolds.

Page protectors

All stamp shows now require exhibit pages to be mounted in a page protector for safety of the material. These may be found in stores which sell archival material or by mail order from companies such as Light Impressions (www.LightImpressionsDirect.com). Two types are normally found: a top loader with a tab on the left side for storing in a three ring binder and a top loader sleeve without the side tab. Sizes are available to fit either 8½"x11" or 9"x11" pages. To provide needed stiffness for the finished product, obtain proper size white card stock from your local printer. Pair your exhibit page with a sheet of card stock behind and insert both into the plastic page protector. Number the page on the back side of the card stock in pencil so that pages can be arranged properly in the exhibit frame by someone other than yourself. Page protectors for oversized pages may be special ordered.

Exhibit Title Page

The title page is the single most important page in your exhibit and should be constructed with care. After you prepare your exhibit plan, make a draft of your title page. After you have finished the exhibit layout and completed the writeup on each page, read over your title page and modify it as necessary to agree with what you actually have exhibited.

What should be on the title page of a one frame exhibit? Three things to be sure:

1. The exhibit title in large, readable text.
2. The exhibit purpose, clearly stated. One way to make sure of this is to start one paragraph with the word "Purpose"(bolded). Then continue: "This exhibit is a study of..." or "this exhibit illustrates with covers and postcards the...." or "The purpose of this exhibit is to show...". Some exhibitors bury the purpose somewhere in the discussion of the subject, but that is not wise. I believe it is much better to lay out your purpose in one succinct paragraph at the very beginning of the title page..
3. Background information on your subject in a paragraph or two. Generally this will be historical information directly related to your subject. This discussion, however, should be brief including just information necessary for the viewer to understand what you are showing and why. The mistake most often made by novice exhibitors is writing long, detailed paragraphs of background information, much of which is superfluous. Remember, this is a philatelic exhibit, not a book. Resist the temptation to demonstrate your considerable knowledge of the subject on the title page. Nothing deters a viewer more than a full page of 10 point text masquerading as a title page. Certainly one way to limit text is to use an interline spacing of 1.5 lines and double spacing between paragraphs.

If you are doing a single frame exhibit, include your exhibit plan on the title page. A simple statement such as "this exhibit is organized chronologically" is normally sufficient. If you are showing

a multi-frame exhibit, page two is normally used to outline the exhibit plan.

A caution in selecting the title of your exhibit. Avoid the temptation to use a cute or clever sounding title. For example, if your exhibit features submarine operations in the Arctic, don't use something like "Sailing among the Polar Bears" or "Ice Cubes Ahoy". Neither describes your exhibit properly; both open the way for judges to point out inconsistencies or items missing from the exhibit because of the title. Keep the title simple, descriptive and straight forward.

On the other hand, your title should be explicit. If your exhibit is of U.S. battleships in commission on April 1917 when the US entered World War I, your title should be "United States Battleships in World War I." If your title is just "Battleships" the jury will expect to see battleships of all nations irrespective of time frame.

Select an easily readable font and stick to that for your entire exhibit. Use underlining, bold or italics to provide emphasis where needed. Use at least a 10 point font or greater for ease of reading by the viewer. Avoid really fancy or ornate fonts - old English is fine for the banner of a newsletter, but not easy to read as exhibit text. Generally serif fonts are considered easier to read as text but since text is a minimum on exhibit pages, some exhibitors prefer a non-serif font.

An excellent technique is to include an important or representative cover, card or photo on the title page. This has the advantage of cutting title page verbiage to that which is absolutely necessary and starting your exhibit off with an important piece. This technique is invariably used for single frame exhibits by experienced exhibitors but is equally useful for multi-frame exhibits.

If you are doing a multi-frame exhibit, use as much of page two as needed to provide a plan of your exhibit. The plan is actually the same as the table of contents of a book - it tells the viewer what sort of items will be found in the exhibit and in which frame. If your exhibit is arranged in sections or chapters, that should be reflected in your plan. If space is left over, add a significant cover or card to the page.

