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SPECIMENS OF THE SPANISH PHILIPPINES

by *Don Peterson*

In the philatelic literature there is almost no mention of specimens of the Spanish Philippines. This article describes the five types of specimen overprints that occur on postal and newspaper issues of the Spanish Philippines. Specimen overprints also occur on revenue and telegraph stamps; however, they are not included within the scope of this article.

Specimen overprints on Spanish Philippine stamps occur in two general forms. The overprint occurs as a single word "MUESTRA", meaning "sample" or "specimen", or it occurs as a phrase: "MINISTERIO DE ULTRAMAR MUESTRAS", meaning "overseas minister samples." The latter format is of such size that it extends over several stamps. The overprints were either handstamped or typeset at the National Stamp Factory in Madrid. Occasionally, on the typeset overprints, a fine horizontal frameline can be observed over and under the letters.

To my knowledge, few of these specimens ever reached the Philippines. Except in one instance, as I shall later describe, all of the specimens were distributed from the National Stamp Factory in Madrid. In fact, there is a well-circulated story among philatelic circles in Spain that the specimens first appeared on the philatelic market in the mid 1930's. Although the specimens were produced approximately at the same time when "host" stamps were printed/issued, apparently all or most remained in storage (intentionally or

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unintentionally) at the National Stamp Factory. It is rumored that the release of these stamps occurred through the Madrid stamp dealer, Manuel Galvez. Even today, these overprints can regularly be found in stamp dealer stocks in Spain, whereas they are scarce in the Philippines and elsewhere.

Alvarado (1977) indicated that specimen overprints of Spanish Puerto Rico "are merely samples sent to the different consulates and agencies to notify them of changes in stamp color or design." However, there is no evidence indicating that this was done for Spanish Philippine stamps.

All evidence indicates that the specimen overprinted stamps were not sent or did not reach the Philippines, at least until after the mid 1930's. The bright hues, clear gum, and lack of tropical staining on the stamps is indicative of stamps that have remained in more temperate climates (such as Spain) rather than in tropical climates (such as the Philippines.) The condition of these stamps and the almost total lack of reference to them in 19th century and early 20th century stamp catalogues supports this theory.

None of the specimens are known to have experienced legitimate postal use in the Philippines. In fact, no covers are known anywhere. The few "used" stamps I have examined have bogus or "out-of-period" cancels.

To date, specimen overprints have been recorded on Philippine stamp issues of 1871-1872, 1875-1879, 1890-1897, and 1898. Specimen overprints also occur on the newspaper issues of 1886-1896. No specimen overprints are known on postal issues earlier than 1871, or on the issues of 1874 and 1880-1886. No specimen overprints are known on the surcharged issues of 1881-1888, 1877-1879 and 1897. Although the quantities of specimen overprints produced are unknown, they are generally scarce to very rare, depending on the specimen type and "host" stamp.

Specimen overprints have been reported on proofs or essays of the Spanish Philippines. For example, Harradine (1987) reported that all four stamps of the 1871 issue (Scott # 39-42) can be found printed in blue on white card stock with the overprint "MUESTRA." Although I have not seen these cards, I suspect that the actual specimen overprint was "MINISTERIO DE ULTRAMAR MUESTRAS", which was the specimen type used on the "normal" stamps issued between 1871 and 1877.

On the 1872 issue, the 12c blue (normally rose) and 62c rose (normally violet) are considered color trials, proofs, or essays. Both of these stamps can be found with the "MINISTERIO DE ULTRAMAR MUESTRAS" overprint.

Harradine (1987) reports an interesting story on Scott #178 (25c dull blue). The source of the information was Warren Browne in Manila.

"Ten sheets of the 25 centavos de peso value (regularly printed in dull blue) were sent to the Manila post office (arrived April 20, 1891) to be distributed as samples only - to various officials and interested parties. These were clearly marked on the upper portion of each stamp, MUESTRA, (i.e. "Specimen"), but were also placed on the mails to prepay postage. These stamps, naturally enough, were quickly snapped up by some philatelists and other speculators in Manila for resale at large profits. However, these same people found themselves "cornered", as many more similar sheets, apparently scheduled in another consignment, arrived in Manila the following year (1892) and the value of the original holdings fell very dramatically."

