

CRESTHAVEN STAMP CLUB NEWSLETTER

West Palm Beach, Florida

The Palm Beaches Oldest & Friendliest Stamp Club

February 2023

It is with great sadness that Cresthaven Stamp Club announces the passing of their long-time president and avid philatelist, Robert Burr. "Bob" passed on January 4, 2022, following a brief illness. He will be missed.



Memorial services were held on January 16th at Palms West Funeral Home in Royal Palm Beach. At our January 10th club meeting, members voted to donate \$250 in Bob's memory to "Tunnels to Towers". The foundation is a registered charitable organization that supports and honors America's first responders, veterans and their families.

Election of new officers will be conducted at the February 14th meeting.

Regards,

Michael Swope

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Chapter Affiliate #923
Membership Affiliate #81338

Meetings: Barkley Clubhouse
1:00 p.m. – 2nd & 4th Tuesdays
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The Last 19th Century Stamp Printed

DAN MADDALINO

The last U.S. postage stamp printed in the 19th century was the \$2, 1898, Trans-Mississippi Exposition (Omaha, Nebraska) issue Scott #293. And, it was another U.S. Post Office Department flop, similar to the disappointing pictorial series of 1869. The May 6th, 1898, official announcement called for 1¢, 2¢, 5¢, and \$1 stamps. The philatelic community was not pleased because Post offices across the country were awash in high value stamps that no one was buying. Letters poured into the office of Postmaster General James A. Gary, protesting yet another bloated stamp series. Gary pushed back, touting the importance of the Exposition.



When the Post Office department announced changes to the Trans-Mississippi issue, the chorus of jeers intensified. An expansion of values now included a \$2 stamp! Still available for sale at the Philatelic Agency in Washington and in local post offices were the \$1, \$2, \$3, \$4, and \$5 stamps from the 1893 Columbian Exposition; as well as the \$1 Perry, \$2 Madison, and \$5 Marshall, from the 1894 and the 1895 series! Neither stamp collectors, nor the public, could absorb more high value stamps. Average worker income at this time was \$320/month, which was below the average \$434/month cost of living. The United States was in an economic depression caused by a world-wide collapse of investment markets known as the Financial Panic of 1893, and the Spanish-American War, which began in April 1898.

The public and the press initially praised the stamps, but quickly soured on their designs, quality of printing, and cost, and soon - shared their displeasure when the stamps were issued. These stamps were not printed until two weeks after the start of the exposition and they made no reference to their purpose (the exposition). The public had little use for them and few sold.

The last stamp of this series to be printed, and thus the last stamp produced before the start of the 20th century, was the \$2 "Mississippi River Bridge". It was a rush print-job as the promoters of the Exposition were clamoring for publicity. All 56,200 two-dollar stamps (281 sheets) were printed in one day, on June 2, 1898. By the close of the exposition on November 1, 1898, very few \$2 stamps (and few of the other values) had been purchased. In March, 1899, all remaining stocks of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition stamps were ordered returned to the Post Office Redemption Center and incinerated. Of the 56,200 two-dollar stamps printed, fewer than 18,000 were sold or given away. A sad ending to our 19th century philatelic history.