Most shows now require the title page to be submitted with the exhibit prospectus or not later than a specified date if not with the prospectus. Title pages are assembled into a package and sent to each judge on the jury well in advance of the show so that the judge can do necessary research on the subject of your exhibit.

Examples of a single frame and a 10 frame exhibit title and plan pages are included as Appendix 1 and 2.

Synopsis page

The single most important page IN your exhibit is the title page, discussed in the foregoing. However, the most important page NOT IN your exhibit is the Synopsis Page. If that makes no sense, read on.

Over the recent decades, collections have become more specialized and so have exhibits. Juries could not be expected to know the finer points of arcane exhibits. I'm not sure who first came up with the idea of providing specialized information to jury members, but the practice is now widespread. The usual prospectus now invites exhibitors to submit a synopsis page along with a title page. Both documents are furnished to jury members well in advance of the show so that the judges may do the necessary research.

You are doing yourself a disservice if you fail to create and send a synopsis of your exhibit

along with the title page.

Remember, the purpose of the synopsis page is to educate and inform the judges, not the public, and there is no specified format. However, there are a number of areas which should be covered in the synopsis. What you should *not* do is simply regurgitate the information on your title page - the judges already have read that. The synopsis is your opportunity to provide more detailed or more significant information.

Currently, all APS and even local show juries have begun to use the APS Uniform Exhibit Evaluation Form (UEEF). Many exhibitors have found it useful to construct the synopsis using the format of the UEEF, which can be downloaded from www.stamps.org.

1. Treatment. Describe in greater detail what your exhibit is going to show and why. Explain the structure of the exhibit and why you have chosen that. Tell how your exhibit is organized so that the jury members don't have to scratch their heads in figuring that out at the frames. Don't repeat information which is already included in the Title Page and which the jury has. Provide *additional background information* on the subject which explains why this exhibit is significant or important.

2. Knowledge, Study & Research. Discuss your research emphasizing any original research that you may have done. For example, if your exhibit is on Pearl Harbor ships of 7 December 1941 and your covers are all dated in the early 1930s, you have not had much of a challenge in putting together the exhibit. But, if each and every cover in your exhibit has a 1941 date, you have risen to the challenge, so speak to that. And if you were able to find covers from ships with no post offices, speak to that. Realize that research is not simply looking up the information in the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*; research is going to the National Archives and searching for information in the ship's log books or corresponding with persons who might have served aboard or examining a significant quantity of covers and coming to a conclusion not published. Or your knowledge can come from personal experience or service aboard a particular ship. Don't be shy to let the jury know why you can provide solid or new information in your writeups.

3. Rarity & Condition. Here you have the opportunity to discuss scarcity of your material (if it is) or the difficulty in acquisition (if that is the case). You can also discuss condition of your material if that is relevant. For example, sponsors of the 1930s often used inexpensive envelope stock which, after seventy to eighty years may have glue stains showing through. Explain this to obviate a comment which you would otherwise surely get to "look for better quality covers."

4. Exhibit highlights. Here is your chance to brag so to speak. List or discuss your very best pieces, the rarest ones, the most difficult to obtain, basically, the items which those who know your specialty will see and say "wow." It is also well to highlight those items in your exhibit by matting, outlining or noting in some fashion (little red dots on the page are now passe). However, don't get carried away here; generally you should limit this treatment to one item per frame in a multi frame exhibit and one or two items in a single frame exhibit.

5. References. The synopsis is a better place to list your informational sources than tacking them on the title page. Here list only the most important references which will help the jury become educated in this specialty. Generally limit your references to one or two of the most pertinent; any more is a waste of space and time. If you are using either the Postmark of Cachet Makers Catalogs, be specific what pages or information you have extracted. Listing either as a general reference won't help the jury in the least to zero in on the areas covered in your exhibit.