I have no records (philatelic literature, auctions, or collections) of any of these stamps, either on or off cover. If the above statement is correct, these would be the only specimen overprinted stamps actually shipped to the Philippines and the only ones that could have been used legitimately in the mails. Surviving examples, if they exist, would appear to be very rare. The type of specimen overprint on this stamp cannot be determined from the above reference.

Alvarado (1977) provided some additional information on specimen overprints in an article on the 1898 Alfonso XIII issues of Puerto Rico. He indicated that the "MUESTRA" overprinted stamps were "possibly for Infanta's collection." Although this could be an appropriate explanation with regard to the 1898 issue, it would not apply to any specimen overprinted stamps printed/issued before his birth in 1886. Interestingly, one of the illustrations in Alvarado's article shows the "MUESTRA" overprint typeset vertically on an 1898 Puerto Rican stamp. On the 1898 issue of the Philippines the typeset "MUESTRA" is only known to have been applied horizontally.

Another interesting piece of information from Alvarado's article is that all values of the 1898 Puerto Rican issue, both perforate and imperforate, exist with the "MUESTRA" overprint. The presence of "MUESTRA" on imperforate 1898 Philippine issues is rare; how-

ever, I believe the overprint likely occurs on all of the 1898 Philippine values, perforate and imperforate.

One final note. In current auction catalogues, I have occasionally seen a Spanish Philippine postal, revenue, or telegraph stamp (usually issues of the 1880's) with the overprint (or part of it) "GOBIERNO GENERAL URBIZTONDO." Frequently, it has been described as a specimen. That is incorrect. It is not a specimen. In addition to being the name of a Spanish Governor between 1850 and 1853, "URBIZTONDO" means that the stamp was officially "retired" and was no longer in use by the government.

Table 1 describes the five types (A through E) of specimen overprints applied on Spanish Philippine postal and newspaper stamps. Figure 1 provides examples of each type.

Table 2 summarizes the known occurrence of specimen types of postal and newspaper stamps based on a review of philatelic literature, auction catalogues, and private collections.

A possible forgery of a specimen is known on Scott #56. Instead of the normal violet Type E overprint, it is blue-green and has thicker letters. Another possible forgery is known on the surcharged Scott #95 (specimen type not known.)

TABLE 1

Description of Specimen Types of the Spanish Philippines.

TYPE A: Handstamped "MINISTERIO DE ULTRAMAR MUESTRAS" in two lines. The top line "MINISTERIO DE ULTRAMAR" has sans serif letters. The bottom line "MUESTRAS" has serif letters. 15mm by ?mm Blue. No gum. Found on 1871-1877 issues.

TYPE B: Handstamped "MUESTRA" with sans serif letters. 2mm by 14mm. Smooth yellow-white gum. Found on 1886-1896 issues.

TYPE C: Handstamped "MINISTERIO DE ULTRAMAR MUESTRAS" in two lines. Sans serif letters. 17mm by 42-1/2mm. Violet. Smooth white gum. Found on 1890-1896 issues.

TYPE D: Typeset "MUESTRA" with sans serif letters. 1-1/2mm by 10-1/2mm. Violet. Smooth white gum. Found on 1897 issues.

TYPE E: Typeset "MUESTRA" with sans serif letters. 3mm by 13mm. Violet. Smooth white gum. Found on 1897-1898 issues.

