

BELGIAN CONGO



STUDY CIRCLE

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NEWS AND VIEWS

A Bit of Publicity In response to an article written in The American Philatelist "So What Else Happened in 1886?" (September AP, Page 841) your editor wrote in to claim the well-intentioned author overlooked the year of the founding of the Belgian Congo. With the letter went photo copies of two covers received from our membership - one from Zaire and one from Belgium - both showing the extremely attractive stamp to proclaim the date. The edited version of my letter did not show the covers, but we did get a bit of publicity.

Word has been received we will get a lot of attention with the January 1987 issue of The American Philatelist. Peter Foden's article on the Paysage Issues will be the feature article and I am told we will have the front cover in color. Bill Welch, the Editor, has written that he thinks our group will be well pleased.

New Members - Two new members have joined our group:

R. Ohrneman, Brotby, SWEDEN

Harry A. Eisenstein, Highland Park, Illinois, U.S.A.

Mr. Eisenstein is the first new member to complete our new application blank (a copy is enclosed with this issue of the Bulletin). He comes to us as a result of my letter appearing in The American Philatelist concerning 1886.

While living in Illinois, he does winter in Florida. He is a life member of The American Philatelic Society as well as F.R.P.S.L. In addition to all types of Congo philately (including Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi), he also collects Costa Rica, Haiti, Brazil, Argentina, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama, Guatemala, Uruguay, Venezuela, Honduras, etc.

With that type of background, we certainly welcome you to the Study Circle and we are certain you can contribute much to our studies.

New Contributors - Your editor's job has become a real pleasure with several new articles by members. In fact, we have had so much material to select from that a major article (yes, even two of them) had to be pulled to keep our publication into a manageable size.

To continue with your editor's "This Old House in the Congo", Edgar Hirdler was kind enough to send a postcard to add to this feature. If other members have similar material, all you have to do is run off a copy (front and back will be fine) and it will be included in future issues. Who knows, we may get enough material from our members to some day publish a book on the architecture of Africa!!

So thanks to Comdt. Peter Farry, Ronald E. Strawser and E. A. Hirdler for your contributions.

AEROGRAMMES OF THE BELGIAN CONGO

From 1955 to 1960 the Belgian Congo issued aerogrammes. Both the Higgins & Gage (H&G) and Stibbe catalogs recognize three different printings or issues. After studying the 10 aerogrammes in the authors collection under visible, and short and long wave ultraviolet light, it now appears that there were at least five separate printings or issues.

While H&G and Stibbe differ somewhat in their descriptions of the colors involved, they basically agree that there were three printings of the 4 Fr aerogrammes as follows:

1. Magenta on light blue with fine watermark
2. Magenta on turquoise with course watermark
3. Magenta on light blue with course watermark

Both H&G and Stibbe agree that horizontal or vertical watermarks can be found on each of these three printings.

While studying under ultraviolet light five aerogrammes that would be classified as #1 above, it became apparent that three different printings were represented rather than one. The table below describes the five printings' characteristics. It should be noted that the description of color under ultraviolet light is even more difficult than under visible light. This is likely dependent upon the frequency of the ultraviolet light to a certain degree.

H&G and Stibbe#	Author #	Paper Color		Magenta Ink Color		Watermark	Earliest Known Use
		Visible	Ultraviolet	Visible	Ultraviolet		
1	1	light blue	medium gray blue	magenta	magenta	fine 25mm h&v	Aug 18, 1956
1	2	light blue	dark gray	dark magenta	bright vermilion orange	fine 25mm v*	Aug 04, 1957
1	3	light blue	dark gray	magenta	magenta	fine 25mm h*	May 24, 1958
2	4	turquoise	light turquoise blue	dark magenta	dark magenta	course 29mm h&v	unavailable
3	5	light blue	light gray blue	magenta	magenta	course 28.5mm h&v	Jun 04, 1960

*Although both orientations of the watermark have not been seen on these two printings, this is likely due to the limited number of examples available to the author. It would be presumed that both vertical and horizontal watermarks exist on each of these printings.