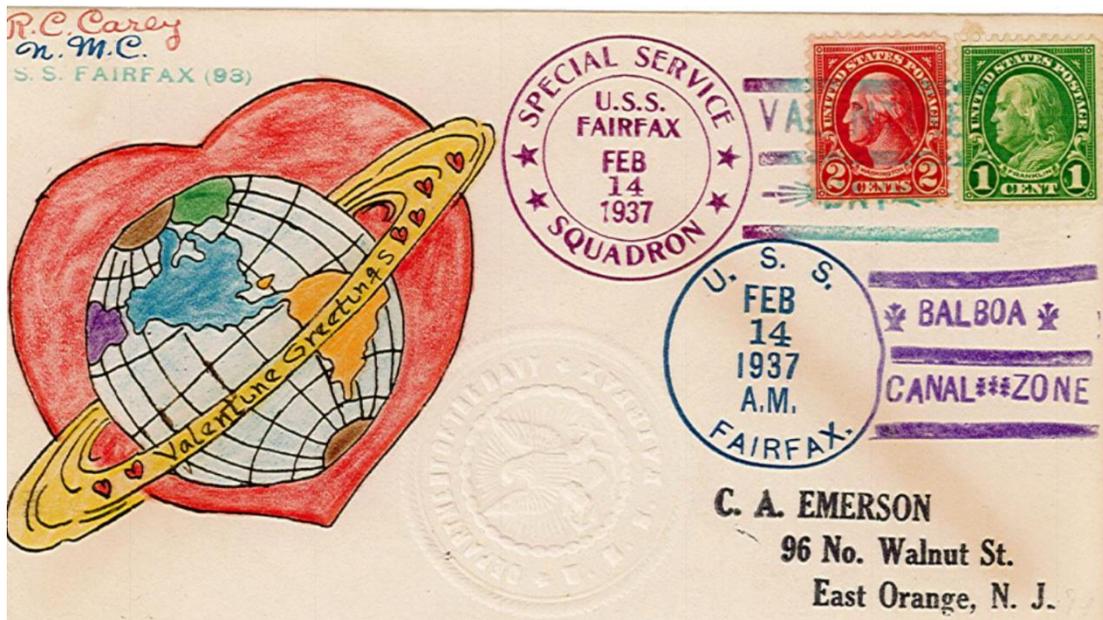
Ref:

Wikipedia.com

Scott Catalogue, Amos Media, Sydney, OH

The Special Service Squadron

Juan L. Riera



Featured here is a colorful Valentine cacheted greeting cover mailed on February 14, 1937, from the *U.S.S. Fairfax* to East Orange, New Jersey. The cover is stamped with the 1¢, green Franklin, Scott A155 and the 2¢, red Washington, Scott A157. The cover bears several cancellations: in blue-green, "Valentine's Day"; in purple, "Balboa, Canal Zone"; in black, "U.S.S. Fairfax"; and, in violet, "Special Service Squadron". It also bears a matrix seal, "United States Navy – U.S.S. Fairfax".

The *U.S.S. Fairfax* (DD-93) was a Wickes Class Destroyer commissioned on April 6, 1918, and from October 1935 to March 1937, she served with the Special Service Squadron out of Coco Solo and Balboa in the Canal Zone, operating primarily on the Atlantic Side of the Canal Zone. On November 26, 1940, she was transferred to Great Britain under the destroyers for land-bases exchange agreement. The transfer occurred at Halifax, Nova Scotia. On July 16, 1944 she was transferred to the Soviet Navy. It was returned to Britain on June 24, 1949, and sold for scrap in July of that year.

The Special Service Squadron dates to 1907 as a component of the U.S. Navy, part of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet - in separate command, from 1920 to 1940. This squadron patrolled the Caribbean Sea enforcing what is currently known as gunboat diplomacy. Headquarters for the squadron was at Balboa Harbor in the Panama Canal Zone. It was assigned to protect the Panama Canal Zone as well as American interests in the Caribbean and the Pacific coast of Central America. The squadron was comprised of mostly small, older ships and then abolished as part of naval command consolidation leading up to World War II. Between 1907 and 1940 the squadron had at least eleven commanders.

One Commander of the Special Service Squadron was David F. Sellers (1874-1949). During the Spanish American War aboard the *U.S.S. New York*, he participated in the Samoan campaign and the Philippine-American War. Sellers was commander of the Special Service Squadron from July 1927 to May 1929, during the Nicaraguan uprising, which was part of the “Banana Wars”. He also served in the Bureau of Navigation and had a guided missile destroyer (*U.S.S. Sellers*) named after him. He reached the rank of Rear Admiral.

Another Special Service Squadron Commander was Edward Hale Campbell (1872- 1946). During the Spanish-American War he served off the coast of Central America. He commanded the Special Service Squadron from May 1929 to 1930. And reached the rank of Vice Admiral.