TABLE 2

Known Occurrence of Specimen Types on Postal and Newspaper Issues of the Spanish Philippines.					
Scott No.	A	B	C	D	E
39 (cardstock)	VR*				
40	R				
40 (cardstock)	VR*				
41 (cardstock)	VR*				
42 (cardstock)	VR*				
43 (blue essay)	R				
45	VS				
46 (rose essay)	R				
48	R				
50	R				
51	R				
52	VS				
54	VS				
56	VS				
57	VS				
58	VS				
140		S	VS*		
141		S	VS		
143		S		S	VS
144		S			
145		S			
146		S			
147			VS		
148			VS*		
149		S			
150		S			
151		S			
152		S			
153		S	VS		
154 (proof)			R1*		
155			VS*		
156		S	VS*		
157		S	VS		
158		S	VS		

Scott No.	A	B	C	D	E
160		S			
161		S			
162		S			
163		S			
164		S		VS	
166		S		VS	
167		S			
168		S		VS	
169		S		VS	
170		S		VS	
171				VS	
172		S		VS*	
173		S			
174		S			
175		S			
176		VS*			
177		S			
178		S			
179		S			S
180					R*
192					S
193					S
194					S
195					S
196					S
197					S
198					S
204 (imperf proof)					R*
P1		S*			
P2		S*			
P3		S			
P4		S*			
P5		S			
P7				VS	
P9		S			
P12				VS	
P13		S*			
P15				VS	
P17		S*			
P18				VS	
P19				VS	
P20				VS	

*Reported in philatelic literature and auctions, but not visually verified.

Note: Relative scarcity is indicated in S=scarce, VS=very scarce, R=rare, and VR=very rare.



#43

Color Essay.
Blue Instead of Rose



#40



#45

TYPE 1



#52



#153



#P3

TYPE 2



#143

Pale Brown Claret
Color Variation

TYPE 4



#171



#P20

TYPE 3



#143



TYPE 5

#194

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September 2-5, 1977. San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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THE LEGISLATIVE PALACE COMMEMORATIVE

Issue of 1926

by Arnold H. Warren

Part II

Double Impressions....The three types of the double impression are as follows:

Type I: One impression is about two millimeters above the other, and the two impressions are parallel.

Type II: One impression is about three millimeters above the other, and the two impressions are parallel.

Type III: The first impression makes a slight angle with the second impression. A study of the photograph of this sheet of stamps reveals that the center of rotation of the two impressions must have occurred near the center of the bottom of the eighth stamp of the sheet, so that on this stamp the two impressions very nearly coincide. The extremes in variation in position of the two impressions occur on the forty-sixth and fiftieth stamps of the sheet. On the forty-sixth stamp one impression is about two millimeters to the left of and slightly less than one millimeter above the other. On the fiftieth stamp one impression is about two millimeters to the left of and slightly less than one millimeter below the other. There are, of course, fifty varieties of type III, and the exact position of each stamp in the sheet can be determined by the relative positions of the two impressions of the center.



Types I, II, III in order

SHADE VARIETIES - Some variation in shade occurs in every denomination, but the variation in the 18-centavos and 24-centavos is so slight as to be scarcely noticeable. The most pronounced variation in shade occurs in the 4-centavos and 20-centavos; at least four shade varieties can be distinguished in each. A description of shade varieties is always difficult and never entirely satisfactory, but for the assistance of those who are interested the following list is presented:

SHADE VARIETIES OF THE FRAME

2c	green, light green
4c	carmine rose, carmine, deep carmine, red
16c	olive green, deep olive green
18c	light brown
20c	orange, orange yellow, yellow
24c	gray
1P	rose lilac, pale rose lilac

It is possible that the yellow shade of the 20-centavos is due to fading. The only specimens seen by the writer were used. The pale rose lilac shade of the 1-Peso may also be due to fading, although both used and unused specimens exist. The different shades are listed above in the order of their apparent frequency, the most common shade being given first.

HANDSTAMPED OVERPRINTS FOR OFFICIAL USE - The quantity of stamps with the "OFFICIAL" overprint issued by the Bureau of Posts was so limited that only the more important offices of the Central Government offices applied handstamped overprints to stamps of the Legislative Palace issue. It is exceedingly difficult, and perhaps impossible, to determine exactly how many varieties of these handstamped overprints were issued. The writer lists those which he has seen (see previous issue, page 13). There are probably others.