According to both Stibbe and H&G, the aerogrammes with the fine watermark were also overprinted "KATANGA." Thus these overprinted aerogrammes might also warrant further study.

The order for author numbers 1, 2, and 3 were based on date of first known usage which is subject to change.

The author would appreciate seeing any copies of this aerogramme, especially used copies. The author wishes to thank Ray Keach for his assistance in the preparation of this article.

Ronald E. Strawser

TER HELME This year's joint meeting with the Belgian Study Circle was a great success and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended, as well as providing the opportunity to make new friendships and renew established ones. Displays included an excellent slide presentation by Dr. Hoffmann of his covers and postcards, in the form of a geographical safari of the Congo, showing markings of all the post offices for the period up to 1909 - some of these cancellations are seldom seen. Mr. Du Four then showed a most interesting selection of covers and markings from the Lado Enclave. For the joint meeting in the afternoon, Mr Deynckens provided a comprehensive display of covers and documents detailing the history of the Compagnie Maritime Belge du Congo, its cancellations and ships, and this was followed by additional material for other shipping lines which members had brought along. All this was on the Saturday, 13 September, and was the prelude to the formal dinner, which was also most enjoyable. Finally, a number of members spent several more hours in the bar, still discussing stamps.

On the Sunday, we had a display of Ruanda-Urundi stamps and postal history of the period 1924-62, mainly provided by Mr. Keach, with some additional material from other members. This was an interesting and unusual display, because not so many members are serious collectors of the post-Mols issues of Ruanda-Urundi and some of the material is much scarcer than the catalogues suggest, especially some of the postal stationery in used condition - some items are still unrecorded thus! Next, Mr. Vindevoghel showed us his collection of East African Campaign postal history as a "new discovery" - really a complete new collection which he has started to put together and which is already impressive. In the afternoon, members had brought along any items which puzzled them, or about which they wished additional information. A broad spectrum of interesting material was shown and some questions could be answered, though by no means all.

It is clearly impossible to do justice to such a meeting in a brief report, but some 18 members and wives (only counting BCSC) had a very good time. Our special thanks are due to Mr. W. Deynckens, who worked very hard to ensure that all the arrangements were perfect.

TADWORTH - 18 OCTOBER MEETING In just one sense, this meeting was a disappointment - only 4 members were able to attend. That being said, they spent a most enjoyable and informal afternoon studying almost 300 sheets of air mail covers, from 1921 1st. LARA, to 1985 50th Anniversary of regular Sabena service. Members who have previously attended meetings at Tadworth will be well aware of the Keach hospitality, which was in no way lacking on this latest occasion.

STANLEY GIBBONS SIMPLIFIED CATALOGUE - STAMPS OF THE WORLD Members who make purchases based on this Catalogue, which is widely used by dealers in the U.K., are warned that a rather expensive error has crept in - as far back as 1983 and possibly earlier. The 1909 10fr value, overprinted "CONGO BELGE" has been priced as for the scarce perforated 14 stamp, instead of the much commoner perf. 12 stamp. SG prices are thus £110 mint and £55 used, for a stamp which is priced in the 1987 Catalogue Officiel at 3500fr mint and only 700fr used. Remember too that the scarce stamp is the original printing, actual perf. 14 $\frac{1}{4}$, the Princes printing stamp, perf. 14, is worth very little more than the perf. 12 stamp, as far as the typographed overprints are concerned.

BULLETIN INDEX An index to the first 50 issues of the Study Circle Bulletin appeared in December, 1984. A self-contained index to issues 51 - 62, compiled on the same principles, will be prepared early in 1987 and will be sent to all members as soon as is practicable.

