

The American Philatelist

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The Journal of the American Philatelic Society



Semipostals, Page 1106

shipped there. Has anyone seen one used from the Persian Gulf?

There would have been a short window of time — a month or less — that these stamps would have been used: early September through early October, at which time the troops received free franking.

I would appreciate any information concerning Desert Storm covers using the self-adhesive Eagle and Shield.

Leonard Piskiewicz
Santa Clara, California

June Issue Lauded

It seems like at least one AP reader is having a bit of trouble differentiating between "philatelist" and "moralist." Try as I might, I can't stretch the meaning of one to cover the other. "A house organ for warmongers . . ." Really, I don't believe I read that!

The study, collection, or even mild interest in the postal aspects of any subject, event, or person is what philately is all about — or so I thought. Apparently Allison Cusick (August AP, page 680) feels the subjects better fall into a highly moralistic and severely restrictive set of parameters, or else we are all in deep trouble.

Lighten up, Allison. If the subject is distasteful, well, walk away from it. Philately has something for everyone. Go find another subject and enjoy it. I personally think *The American Philatelist* did a super fine job on the Desert Storm Album and so do a lot of other folks. Allen Hauck in September's *Global Stamp News* played up both that article and the APS, and the August issue of the Universal Ship Cancellation Society *Log* is urging USCS members to get a copy of the June AP from a local library or from an APS member.

The AP was right on top of a timely current event.

Ed Floyd
Waterford, Michigan

Merit Badge Boost

You may have heard recent rumors about the demise of the Boy Scout Merit Badge for stamp collecting going the way of "button collecting" and being dropped as an individual merit badge. The good news is that the rumors proved untrue. The bad news is that we are coming close to this possible loss for our hobby.

Under Boy Scout procedures, a merit badge is maintained only as long as a given number of Boy Scouts successfully obtain a badge in that area. If the number of merit badges awarded in a calendar year drops below 1,500, then that badge is put on pro-

bation for two years, during which time a decision is made to either continue or drop the badge.

In 1989, the number of merit badges awarded was 1,844. This compares to 3,385 badges awarded in 1981.

So, while the stamp collecting badge was saved this time, the number of badges being awarded is perilously close to the cutoff point.

The Boy Scout tradition, of course, parallels that of philately. Many Boy Scouts who earned the merit badge in stamp collecting are today serious philatelists and members of our Society. In a related note, as the number of merit badges in stamp collecting drops, so, too, does interest in our hobby.

If we can make stamp collecting more attractive to Boy Scouts and increase the number of these boys earning merit badges, we will bring more stamp collectors into our Society. Since less than 2,000 of the some 1,000,000 Boy Scouts earned a merit badge in stamp collecting last year, we have our work cut out for us.

What can the average APS club or member do about this problem?

Plenty.

If each club contacted its local Boy Scout council and offered assistance in working with young boys trying to earn their merit badge in stamp collecting, we would not only help the Boy Scouts with this situation, but bring some additional collectors into our hobby. The local Boy Scout councils can be contacted through their listings in local telephone directories.

Each council also has a newsletter that goes to troop leaders, which would provide an effective means of spreading the word about our hobby.

But this is not enough. We need to make a positive effort to encourage Boy Scouts to work toward obtaining this badge. One step might be a weekend seminar or "stamporee" — which could be offered on a Saturday morning and would be intended to give scouts a basic, motivational introduction to our hobby.

This seminar or "stamporee" could include free stamps, refreshments, and several activities designed to encourage their interest.

An informational package on how to run such a seminar is being prepared. People interested in helping in this area of collecting outreach or who want further information are advised to contact Peter Jehrio, APS director of education.

And we should not forget the Girl Scouts, who, by the way, do not even have a stamp collecting merit badge but only a

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C1	125	100	80	65	50	75	67	80	80	
C2	970	140	120	95	85	110	100	80	80	
C3	180	140	120	95	75	110	100	80	80	
C4	50	47	40	30	25	35	30	27	20	
C5	180	125	110	95	75	110	100	80	80	
C6	180	140	120	100	85	115	105	85	85	
C1-B	710	850	580	470	375	480	430	280	300	
C7-B	50	45	40	30	30	—	—	—	—	
C10	25	22	20	15	12	—	—	—	—	
C11	25	22	20	15	12	—	—	—	—	
C12	25	22	20	15	12	—	—	—	—	
C13	470	325	300	275	210	300	275	250	200	
C14	800	700	675	600	550	640	550	500	450	
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general collector's badge. They should be included in this weekend seminar. A USPS survey indicates there are more girl collectors among juniors than boy collectors. This provides an even greater pool of potential collectors.

Walter M. Creitz
Reading, PA 19601

Legibility Factors

I am seeking information concerning the legibility of different kinds of type, as well as other factors affecting legibility. I am thinking of type size, serif versus sans serif, height versus width of letters, thickness of print, and leading between lines. Perhaps there are additional factors of which I am not aware.

The reason for my interest stems from the fact that I find philatelic editors, here and abroad, appear to be unaware of factors affecting legibility. As a result, they do not use the most legible type, particularly in printed publications. The Europeans, furthermore, appear to favor sans serif for periodicals (but not for books), making their journals less legible, on the whole, than ours.

I should like to be able to cite an easily obtainable reference which editors can use when negotiating with printers (who also are, at least in part, unaware of what makes legible copy).

Ernst M. Cohn
1138 Appian Way
Dothan, Alabama 36303

More Identity Help

In reference to Scott Troutman's article "Searching for Lost Businesses" in the May *AP* (page 427), the initials R & G almost certainly identify Roget (or Roger?) and Gallet, perfumists. One of their early creations, which was presented to all young girls on reaching the age of 12-13, was "April in Paris." (I'm speaking of the 1930s.)

I'm sorry I can't help with any of other of the unknowns.

Nathaniel A. Matlin
Morrisville, Pennsylvania

A Painful Experience

In response to a large buying ad in a popular German stamp magazine, I sent a valuable package of mostly early never hinged mint West German and Berlin stamps to a dealer in Berlin. It was insured for value, based on the dealer's advertised buying prices, and shipped by United Parcel Service. UPS was used as the USPS did not provide adequate insurance.

I had not anticipated that the package would be assessed customs tax which UPS had to pay. After three months, the dealer finally reimbursed UPS for the tax and accepted my package, but only after I had sent him an inventory.

Without my knowledge and without my permission, the dealer promptly sent the stamps to two experts and charged their fees to my account. The expert Schlegel liberally rubberstamped the backs of many of my stamps. None of the stamps was fake or altered and there were no overprinted stamps. Presumably my stamps were microscopically examined for gum and perforation flaws that I was later unable to ascertain.

The dealer sent me a check for barely half of his advertised buying prices after deducting not only the "expert" fees of DM864 (about \$494), but also for alleged condition deficiencies found by the "experts." I rejected the offer, returned the check, and demanded complete return of my stamps.

The dealer kept the three most valuable items in the lot and returned the rest of my stamps. Eventually, he forced payment for the items kept, less DM864 in expert fees, by making a direct deposit in U.S. dollars to my bank account.

I sent a letter of complaint and request for assistance to the APHV, the German stamp dealers' association. I also wrote to the United States Mission in Berlin, on advice of the German consulate in my area. Neither organization ever responded.

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