Handstamped Overprints

TYPE A: O. B. in bold-face block letters with square periods. This overprint occurs with several slight variations in size and in thickness of lines of the letters. It is about 5mm high and varies between 15mm and 17mm in over-all length. The difference in length is due chiefly to a difference in the space between the two letters, O and B. This overprint occurs in violet, blue, red and black, but is rare except in violet. It occurs on all denominations from 2c to 1-Peso. Both single and double overprints occur on all denominations. The 20-centavos exists with a quadruple overprint. The double overprint occurs as two overprints, one following the other in the same line. This resulted from the use of a long rubber stamp with a series of letters, O. B., so spaced as to overprint at one time several stamps of the 1917-25 issue. The stamps of the Legislative Palace issue were almost double the width of the stamps of the 1917-25 issue, hence the use of this long rubber stamp on the Legislative Palace issue resulted in a double overprint, or parts of a double overprint upon every stamp. The quadruple overprint on the 20-centavos is the result of two impressions by this long rubber stamp. This type of overprint was used by many government offices throughout the Philippines and is by far the most common type of handstamped overprint. The slight variations which occur in this type are due to different rubber stamps in use by different offices.

This type A overprint also occurs as an additional, and unnecessary, overprint on each of the four denominations which were issued with the printed overprint "OFFICIAL". The handstamped overprint is usually violet, but occurs in red as a double overprint on the 2-centavos overprinted OFFICIAL. The unnecessary handstamped overprint was probably due to the thoughtlessness of clerks who had long been accustomed to handstamp all stamps used on official correspondence. The purchase of stamps and the handstamping of the stamps after purchase was often done by the messenger boy who was usually the least paid and most poorly educated employee in the office.

TYPE B: OFFICIAL in red in type of the same size and style as the printed overprint "OFFICIAL". This overprint occurs on the 16-centavos and 24-centavos. It may occur on the 1-Peso. It was probably applied by the Executive Bureau which had a supply of the printed overprints. The handstamped overprint OFFICIAL occurs only on those denominations which were not issued with a printed overprint OFFICIAL. The idea was apparently to provide the complete series of stamps with an overprint OFFICIAL of the same type and color. This overprint occurs inverted on the 16-centavos.

TYPE C: O. B. in violet in large double-line letters with round periods. This overprint is about 10mm high by 25mm long. It occurs on the 2-centavos and 18-centavos. Stamps bearing this overprint were cancelled in Tarlac, indicating that the overprint was applied in some government office of that provincial capital.

TYPE D: O. B. in violet in tall, narrow letters with round periods 10mm high by 18mm long. It occurs on the 4-centavos and probably also exists on the 2-centavos. The cancellations indicate that it was applied by some government office in Tacloban, capital of the province of Leyte.

TYPE E: O. B. in violet letters similar in size and style to typewriter use. The letters are slightly broader than typewriter type and the spacing between the letters does not exactly correspond to the spacing of a typewriter. This overprint is about 2.5mm high by 9.5mm long. It occurs on the 2c, 4c and 16c. Cancellations indicate that it originated in Manila, probably in the Executive Bureau.

TYPE F: O. B. in red in tall, thin letters with square periods. The overprint is about 7.5mm high by 15mm long. It was applied by means of one of the long rubber stamps described for the type A overprint, hence this overprint always occurs as a double or quadruple overprint. The only specimen seen by the writer is a quadruple overprint on the 4-centavos.

TYPE G: OFFICIAL BUSINESS in block letters within a single-line oval frame with a five-pointed star within and at each end of the frame. The oval frame is about 12mm high by 23.5mm long. This overprint occurs in violet on the 16-centavos and in red on the 24-centavos. It probably occurs on other denominations. It is known to have been applied by the Executive Bureau.

