

America Aids French Orphans and The User for Pattern N17 is Identified

Bob Garrity (#3824)

In my search for perfins I have managed to come across many unspectacular philatelic items. I thought that this was another one of them. Shown below (Figure 1) is an unused return envelope with a 3 cent Washington from the period from November 2, 1917 through June 30, 1919 when the WWI War Emergency rate was in effect. But who wants unused covers with no postal markings? What can these possibly tell us?

In checking the *Catalog of United States Perfins*, the perfin is clearly pattern **N17** (NA/FH), a C+ rated perfin (Figure 2). It is not identified as to the user either in the catalog or in the two Additions and Corrections that have appeared to date. The cover is addressed to Lee, Higginson & Co. as the depository for the French Heroes Lafayette Memorial Fund, Inc.

Using the lamp in my stamp room, I noted that, although the cover is sealed, there is an enclosure inside from the "National Association of French

Heroes". Dated 1919, it is a blank receipt to be sent with any donated funds, a request for future donations and the income tax deduction rules. Yes, even back then there was a Federal Income Tax!

Here is a match of perfin pattern **N17** to the "National Association of French Heroes". Brad Baker, U.S. Catalog Chairman, concurs and advises that this identification will be listed in the future Additions & Corrections #3.

Doing a little further research reveals information that the Fund was founded in 1917 to help renovate the Marquis de Lafayette's home in southern France for the benefit of French War Orphans. Lee, Higginson & Son Co. (at various locations) was the depository for all monies donated to this Fund. This cover happened to be to the Boston office. The Fund was dissolved in 1922. Interestingly, one of the founders was a fellow named Teddy Roosevelt.

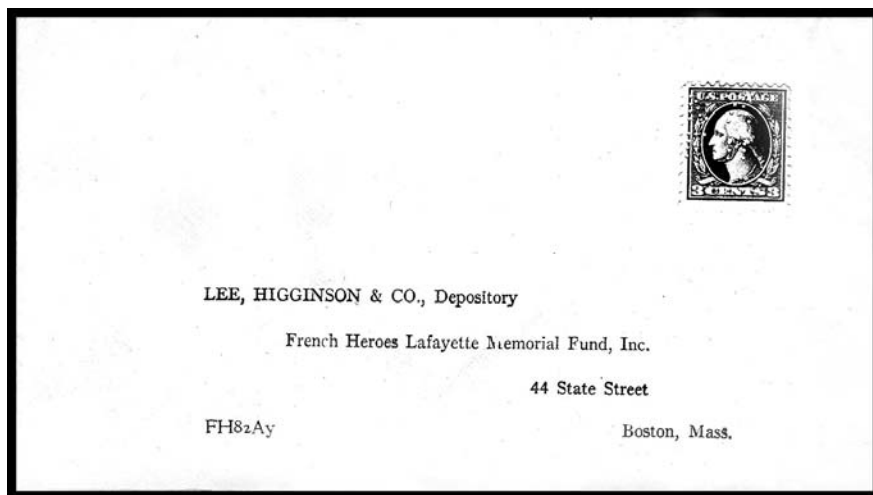


Figure 1:
National Association of French Heroes Cover
Identifying Perfin Pattern N17



Figure 2
Stamp cropped from cover
(135% of actual size for clarity)