Henry Francis Bryan (1865-1944), fought in the Spanish-American War and served as the 17th governor of American Samoa from March, 1925 to September 1927. His largest command was the Special Service Squadron from 1920 to 1921, during which time the squadron monitored contentious relations between Costa Rica and Panama. He retired at the rank of Rear Admiral.

John W. Wilcox, Jr. (1882-1942), served on the *USS Dolphin* from 1913 to 1915, the flagship during the Tampico Affair and the U.S. occupation of Veracruz. In the 1920’s he served in the U.S. Navy Scouting Fleet. Wilcox served as the last commander of the Special Service Squadron, 1939-1940 and retired at the rank of Rear Admiral.

Julian Lane Latimer (1868-1939), served during the Spanish-American War onboard the *U.S.S. Winslow*. On May 7, 1926, he was assigned command of the Special Service Squadron. On December 23, 1926, the squadron was sent to Nicaragua to deal with the Nicaraguan Civil War (1926-27). He received the Distinguished Service Medal for his command of the squadron that lasted until July 1927. He retired at the rank of Rear Admiral.

William Carey Cole (1868-1935), served during the Spanish American War onboard the *U.S.S. Dolphin* off Santiago, Cuba. He commanded the Special Service Squadron in 1922 and 1923, which was colloquially known as the “Banana Fleet. He retired as a Vice Admiral.

This short article should serve as primer for the Special Service Squadron that was based out of the Panama Canal Zone, generating mail through land-based post offices as well as from ships based in the Canal Zone. A good number of commanders of this squadron served in the Spanish-American War, thus allowing for another field of philatelic collecting.

Ref:
Wikipedia.com
History.Navy.mil

V-Mail

Pat Hensley



V-mail is short for Victory mail which began during World War II. The name came from the “V for Victory” symbol used to support public spirit and patriotism. V-mail was utilized between June, 1942 and November, 1945, with over one billion items moved quickly, to and from overseas soldiers.

This way to deliver mail was new but the technology wasn't. Microphotography had been used for business and banking since the 1850s. In 1935, Kodak began filming and publishing the New York Times on microfilm. The US Postal Service was keeping an eye on Britain's mail service at the beginning of the year. Britain used microphotography since 1941 and Queen Elizabeth sent the first Aerograph letter. That is when the US developed the V-mail system. In 1942, the US and Kodak had a contract for V-mail microfilming. President Franklin D. Roosevelt received the first two V-mails in June 1942.

The letter was written in a special form and photographed in microfilm. Then it is sent and reproduced and delivered. V-mail was given preferential sorting and transportation. On one side of the form, there was space for the message and on the other side were instructions for sending the letter. Writers had to use dark ink or a dark pencil, then fold and seal the envelope and apply postage. No enclosures were allowed but eventually, pictures of infants under a year old or born after the soldier had gone overseas was allowed.

V-mail reduced the weight of military mail which allowed more space for important cargo. Machines at V-Mail stations opened the letters and filmed them at 2000 to 2500 per hour. Approximately 1600 letters would fit on a roll. Normally the letters would weigh 1500 lbs. and fill 22 mail sacks but the microfilmed letters only weighed 45 lbs. and fit in one sack.

Authorities would censor the letters and decide if the letter would be sent as is or filmed depending on the distance, mail volume, and space. When the V-mail was reproduced at the destination facility, it was printed out into 4x5 inch photos and forwarded in special War-Navy Department V-Mail penalty envelopes. The film was not destroyed until they were sure the letters were delivered and if they weren't, they were reprinted and resent.

The Post Office separated mail by Army and Navy units and then delivered it to the appropriate V-Mail stations. V-Mail stations were established in New York City, San Francisco, Chicago, and different places overseas. Soldiers could send personal letters including V-mail for free because of an Act of Congress in 1942. It cost civilians three cents to send a V-mail letter by surface mail or six cents by airmail to domestic V-mail stations. The airmail rate was raised to eight cents in 1944. The Post Office offered two sheets of this special stationery free each day per customer or customers could buy material from stores.

