

The Handstamped Victory Issues of the Philippines (1944 American Occupation)



RARE stamps issued for propaganda purposes from
8 November 1944 to 19 January 1945 in the city of Tacloban,
in the island of Leyte where MacArthur returned on 20 October, 1944

American Occupation of the Philippines: Overview

The Philippines



Guam



Puerto Rico



Cuba



- In 1898 Spain's Pacific and Caribbean colonies were the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Cuba
- Exiles from the independent movement in Cuba fled to the USA, where they garnered support for US intervention

Insult of the Spanish Ambassador to the United State



Enrique Dupuy de Lôme

- President William McKinley was sympathetic to the Cuban independence struggle
- As a gesture of good will, McKinley proposed to send the brand-new battleship *Maine* on a courtesy visit to Havana
- Spanish Ambassador Enrique Dupuy de Lôme officially consented to the proposal
- Unofficially, Enrique Dupuy de Lôme, expressed that he was against the gesture in a letter, and that he thought further negotiations with the Cuban insurgents were futile
- The letter was intercepted and published in the *New York Journal*, owned by William Randolph Hearst, under the banner headline, "The Worst Insult to the United States in its History."

Blowing up of the *Maine* and the declaration of war between the US and Spain



- On February 15, 1898, a few days after Spanish Ambassador Enrique Dupuy de Lôme's infamous letter was published, the US battleship *Maine* mysteriously exploded in Havana harbor.
- Death of 266 sailors
- A Spanish investigation concluded an internal explosion destroyed the *Maine*
- A US investigation concluded that an external source destroyed the *Maine*
- A reluctant President McKinley was forced to demand Spain grant independence to Cuba which Spain refused
- The US declared war on Spain on April 21, 1898, and a blockage of Havana harbor commenced

Initial stamps of occupied Spanish colonies

- After US victory in the Spanish-American War, the Treaty of Paris of December 10, 1898 ceded the US Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines from Spain
- The US occupied Cuba until 1902, and retains Puerto Rico and Guam to this day
- The US occupied the Philippines until July 4, 1946
- Initially, the US overprinted US stamps for all 4 occupied regions. US domestic stamps became used in Guam and Puerto Rico beginning in `1901.
- The “Philippines - United States of America” series stamps began use in 1906 (later changing to “Commonwealth of the Philippines - United States of America”)

US Scott 279 overlaid with Puerto Rico, Philippines, Cuba and Guam



Japanese Occupation of the Philippines



- The Japanese invasion of the Philippines began December 8, 1941
- General Douglas MacArthur was forced to leave the Philippines March 11, 1942

Japanese Stamps during the occupation in the Philippines



March 4, 1942, Japan issues first postage stamp in the Philippines, blacking out writing of Scott Philippines 461



June 7, 1943 , stamps printed in Japan for the Philippines

American Liberation of the Philippines



MacArthur returned to the Philippines on October 20, 1944, to the island of Leyte, where the city of Tacloban is situated

Philippines Post Office Re-established by Philippines Authorities



General Basilio Valdes
Chief of Staff of the Philippines Army

- On November 6, 1944, General Basilio Valdes, Chief of Staff of the Philippines Army, authorized Acting Post Office Inspector Ben Cunanwan to reopen the post offices of Tacloban and Palo and to make postage by overprinting “VICTORY” on prewar postal paper found on Leyte
- Postmasters of Bato, Hilogos, Palo, Hindang and a few other local Leyte Post offices were instructed to send all their pre-war stock to the Tacloban Post office, where they were to be affixed with “VICTORY” overprints.



The “VICTORY” handstamp

VICTORY

- A crude “Victory” handstamp was made by an amateur craftsman, the rubber of which was of inferior quality.
- Initial group of overprint “Victory” stamps went on sale at the Tacloban post office November 8, 1944, overprinting pre-occupation stamps.
- After the initial batch of Victory stamps went on sale, the Post Office allowed anyone with pre-occupation stamps to sell them back, accounting for the large variety of issues affixed with the “Victory” stamp.
- Subsequent issues were released on 3, 24 and 29 December, 1944
- Last “Victory” handstamps were sold on 19 January, 1945

The Two Types of “Victory” handstamps



Type I, pre-damaged stamp, straight letters



Type II, damaged stamp, letters curved with a gap between ‘C’ and ‘T’, and “bite” out of ‘T’