At the end of 1988, it is hoped to produce one combined index for 72 issues: during that year, members will be requested to advise of any earlier omissions and to put forward suggestions for any changes in format or other improvements.

COMPUTERISATION The Secretary very much hopes to be able to put all membership records on to a home computer in the near future. This means that, initially, it should be possible to keep on this basis:-

- a complete name and address list of members, for use by the Secretary, Editor and Sales Secretary;
- a list of members, showing only abbreviated addresses, but including brief specialised interests, for periodic issue with the Bulletin.

Eventually, it should also be possible to produce address labels for distribution of Bulletins, notices, etc., and to keep the Study Circle accounts - both quite time-consuming tasks for the Secretary.

But, and it is only a small but, there is in the U.K. a Data Protection Act, which restricts the information which can be held about members on a computer without their agreement. This does not affect the simple list of names and addresses, but a note of specialised interests cannot be included if members disagree. Therefore, if you do not wish any information about your specialised interests to be held on a computer system, please let the Secretary know before 31 March, 1987.

HELP WANTED! In the last Bulletin, the Editor noted that we were considering the possibility of a "clearing house" for information for newer members. We have now had time to think more carefully about this idea and have identified two ways in which this could be done. All members, but in particular those who have joined relatively recently, are thus invited to help by sending in suggestions for the following:-

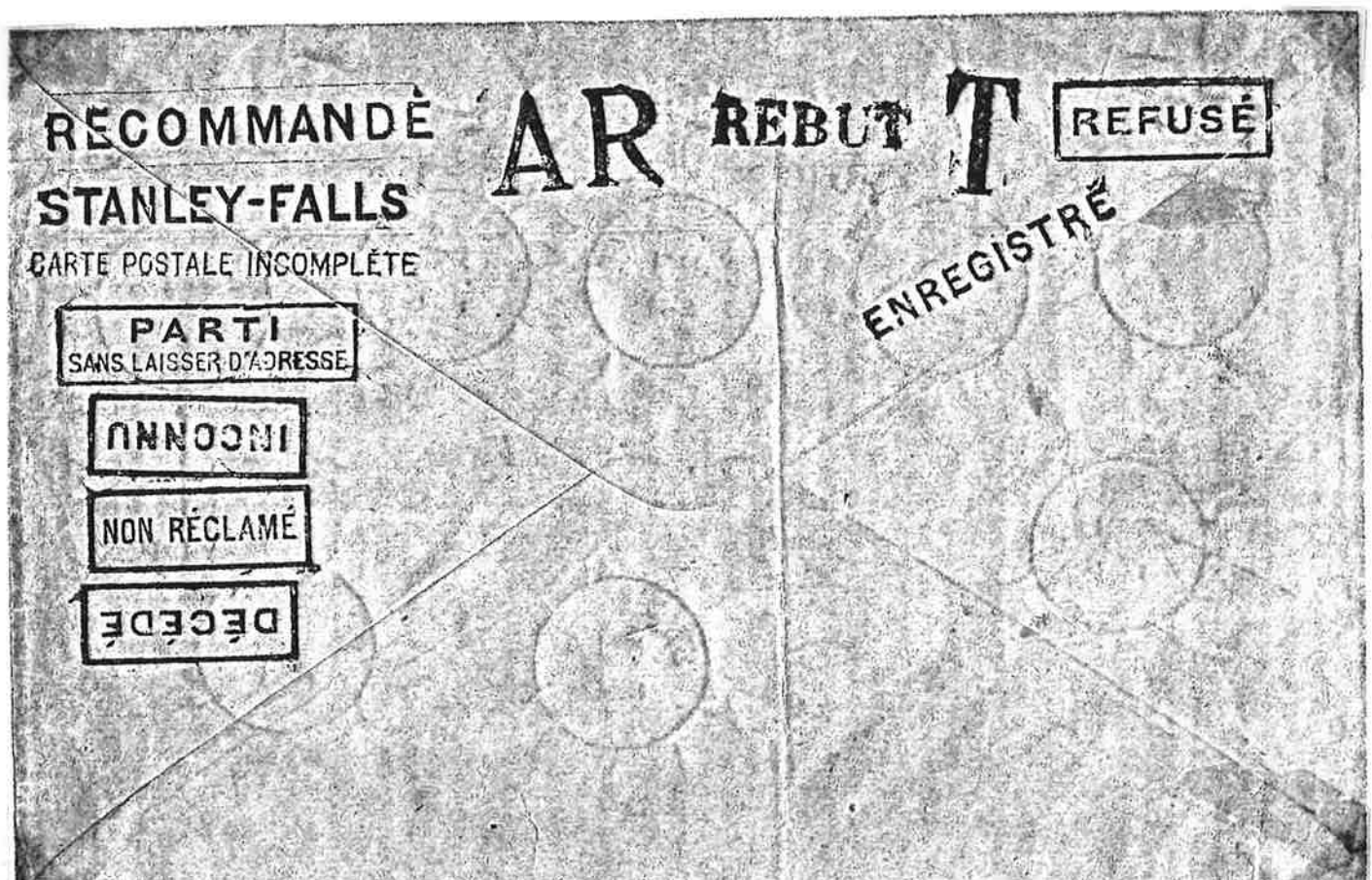
- 1) A standard letter, giving all the benefits of membership, which can be sent to all who write requesting details of the Study Circle. The Secretary has tried to work such a letter up over the years, but is conscious that he may be taking certain things for granted and not giving a properly balanced impression.
- 2) A list of what you consider to be the most likely questions that new members would ask about Congo stamps or philately generally. It does appear that certain questions come up fairly often - e.g. an explanation of the Princes Issue - and it could save a great deal of repetitive letter writing if a set of questions and answers could be produced and sent out as a matter of routine to all new members when they join.