The concept of a synopsis is often a challenge to exhibitors who are not very experienced. The best advice is to follow the lead of the UEEF. A sample synopsis of a recently constructed multi-frame post card exhibit is also attached for information as Appendix 3.

Single vs Multi-frame exhibits

The ideas outlined in the foregoing apply equally to both single and multi-frame exhibits. However, the concept of a single frame exhibit differs from a multi-frame exhibit as noted on page 1. Whether you are a novice or an experienced exhibitor, the critical feature of a single frame exhibit is its limited scope. What do I mean by that?

A single frame exhibit of the Locy system of cancels is not possible - the scope of the subject is simply too great for one frame. However, a single frame exhibit of the Locy type 1 cancel is fine since the subject is definitely of limited scope. An exhibit of USS PENNSYLVANIA BB-38 cancels can only be done in multi-frames since the Postmark Catalog lists over 50 cancels and variants. But the 14 cancels of USS PENGUIN AM-33 would make a fine single frame exhibit. Scope matters with single frame exhibits.

However, a subject of wider scope can be accommodated in a single frame if the title of the exhibit indicates that the exhibit is of "selected" examples of the subject. Of course, the jury will note that the subject is really larger than presented and suggest the exhibitor expand the exhibit, but for the novice who is just getting started, such an approach is perfectly fine.

Judging Philatelic Exhibits

In creating an exhibit, it helps to know how your exhibit will be judged. The APS has discontinued its printed manual of philatelic judging, replacing that with an on line version available at www.stamps.org. The value of this is that content can be upgraded as needed so that exhibitors do not constantly have to buy the latest edition. I suggest that you download the specific sections of the judging manual pertinent to your exhibit, read, and follow the guidance closely.

While each class has its own specific criteria, all exhibits have criteria in common:

1. Development of the story (how well/logically the story is presented)
2. Composition or focus on material appropriate to the class (appropriateness of material displayed)
3. Knowledge of subject (new research is especially valued)
4. Difficulty of acquisition/condition (should be appropriate to availability)
5. Presentation (should reflect neatness and care in assembly)

Presentation is awarded just five percent in all classes. However, a sloppily prepared exhibit, with typos and errors in the writeup signals to the jury that the exhibitor is not particularly rigorous in his/her effort. That carelessness will effect the seriousness with which a judge will consider an exhibit. Do your best to provide a neat exhibit with carefully mounted (and/or matted) covers and no typos or errors in the text.

Juries are now required to provide a written evaluation form for all competitive exhibits. The comments will reflect the thoughts of the entire jury, not just the preparer. In my experience the written comments are usually quite helpful.

Helping Yourself

The very best way you can help yourself is to visit a stamp show and carefully inspect the exhibits on display. Skip the stamp exhibits and concentrate on cover exhibits. Look at the various techniques of mounting, arrangement and write up. Pick out those which you find pleasing and plan to copy those. The medal level ribbons are normally mounted on the exhibit frames the second day of a three day show. Pay special attention to the Gold level exhibits. Material aside, try to figure out why those exhibit garnered a Gold and put those in your memory bank.

Whether you have an exhibit or not, go to the exhibit critique. Listen carefully to the judges critiques. Often a judge will say something like "this exhibit has an excellent title page" or "the arrangement of this exhibit was easy to follow." Star those exhibits on your program and then reinspect them noting the complimentary points. On the other hand, a judge might point out a particular flaw in an exhibit. Make note of that, look again at the exhibit so that you, too, can avoid that flaw in the future. It is not a crime to imitate the best and avoid the worst. Learn from the experience of others and you will progress more rapidly.

Most exhibitors starting out will receive a moderate award - Silver or less. However, if you listen carefully to the jury comments and take time to observe the best exhibits, you will gain the knowledge and skill to improve your exhibit and climb the award ladder. A word of caution regarding jury comments. Each jury has different members and not all juries think alike. Carefully evaluate the comments made about your exhibit - if a comment makes sense to you, then incorporate it. If the comment seems somewhat arbitrary or not well considered, simply ignore it. Don't slavishly accept everything you are told - pick and choose. But if two or three judges say the same thing, you would do well to take that suggestion to heart.

