

One small victory....Bob Schwerdt takes his victories one country at a time

After having collected perfins for a few years, I thought it would be great if I could find a perfin example from each country or affiliate. That is still my ambition, yet unfulfilled after a 35-year quest.

Certain countries have produced single perfin types: French India, French East Africa, Martinique, and a few others. Before I turn completely white-headed (I'm almost there), my chances of obtaining examples from these places are slim indeed. Better odds would be securing perfins from a place where multiple perfin types are known.

Such a place, with a high priority on my want list, is Port Said.

The *World Perfins Catalog* lists four patterns, illustrating three of them, from this Egyptian city. Though Port Said is a French post office located in Egypt, special stamps were issued for use there. Hence, though a French affiliate, for my purposes, it becomes a separate country.

Whenever my friend Bob (a fellow perfin collector from a smaller eastern state) and I get together, the conversation invariably includes a mention of Port Said perfins since we both needed examples for our collections. For years, like the search for the Holy Grail, ours has been an unsuccessful quest. Since Bob has fine French collections, both perfin and non-perfin, I believed because of his connections that he would locate a Port Said perfin long before I.



While Bob was visiting one day, I had a telephone call from a collector who had acquired several thousand world perfins and wondered if I would like to look them over.

Does a child like ice cream?

About a week later, two shipments arrived packed with perfins in glassines arranged by countries. Disappointment quickly set in since most of the perfins appeared to be someone's discards: splits and missing holes. A few had pencil notations including catalog numbers. I was resigned to seeking better copies, additional postmarks, or different issues. The thought of finding any new types from this mix was now far removed.

The last envelope I tackled was a thick one containing French perfins, but the contents were repetitious: SGs, CLs, HMs, and so on. I was finally down to examining a small pile of the last few stamps. Most were face down but one was face up with only the top half visible. I could tell it was an early type because of "rights of man" female design. I thought, then hoped, it might be a French Levant issue to salvage some of my disappointment. I could not readily determine the perfin type because of some backing paper which I discovered later.

As I pulled the stamp from the small pile of other perfins, two words on the bottom of the stamp jumped out: PORT SAID! It was a pretty copy of C.N., neatly centered. I wondered how this item had escaped the vigilance of the previous owners of the mixture, but I didn't wonder for long. Soon the stamp was cleansed from its backing paper and secured in my album.

I relished my victory and enjoyed thinking about Bob's reaction when he would first see the perfin.

Then reality sank in.

It was a small victory.

The campaign must go on.

There are yet unconquered territories and fifty more battles to win before total victory: BUSHIRE, IRAQ, ISTRIA, LITHUANIA, SHAIGHAL.....