THE OVERPRINT "SPECIMEN" - A prominent collector of Manila who is also a dealer states that a total of two hundred fifty complete sets, including the four denominations overprinted OFFICIAL, were overprinted "Specimen" in red. Of these, he states, one hundred sets were sent to the Universal Postal Union in Berne, Switzerland, fifty sets were sold to collectors, and one hundred sets (two sheets of each denomination) were reserved for the records of the Bureau of Printing and of the Bureau of Posts. The writer is inclined to believe, however, that the one hundred sets reserved for the records of the Bureau of Printing and Bureau of Posts were overprinted "Cancelled" instead of "Specimen". If this inference is correct, only one hundred fifty complete sets were overprinted "Specimen."

My information states that when the Bureau of Posts first offered sets overprinted SPECIMEN for sale to collectors, each purchaser was limited to a maximum of five sets. He purchased five sets at that

time. A large majority of the members of the Philippine Philatelic Association, however, when informed of this offering of the Bureau of Posts, refused to purchase stamps overprinted SPECIMEN. The leader of the opposition to the purchase of these overprints was a collector, who, it seems, had an unfortunate experience with British Colonial stamps overprinted SPECIMEN which depreciated greatly in value after he purchased them. At any rate, the Bureau of Posts eventually found itself with a balance of twenty five sets of these overprints on hand which it was unable to sell. My informant then offered to buy this remainder and his offer was accepted, so that he bought a total of thirty sets, while the remaining twenty sets were sold to various other collectors.



"Specimen"

THE OVERPRINT "CANCELLED" - While official confirmation is lacking, information from several different sources indicates that at least one hundred complete sets (two sheets of each denomination), including the four denominations overprinted OFFICIAL, were overprinted "Cancelled" in red for preservation in the records of the Bureau of Posts and Bureau of Printing. At any rate, all denominations exist with this overprint and the only point in doubt is the exact number of sets which were so overprinted. My informant of the preceding paragraph was not aware of the existence of the overprint CANCELLED, which is one reason for my inference that the one hundred sets which he states were reserved for the records of the Bureau of Posts and Bureau of Printing were in reality overprinted CANCELLED instead of SPECIMEN!

It is the practice of the Bureau of Printing to preserve sample of all work that it does. In the case of stamps, these sample sheets were overprinted "Cancelled" to prevent the sample sheets from being stolen and put to postal use. The writer has seen old work orders for the printing of Customs Documentary Stamps by the Bureau of

Printing which included instructions to preserve three cancelled sheets in the records of the Bureau of Printing. Even the preservation of cancelled sheets of stamps by the Bureau of Printing has, however, since been prohibited by the Bureau of Audits which supervises the printing of stamps.

The Legislative Palace issue was the first series of postage stamps ever printed by the Bureau of Printing of the Philippine Government, and the officials responsible for the design and printing of this issue took a natural pride in their handiwork. Hence a number of complete sets of the stamps were mounted and framed for exhibition in suitable places. The Bureau of Printing prepared a special printed card for mounting the stamps. At the top of this card appeared the title, "TO COMMEMORATE THE LEGISLATIVE BUILDING, MANILA, P. I., 1926." Space was provided for mounting eleven horizontal strips of three stamps each, one strip of each of the eleven denominations issued, including the four denominations overprinted OFFICIAL. Below each strip was a statement of the number of sheets printed, the number of stamps per sheet, and the total number of stamps of that denomination printed. The stamps mounted on these cards were overprinted "Cancelled" by the Bureau of Printing in order to prevent the stamps being stolen and put to postal use. Several of these cards were prepared, but the exact number is not now known. One of these cards was framed and for several years hung on the wall of the office of the Bureau of Printing. Another card was for a time exhibited upon the wall of the office of the Bureau of Posts. It is also very probable that both the Bureau of Posts and the Bureau of Printing included these cards as a part of their respective exhibits at the annual Philippine Carnival and Industrial Exhibition held in Manila during February, 1927. One of these cards some years later came into the hands of a prominent collector of Manila, now deceased. On the back of this card was a note stating that the stamps were framed by Mr. Issac P. Reyes, Bureau of Printing, Manila, P. I., Jan. 10, 1927.