Patience and a bit of hard work will yield results - don't give up, keep trying and you will persevere.

I will be glad to further explain anything not clear and give you an informal critique of a photo copy of your exhibit or draft.

Appendix:

- 1 Sample one frame exhibit title page
- 2 Sample multi frame exhibit title page
- 3 Sample Multi-frame Synopsis

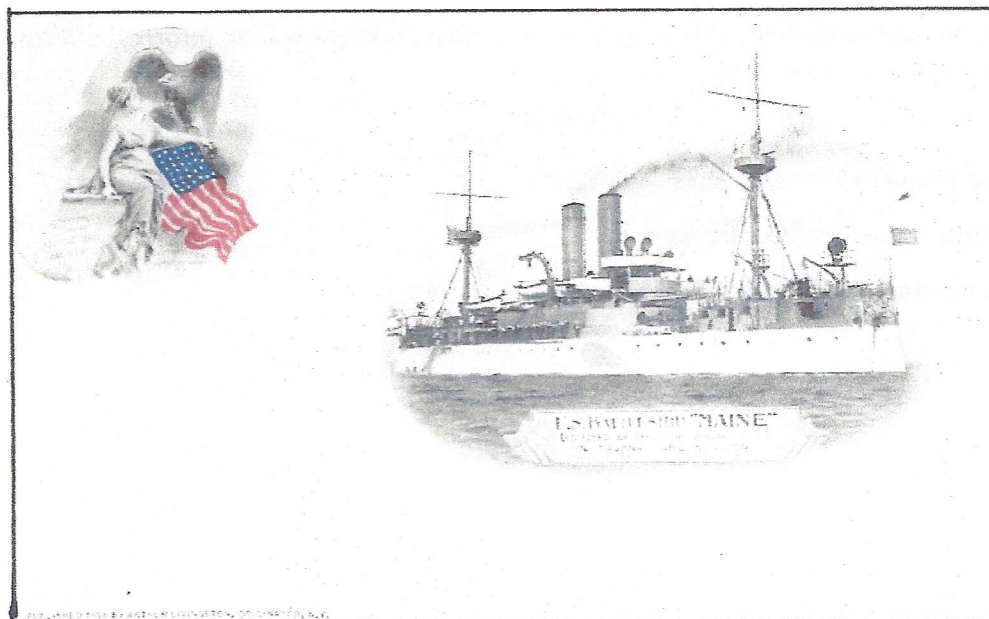
Remembering The MAINE

Purpose. This historical study traces the itinerary of USS MAINE during the final 18 months of her life, her destruction and the aftermath with covers and letters of one of her crew members, and with post cards, photographs and ephemera. The crew member's covers and letters in this exhibit are the only USS MAINE related covers known to experts in the Universal Ship Cancellation Society to be in collectors hands. The exhibit is arranged chronologically.

Background. Authorized as a steel hull armored cruiser, USS MAINE was commissioned as a Second-Class Battleship at the Brooklyn Navy Yard in 1895. John Matza, from East St. Louis, enlisted in the Navy at Brooklyn, New York, and was assigned to MAINE in August 1896 as a coal passer, a job literally and figuratively at the bottom of the ladder of the ship's engineering department.

On 15 February 1898, USS MAINE exploded in the harbor of Havana, Cuba killing coal passer John Matza and 259 of his shipmates. MAINE's loss, the cause of which has never been positively determined, started a chain of events which led to war with Spain (with the battle cry "Remember the MAINE"), the independence of Cuba, the acquisition of Puerto Rico, Guam, Wake and the Philippine Islands as protectorates of the United States and consequent elevation of the United States to world power status.

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Patriotic souvenir card with photo of USS MAINE, undivided back, published in 1898 by Arthur Livingston, New York, following destruction of the ship by explosion in Havana, Cuba.