- Early on in use, the rubber stamp ruptured between the letter ‘C’ and ‘T.’ To repair the stamp a pin was driven into the stamp, deforming it.
- Pre-damaged stamp, ‘VICTORY’ letters are in straight line
- Damaged stamp, letters concave upwards towards the middle, have a gap between the ‘C’ and ‘T’, and have a “bite” taken out of the ‘T’
- Quantity of ink used was poorly controlled, most ink in violet but some in black
- Clerks worked rushed, and imprints made with random quality

Census of Philippines Victory Handstamp Stamp Issues

- Around 51,279 Philippines Victory Handstamps were produced, or about 13779 if one excludes Scott 464 and Scott O37 (which had 24,400 and 13,100 copies respectively)
- Overprinted were 22 regular pre-occupation issues, 2 special delivery issues, 7 official business issues, 7 postage due issues, and 1 airmail issue.
- Meticulous accounting of produced Victory stamps was followed, and the records together with the hand rubber stamp were eventually sent to Manila on March 23, 1946 by Philippines Postal Inspector Cunanan



Regular issues, Scott 463-484, around 31,179 copies (or 6779 if one excludes Scott 464)



Official business issues, Scott O38-O43, around 16,537 copies (or 3437 if one excludes Scott O39)



Two special delivery issues, Scott E7-E8, 738 copies



Postage due, Scott J16-J22, 2703 copies



Airmail, one issue Scott C63, 122 copies

Rarity and prices of some individual Philippines Handstamp issues

- Prices realized for many Philippines Handstamp Victory issues are near or exceed their Scott catalog values.
- If one excludes Scott 464 and O37, the average number of copies per issue was about 375



Scott O40A, catalog value \$8000, 50 copies. Realized \$9600 (including premium) 05-23-2019, Daniel Kelleher



Scott 476, catalog value \$7000, 36 copies. Realized \$11,800 (including premium) 08-07-2022, H. R. Harmer



Scott O42, catalog value \$8000, less than 50 copies. Realized \$13,800 (including premium) 12-13-2017, Daniel Kelleher



Scott 484, catalog value \$6250, 21 copies. Realized \$11,400 (including premium) 05-23-2019, Daniel Kelleher

Counterfeits of Philippines Victory Handstamp Issues

The Philatelic Foundation No. 576049
22 East 35th Street • 4th Floor
New York, NY 10016
04/22/2021
EXPERT COMMITTEE

We have examined the enclosed item, of which a photograph is attached, and *described by the applicant* as follows:

Country: PHILIPPINES

Cat. No.	Issue	Denom.	Color
469	1944	6c	carmine

Scott's unless otherwise specified.
UNUSED, NO GUM, VIOLET "VICTORY" HANDSTAMP OVERPRINT.
AND WE ARE OF THE OPINION THAT:
THE OVERPRINT IS A FORGERY. *****
BE CAREFUL! BE CAREFUL! BE CAREFUL! BE CAREFUL! BE CAREFUL! BE CAREFUL! BE CAREFUL! BE CAREFUL! BE CAREFUL! BE CAREFUL!



576049

K345655

For The Expert Committee
Chairman

Photocopies of this Certificate are not valid.

Submitted by
ARDEN SIMONI

- Unsurprisingly, considering the high value of these stamps, they are frequently forged
 - No doubt that the majority of Philippines Victory Handstamp issues found on eBay are forgeries, as every month the same unscrupulous dealers inundate the market with their offerings of counterfeits
 - It is ESSENTIAL that one has their Philippines Victory Handstamp issues certified, preferably by The Philatelic Foundation (auction houses offering higher-end Victory stamps usually have PF certs)
-
- Fortunately, these Victory handstamp issues are hard to fake, due to the hand-carved, poor quality handstamp that became damaged and experienced heavy wear.
 - The real handstamp had individual characteristics of each letter, not easily duplicated by the local rubber stamp manufacturer.

Replacement printed 'VICTORY' overprints issued on January 19, 1945

- Printed 'VICTORY' overprints replaced the handstamp version of issues
- The Scott catalog value of these printed "VICTORY" stamps are mostly 25 cents
- Some official business "VICTORY" handstamps were issued a few months after January 19, 1945