Two shades of the 4-centavos overprinted CANCELLED exist, carmine and light carmine rose, which is one reason for believing that at least two sheets of the 4-centavos were overprinted CANCELLED. The OFFICIAL 4-centavos overprinted "Cancelled" is carmine.

OFF-CENTERED IMPRESSIONS OF THE BLACK CENTER
- Off-centered varieties of bi-colored stamps are, like shade varieties, very difficult to describe. One reason for this is the almost infinite number of such varieties which are possible. In probably more than one-half of the stamps of the Legislative Palace issue the black center is slightly off-centered so that the clouds overlap the frame somewhat at the top. Sheets in which the black center is badly off-centered are

not common, but probably occur in every denomination. No attempt is here made to list these varieties.

INVESTIGATIONS BY THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT -

The large number of errors which occurred in the Legislative Palace issue was the cause of several libel suits instituted by Mr. Jese Topacie, Director of Posts at the time the stamps were issued, and of two searching Government investigations, one of the Bureau of Posts and another of the Bureau of Printing.

The net result of these various libel suits and investigations was: (1) The Director of Posts, Jese Topacie, was completely cleared of any complicity, or connivance, in the issue of the errors; (2) the Bureau of Printing was completely cleared of any responsibility for the issue of the errors; (3) all employees of the Bureau of Posts were cleared of any imputation that the errors had been issued with their prior knowledge, or that they had profited thereby.

All the evidence goes to show that the errors, while they were undoubtedly issued by the Bureau of Posts, were nevertheless issued without the knowledge of any of the employees of the Bureau of Posts and were sold over the counter at face value by the Bureau of Posts in the same way as any other stamps.

VALUABLE ASSISTANCE RECEIVED - The writer wishes here to acknowledge the very valuable assistance which he has received from two of our leading specialists in Philippine stamps, Col. Louis J. Van Schaick and Mr. Walter Bruggmann. They furnished valuable information and advice without which this article could scarcely have been prepared. Mr. Rogelio de Jesus, stamp dealer and collector of Manila, did his bit by locating a number of rare varieties whose existence was inferred by the writer but which he had not seen until he requested Mr. de Jesus to search for them.

NUMBER OF VARIETIES OF THE LEGISLATIVE PALACE ISSUE - The check list which follows describes 124 varieties of the Legislative Palace issue. Off-centered varieties of the black center are not listed. The list of handstamped official stamps is probably not complete, but includes all of the varieties the writer has seen.

Continued Next Issue...

The 'TACHIBANA-MARU' and GUNJI-YUBIN

by Fumihiko Yano

It was the morning of the third of August, 1945. Bearing Red Cross markings at eleven places on its 1,772-ton hull, a hospital ship attached to the Japanese Army was sailing westward through the Banda Sea off Ceram Island. She was carrying nearly three times capacity of patients (?) and a quantity of cargo taken on at the small island of Keizura, one of the Kai Islands in the North-of-Australia Area, where she had weighed anchor at 6 p.m. on August 1st. Perhaps the U.S. Navy had been receiving intelligence on her from the time she left port, because 7th Fleet HQ ordered her stopped and searched by the nearest naval vessels. Two U.S. destroyers operating in the vicinity, and picked her up on radar after sunset on the 2nd and quietly took up the pursuit. The two destroyers were: USS Conner, DD-582, and USS Charrette, DD-581. After dawn on the 3rd, before 7 o'clock, the U.S. ships ordered her to halt and put aboard a party of fifty officers and men to conduct a search. They found on board 1,562 white-garbed patients in bed. While feeling suspicious that it was an unusually healthy group of patients, they were at the point of allowing her to proceed as a legitimate hospital ship when a considerable quantity of military material, including ammunition, was discovered in cases bearing Red Cross markings, upon which the ship was declared seized by the U.S. Navy. She was then taken under escort to Morotai Island, which by that time was under U.S. military control, and from there sent to Manila. These Japanese officers and men, belonging to the 5th Division, were presumably being diverted to the North-of-Singapore Area by way of Java, but their destination was now changed to Manila, where they were put ashore as prisoners and taken to the Philippines POW camp at Muntinglupa.