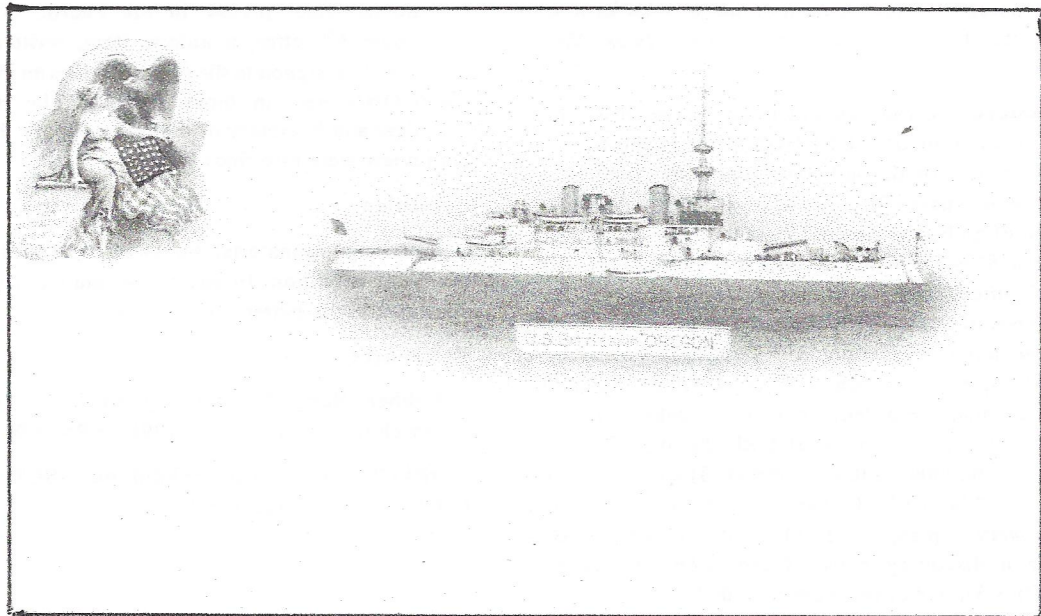
USS OREGON

"Bulldog of the Fleet"

Purpose. This display class exhibit provides a history of the life of this famous and historic naval ship with covers, post cards, real photo post cards, photographs and ephemera. Arranged chronologically, the exhibit follows the life of the ship from launch to final disposition. Items of exceptional note are matted in maroon.

Background. Arguably, the most famous ships of the United States Navy at the close of the 19th Century were MONITOR, MAINE, OLYMPIA, and OREGON. Each played a part in a defining moment of naval history, and all have been memorialized in some fashion.

In 1898, Battleship OREGON steamed under forced draft from San Francisco via Cape Horn to Florida, and, during the battle of Santiago, Cuba pursued and drove ashore the Spanish flagship earning the sobriquet "Bulldog of the Fleet." Thereafter, she provided big gun support to the Asiatic Fleet, served in various duties in the Pacific Fleet and spent her final 16 years as a floating monument and museum at Portland, Oregon. Despite her extensive service, covers from the ship are nonetheless elusive.



Mint "Private Mailing Card" ca 1898 of USS OREGON by Arthur Livingston, New York, one of a series of 21 similar cards.

Synopsis: USS OREGON, Bulldog of the Fleet

Treatment. USS OREGON (BB-3) was the third of the new era steel-hulled, coal-fired battleships which brought the United States into modern times with what was soon to become a first class navy. She played a key role in defeat of the Spanish Squadron in Cuban Waters in 1898, served two tours with the Asiatic Fleet and served with the Pacific Squadron during World War I. In retirement, she served as reviewing ship for a 1919 Presidential review of the Pacific Fleet before transfer to the State of Oregon as an historic museum ship. She might still be in that role, but for World War II.

