

Further Information for the seven-frame exhibit:

POSTAL HISTORY of DEUTSCH NEU-GUINEA and the TERRITORY OF NEW GUINEA, 1885 through 1941

Scarcity

- Material up to 1928 is not common and besides the basic letter rate, material is scarce to find.
- Post WW1 (1920-1923) is much more difficult to find than 1915-1919. This is also the timeframe when the N.W. Pacific Islands OS stamps were issued.
- Oct-Dec 1914 is extremely difficult.

Treatment

Postal rates in timeframe pre-1928 is the focus of the exhibit since there is only one postal rate after 1930. Airmail rates are the primary interest after 1930, since local airmail service grew into international airmail service during this time. Post-1930 was a time of changing stamp issues, and all are represented.

All the basic letter rates are accounted for each rate period, but more exotic rates (i.e., commercial paper, post cards and printed matter) are represented only during select rate periods. Post cards used during the Queensland Administration are rare (5 or less known). Postal cards were never issued. Unlike Papua, it seems few post cards were marketed (one is shown, used locally).

Documenting postal rates is the primary objective. Secondly, I show a wide variety of towns of origination and destinations, especially within Germany, and transit times over the exhibit's timeframe.

Highlighted is the long transition of provisional postage (1914-1925). The Germans destroyed most all German New Guinea stamps before retreating, and there were five provisional issues used. The largest variety of provisional usage is seen during 1915.

Provisional stamps:

- Deutsche New Guinea stamps overprinted GRI (issued 1914)
- German Marshall Island stamps overprinted GRI (issued 1914)
- Australian Kangaroo and KGV heads punctured OS, issued by the military (no overprint, issued 1914)
- Australian Kangaroo and KGV heads overprinted N.W. Pacific Islands (issued 1915-1916)
- Australian Kangaroo and KGV heads punctured OS overprinted N.W. Pacific Islands (1919-1923)
- Common Australian stamps hand-carried by soldiers, and valid for use (mostly seen 1915-1916)

Official regular airmail service in New Guinea began in 1932. New Guinea airlines began flying in the mid-late 1920s because the gold fields in the mountains required air access. Any airmail sent at this time was company mail, opportunity mail, and/or free of charge (except for parcels). This unofficial airmail will not be addressed. In 1932, New Guinea established its own airmail service internal to New Guinea (1½d per ½oz rate). The pre-existing Australian airmail rate (3d per ½oz) was for mail to/from Australia and/or within Australia.

The exhibit ends at the end of 1941, the beginning of WW2 (January 1942 invasion). This is the end of New Guinea stamps because Australian stamps were used after the war.

Highlights of the exhibit include:

- Germain two Mark and three Mark weight usages (1888, 1893), one franked with a Deep Claret 2M.
- An intact German Reply card used both ways from Germany to Deutsche New Guinea.
- An Oct 1914 attempt of German provisional postage, confiscated by censors in Sydney.
- A 1916 real photo post card used internally within New Guinea.
- A selection of N.W. Pacific Islands OS stamps on Official mail, including the earliest known September 1919 usage; four OS stamp usages are only reported usages on cover.
- Six gold bullion airmail parcel tags (high value, multiple £), including usage of *BOTH* the 1935 Bulolo £2 and £5 (one of 2 recorded) postage stamps. The £2 and £5 were issued for bouillon parcel postage.
- Several very large envelopes reflecting high postal rates.

Author's research

I've listed and sorted transit times during various time periods. As transit times vary wildly, I conclude that this reflects the frequency of ships sent to pick up mail. New Guinea was not on main shipping routes during and post-WW1. The difference between a CDS date and an arrival date in Australia is not due to sailing time, but due to wait times for a ship to pick up mail. Varying transit times to Europe were likely due to effects from the war on schedule and ship availability. But since Deutsche Neu-Guinea was a pre-war trade colony, the Germans had more consistent ship schedules.

Few covers have all the backstamps needed for comparison. Some covers have no information. Some destinations are interesting, such as the USA, but with not enough data across all time periods, they are not summarized. Transit to Europe and Australia are most common and I have enough data for an interesting comparison.

It is documented that (small) OS punctured Australian stamps were issued in New Guinea by the military and known used as early as November 1914 (likely issued close to the same time as GRI stamps), but there is no record of what OS values the military issued in New Guinea. I document ½d, 1d, 2d, 5d and 6d OS Kangaroos and ½d and 1d OS KGV heads. So, it is likely to assume that *at least* all OS Kangaroo values to 6d were issued. As these were provisional issues, possibly the 1/- Kangaroo was issued, but likely no values higher. There were only four KGV heads issued at this time, ½d, 1d, 4d and 5d. It is speculative at this time whether the 4d and 5d OS KGV heads were issued in New Guinea.

I show examples of four large OS stamp value usages (½d, 2d, 5d and 6d). They are used by only 2 people who happen to send a lot of New Guinea correspondence over a few years' timeframe. I consider these stamps as private usage, and likely philatelic. All Australian stamps were valid for postage. Many soldiers privately brought stamps with them to use, and examples of this are also shown.

But in Australia, OS stamps were not issued to the public and covers are scarce to find. For example, the 6d is extremely scarce on cover in Australia. Thus, all OS usages are quite important. These Official Service stamps were likely brought to New Guinea because there was limited use for them in Australia.

References:

- Franklin's Guide to the Stamps of Papua and New Guinea, Mark Franklin, AH & AW Reed, 1970 ISBN 0589070843
- Stamps and Postal History of German New Guinea/Territory of New Guinea 1888-1952, Bryant E Korn, Kelleher's Quarterly Magazine, Second Quarter 2025.
- AIRMAIL: The Story of Australia's Overseas Airmail - Book 1, The Beginning Via India to 1934, Ronald M Lee, 2022, National Library of Australia ISBN 9780645501209
- AIRMAIL: The Story of Australia's Overseas Airmail - Book 2, The Rapid Advances between 1934-1939 of the England/Australia Airmail, Ronald M Lee, 2022, National Library of Australia ISBN 9780645501216
- AIRMAIL: The Story of Australia's Overseas Airmail - Book 3, World War II: 1939-December 1941, Ronald M Lee, 2023, National Library of Australia ISBN 9780645501230
- Commonwealth Stamp Catalogue Australia, Stanley Gibbons, 12th Edition, 2022
- G.R.I. The Postage Stamps of the German Colonies occupied by the British 1914-1918, Robert M Gibbs, 1988, Christie's Robson-Lowe ISBN 0853974284