As a consequence of this incident, when the war was over, the Chief of Staff for the Southern Area Armies and four of his subordinates were tried by a military tribunal convened by the U.S. 8th Army HQ and convicted of "Violations Against International Law." This was what came to be known as the "Tachibana-maru False Hospital Ship Incident". Since it was a shameful episode of which no official announcement was made, it is not widely known in Japan even now aside from persons concerned. Those who have heard of it today are few.

The Tachibana-maru was launched in March 1935, and used by her owners, the Tokyo-wan Kisen K.K. (Tokyo Bay Steamship

Corp.), as a passenger ship making scheduled trips between Tokyo and Oshima Island. However, in June, 1938, she was commissioned as a hospital ship attached to Kure Naval Base, and as such was once bombed and sunk by Chinese warplanes, later raised and transferred to the Army for use as a transport between Singapore and the home islands. In 1944 she was formally made into an Army Hospital Ship. In November of that year she was under bombing and strafing attack by U.S. warplanes while in Manila Harbor, but emerged unscathed. In April, 1945, she passed under the control of the Southern Area Military Transport Service, and in mid-July, 1945, accomplished the transport of military personnel from Timor Island to Soerabaya in Java. She then sailed from Problinggo, Java, to Macassar in the Celebes Island where she took on fuel oil and provisions, and from there sailed, on July 28th, her objective being the afore-mentioned Kai Islands and the accommodation on its military personnel.

Regarding the various kinds of Japanese military postal matter captured by the U.S. Army at Manila, I have previously presented this subject in the Kansai-yushu July 1983 issue. I had learned from Dr. Jacobs, who was in the military service in those days, that among those captured items were a number that had been aboard ships. There were then many ships run aground in Lingayen Gulf and Manila Bay, and documents discovered in thorough searching of these ships (some of which contained Japanese soldiers in hiding) were collected together at U.S. Military Intelligence HQ in Manila. The Japanese military's 'False Hospital Ship' became a topic of discussion in Manila at the time, and according to Dr. Jacobs' recollection, was said that about six mail bags were brought from here, and also that unused Gunji-yubin postcards and a Kenetsuzumi rubber-stamp were found in the post office (?) of the ship. Gunji-yubins, unused cards and rubber-stamp; the doctor saved part of these and has them even now. (The author would like to know whether ship's post-office had been put on a short-range passenger ship like this from the beginning.)

According to the doctor's opinion, Gunji-yubin cards written by soldiers taken from the Tachibana-maru were mixed with others. This has made it difficult to distinguish them. However, when we Japanese examine them, we find among the many Gunji-yubin postcards relating to the Philippines Expeditionary Force, some with North-of-Australia Expedition (secret code) KOI unit-numbers 5171, 5173 and 5188. Since these designate 5th Division HQ, the 11th Infantry Regiment and Field Hospital No. 4, all of which were exactly in Garrison at Keuzura in the Kai Islands at that time, we clearly know that these were aboard the Tachibana-maru. They are a consequence

of the fact that the majority of these soldiers would have used this ship to write home with news of themselves. The cards they used were mostly picture postcards issued by the Rikugun-juhin-honsho (Army Quartermaster Main Depot), mixed with a fair number of the normal 'Dove & Helmet' Gunji-yubin cards (Japan printing). Some among them are set apart by their dates, July 22nd and July 24th, and these, we may infer, were hurriedly prepared just before the Tachibana-maru entered port, while others which had been sent from Japan addressed to North-of-Australia Expedition units (Special Military Return Postcards) are thought to have been among the personal effects of soldiers on the ship which had been either handed over or confiscated. Even in the case of the single copy of Navy-Ministry-issue Special Military Air Postcard with Reply Label attached, described in my previous article in the Kansai-yushu July issue, the sender's unit code, SE40 SE131 SE26, is that of the 26th Naval Construction unit, Ambon Detachment, and it may be conjectured that he was someone dispatched to the Kai Island or otherwise there on official business.