- 3) Perhaps linked to 2) above would be the production of a simple glossary of the most commonly used specialised terms in both French and English.

All ideas and comments will be most welcome and this is one area where newer members will probably be able to make more of a contribution than those who have, as it were, grown up with the Study Circle and picked up considerable knowledge over the years.

EARLY POSTAL MARKINGS

The illustration is of the reverse of a cover cancelled Service des Postes, Stanleyville, 22 May, 1906. It shows a selection of instructional markings, possibly the total of those available at the post office at the time. Clearly the markings have been applied by favour and do not relate to the actual cover, but the whole is a most interesting and welcome example of seldom seen marks.



A STUDY CIRCLE COMPETITION Knowing how few members can ever manage to attend meetings, and therefore how much information and opportunity to view rare items are not available to many members, the Editor has come up with a bright idea:-

"Over the years, just a few of our members have been involved with exhibiting in either local, regional or national shows. On the international level there have been a few attempts, but this has not been a successful venture, as most have felt their exhibits have not been given the proper judging, as few judges are equipped to judge exhibits outside of their own particular interests. In the international category, there was just one Belgian Congo exhibit at AMERIPEX, now considered the largest and most successful international event ever held.

It is felt that exhibiting serves a most useful purpose and should be encouraged at all levels of our membership. The very fact that there is competition (which does not exist in a meeting presentation) encourages the exhibitor to improve his exhibit and to make every effort in his power to enhance what he is showing. Many of our members have never shown items of great interest to all, and it is hoped that by having an exhibiting forum established within the Study Circle, it will encourage our membership to be active in the exhibiting arena, be it local, regional or national in scope.

But how can this be done when we all live so far apart and in a venture wherein all members can participate. One way is to use the ubiquitous photocopier. If members would photocopy what they would like to show, and all entries were sent to a city wherein members of the Study Circle could serve on a jury (at least they would know something about what they were viewing), awards could be made as Study Circle Awards, and, after the competition, some of the best pages could be shown in the Bulletin.