Many didn't see V-mail as sending real letters though because it had its drawbacks. It limited the number of words that could be used so writers had to choose their words carefully. Also, since the photos were much smaller (about $\frac{1}{4}$ in size) than the original letter, sometimes the print would be unreadable if the print was too small. Some places sold magnifying glasses so readers could read the small print. Not only were enclosures not allowed, but lipstick kisses were also not allowed because lipstick would gum up the machines used to film the letters. Any dirty, damaged, or crinkled letters could not be microfilmed and had to be sent in their original form.

V-mail service ended on November 1, 1945, but customers could still use the V-mail stationery until supplies ran out in March 1946.

Class Activities:

Print out the V-mail stationery and have students write their own letters on them following the instructions. <https://postalmuseum.si.edu/sites/default/files/victory-mail-vmail1.pdf>

Research "microfilming" and see how the process works.

Find the location of the V-mail stations on the map.

Make a visual of the difference in weight of regular letters vs. V-mail letters.

References:

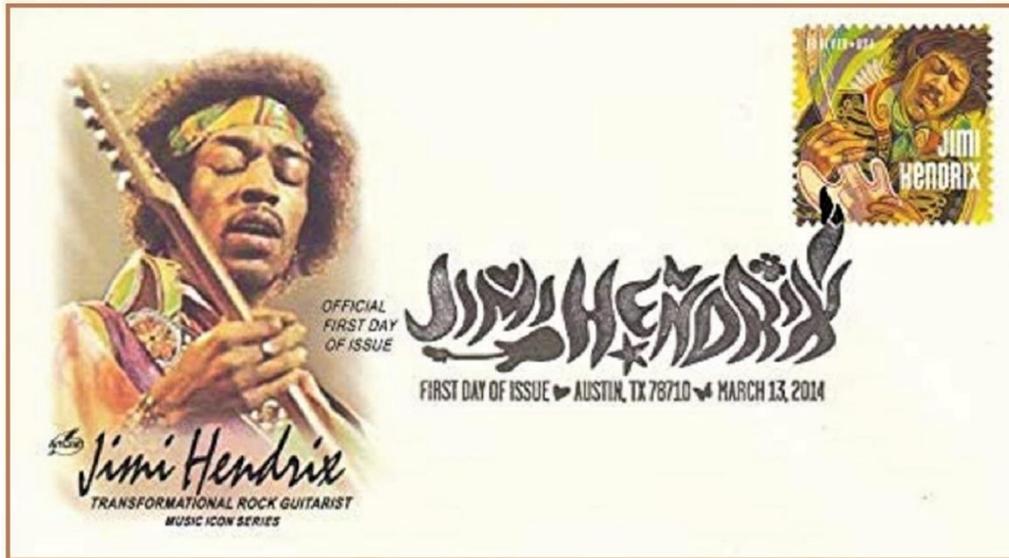
<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/mail-call-v-mail>

<https://postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibition/victory-mail>

United State Postal Service

Jimi Hendrix

Michael Swope



Featured above is a souvenir first day cover celebrating music icon and American guitarist Jimi Hendrix. The cover bears the 2014, Jimi Hendrix Forever postage stamp (Scott 4880) and is cancelled March 13, 2014, at Austin Texas.

James Marshall "Jimi" Hendrix (born Johnny Allen Hendrix, 1942 –1970), was a guitarist, singer and songwriter. Although his mainstream career spanned only four years, he is widely regarded as one of the most influential electric guitarists in the history of popular music, and one of the most celebrated musicians of the 20th century. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame describes him as "arguably the greatest instrumentalist in the history of rock music."

A wild and rebellious youth, a 19-year-old Jimi Hendrix was twice arrested for joyriding. The judge gave him a choice - the army or jail. Hendrix chose the army and enlisted on May 31, 1961. He trained to be a paratrooper and even earned the Screaming Eagle award for his paratrooper skills. As a soldier, however, Hendrix was undisciplined. He often failed to show up for inspections and was caught sleeping on the job. He was a terrible marksman and disrespectful to his commanding officers. On June 29, 1962, Hendrix was deemed unsuited for the military and given an honorable discharge. Lucky for the music world that he was.



Ref:

Pinterest.com

Wikipedia.com