One of the unused Gunji-yubin cards has the very commonly seen 'Dove & Helmet' imprinted design, but it is type in which the lines in the dove's tail and across the bottom of the helmet are missing. Comparing with those produced in Japan and based on paper quality, I think it is of Japan printing. But it is inconclusive. (One of the normal type is on the right and one of the type with lines missing from the dove is on the left — see illustration.)

Another of the unused postcards is one I had not seen previously. I believe it to be very rare. It is a variety of what is known as the 'Special Military Air Postcard with Reply Label Attached', but compared with those produced in Japan, it is smaller by 1mm in length and 2mm in width. It is printed on thick paper, pale yellow in color, and the characters (squared-style) used for the legends 'Yubin-hagaki' and 'Rikugun-juppeibu-hakko' are somewhat smaller and cruder. Upon close examination of the Reply Label in the upper right corner, there are minute differences on some characters, but the aircraft silhouette appears fatter than on these produced in Japan. This postcard looks like the one previously reported by Mr. Takao Suzuki (Philatelist, July 1975 & Feb. 1981) which was posted by a soldier of the Java Expeditionary Force (16th Army). Since the Tachibana-maru had called at a port on the island of Java, it is possible that it is one of those produced locally in Java. (see illustration.)

After processing for the collection of intelligence, the bulk of the Gunji-yubin cards included in the material either surrendered or

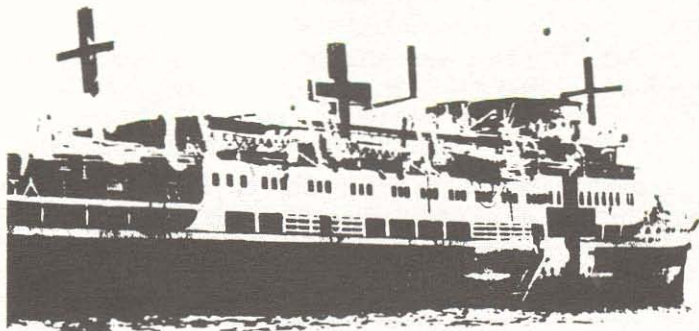
seized was disposed of by burning by the U.S. forces in Manila, after the end of the war as well as before, while those who sent them as well as those to whom they were addressed vainly waited for them to reappear. These cards with the personal tidings of soldiers of the North-of-Australia area were among them. Who could have foretold that these would find a different destiny at Manila?

NOTE:

My thanks to Dr. Jacobs & Mr. Garrett for material and information used, as well as to Mr. Shigetaka Onda for use of his book. My gratitude to Mr. Rasmussen (NYC), for his translation.



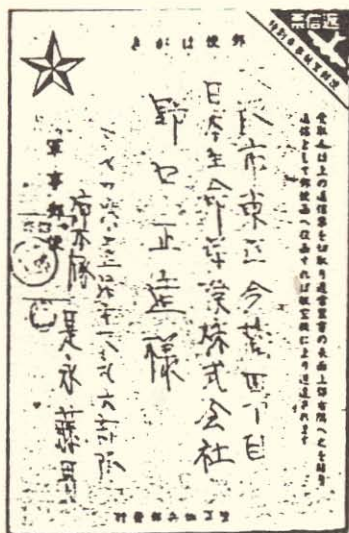
Sea-route of Tachibana-maru after June 1945.



TACHIBANA-MARU.



Unused "Dove & Helmet" card.



Java
Expeditionary Force.



"Censored"
Rubber stamp.



Two US destroyers, the U.S.S. Charrette and the
U.S.S. Conner

International Philippine Philatelic Society

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