The history of USS OREGON, as related in the foregoing, is the subject of this display division exhibit. The exhibit follows the ship with covers, postcards, and directly related collateral material throughout her life from launching to her demise in December 1942. This is as complete a story of USS OREGON as will be seen anywhere.

In 1999, this exhibit was shown nationally and successfully in one frame. Since then, however, I've been able to acquire a number of rare and excellent additional items to build it to the present four frame exhibit. In all likelihood, this exhibit will go no further due to extreme scarcity of OREGON philatelic material.

Knowledge and research. I have researched the history of USS OREGON in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. The ship's log books available there have enabled me to create a history of the ship's locations throughout her life span as well as other facts of interest. I have also gathered a large library of books and articles on the ship and contributed previously unreported information on her postmarks to the Editor of the USCS *Catalog of United States Naval Postmarks*.

Rarity factors. For reasons which have never been fully explained, mail from USS OREGON prior to the Spanish American war is virtually unknown (one letter is found in frame 1) and postmarks from the ship were, for a long time, the scarcest of all battleship mail known to cover experts in the Universal Ship Cancellation Society (USCS). The USCS *Catalog of United States Naval Postmarks*, records just three different types of OREGON postmarks as classified by the Locy system: a type 2 (nine copies + 1 cut square recorded), a type 3 (six copies + 1 cut square recorded), and a registered cancel (a cut square recorded, whereabouts unknown, and a proof strike, fr 3). Examples of both the type 2 and 3 postmarks are included in this exhibit (fr 3) along with two World War I "Passed by Censor" marks used as a cancel (both discovery copies, fr 4). Unlisted in the USCS *Catalog* is a discovery copy of the OREGON type 1 postmark (fr 4-5), one of two now recorded.

In addition, this exhibit has a spectacular cover directly related to the exhibit and others from or to the ship with town postmarks: (1) a unique cover from a USS MAINE sailor

mailed days before the ship was blown up in Havana Cuba (fr 1-5), (2) a letter postmarked in Brooklyn mailed in Florida upon completion of OREGON's dash around South America in time for her to participate in the Battle of Santiago where she played a key role (fr 1-6); (3) a cover with New York City street car cancel to OREGON at Brooklyn Navy Yard for overhaul prior to her return to the West Coast (1-9); (4) sailor's letters on rare covers with ship's silhouette posted at Montevideo, Uruguay and Callo, Peru and one posted in Honolulu on her way to the Asiatic Fleet (fr 1, 10-12); (5) a registered letter with the Captain's hand corner card mailed at Hong Kong (fr 1-16); (6) a personal letter (unique) to the donor of a "loving cup" presented to the ship (fr 2-1); (7) homeward bound postcard postmarked at Yokohama (fr 2-14), (8) a pair of postcards sent by a sailor to his mother and father on OREGON's final voyage to Seattle, Washington for decommissioning (fr 4-8).

In addition, a number of examples of personal mail from and to crew members during her short life span are included. Examples of real picture post cards sent by sailors aboard the ship are found in frames 2, 3, & 4. This mail represents a large portion of known OREGON related mail with other than the ship's postmarks. Photographs included were selected to enhance the story of the life of the ship.

The Launch invitation is one of three known to USCS experts. (fr 1-2). The Mechanics Institute program is the only one recorded (fr 1-3).

OREGON was temporarily commissioned in 1919 to serve as reviewing ship for both a Secretary of the Navy and a Presidential fleet review in the Pacific northwest. The September 9th letter, a unique item, written by a sailor temporarily assigned to the ship, provides an in depth look of OREGON's part in those reviews. The photos of the President and Secretary of the Navy aboard the ship during the review were rare finds.

Condition.

Considering this material is over 100 years old, it is in fine to excellent condition. In any event, the chance of finding a similar cover in better condition is nil.

References:

- Webber, Bert; Documentary *Battleship Oregon* Webb Research Group Publishers, 1998, ISBN 0-936738-24-3
- OREGON one frame exhibit on USCS.org (click on Exhibits on the home page).