Many of our members have been reluctant to get into the exhibiting field, but there is help available. Within our membership, we have a few who have taken the hard knocks of exhibiting and can explain the drawbacks and advantages. It can be fun - not so much for winning - but for a chance to show what your particular interests are. Pride of ownership is involved, and why we find our particular hobby so fascinating."

This suggestion was brought to the Ter Helme meeting by our President, Mr. A. I. Heim, together with a photocopy of the exhibit which had appeared in AMERIPEX. The Committee have since considered the idea and would like to recommend it to members, with a few detailed ground rules:-

- 1) The competition should be run annually;
- 2) Three most experienced members will be asked to act as judges;
- 3) The competition will be open to all members except the judges;
- 4) A single facet of Congo philately will be specified for each year's competition - this to allow the judges to compare like with like as far as possible;
- 5) Each entry to consist of 16 album sheets, of which 3 photocopies should be sent to the Secretary for distribution to the judges;

- 6) The judges will operate to the F.I.P. marking system and will make awards accordingly. Clearly the Study Circle cannot run to actual medals, but certificates will be issued showing the standard of award achieved.

Rules 5 and 6 are intended to give the entry sufficient credibility to go forward to a regional or national exhibition - provided the same standard is maintained throughout the larger number of sheets required at these levels.

Using photocopies, of course, two things must be obvious. First, the quality of the actual photocopy should not influence the awards given, but it is in competitors' own interests to ensure that the photocopy is of reasonable quality. Second, it will not be possible, in most cases, for the judges to identify forged stamps, cancellations, material in poor condition, particularly if not on the surface of the stamps, etc. However, any award given in error to an exhibit which includes such items will therefore be no guide whatsoever to the standard which the exhibit would be likely to achieve in any other competition.

IF MEMBERS ARE INTERESTED IN HAVING A STUDY CIRCLE COMPETITION ALONG THE ABOVE LINES; AND ARE PREPARED TO TAKE PART, WOULD THEY PLEASE LET THE SECRETARY KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, SO THAT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FIRST YEAR CAN COMMENCE. SIMILARLY, IF THERE ARE ANY QUERIES OR COMMENTS ABOUT THE IDEA, THE SECRETARY WILL BE DELIGHTED TO RECEIVE THEM.

EDITOR'S NOTE: On the Exhibiting Front

It has been months since I have heard of any of our membership active in the exhibiting area. Hopefully I am not the only one doing this sort of thing. In late October, my five frame display titled "Plating Study of the 25 Centime Inkissi Falls Issue of the Congo (1894-1922)" took a Silver Award at SESCAL '86 held at The Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, California.

There were two beautiful exhibits on plating - one of Denmark and one of Bermuda and none fared better than a Silver Award. In discussing the awards, it became apparent that plating was not high on this jury's list. Further discussion revealed that the jury did not read title pages (they make a big thing of title pages these days) as the jury could not figure out whether the Mols issues were printed in sheets of 25 or 50 - yet on my title page "50 impressions" was clearly stated.

But not to give up! In January I will be showing for the first time a study of the 10c value of Mols (120 pages) at the ARIPEX show in Tucson, Arizona. For the first time, I am also listing my reference sources for the basis of this study. In this way, I hope to educate the judges as many do not go beyond a standard worldwide catalogue to appreciate what is being shown.

EARLY AIRMAIL FROM ANGOLA ROUTED THROUGH THE BELGIAN CONGO

Further to the note in Bulletin No. 58, the International Society for Portuguese Philately has again been in touch, this time with copies of both sides of a cover (shown). The information given is "The cover apparently originated in the Angolan town of Dundo on July 11, 1935, thence to Tshikapa on 12 July, 1935. From there it apparently went to a town in Congo called Luluabourg and then on 21 July to a town in Congo ?(can't make out in lower left corner on reverse) thence to Le Bourget, port of entry in France, arriving in Paris on 25 July.

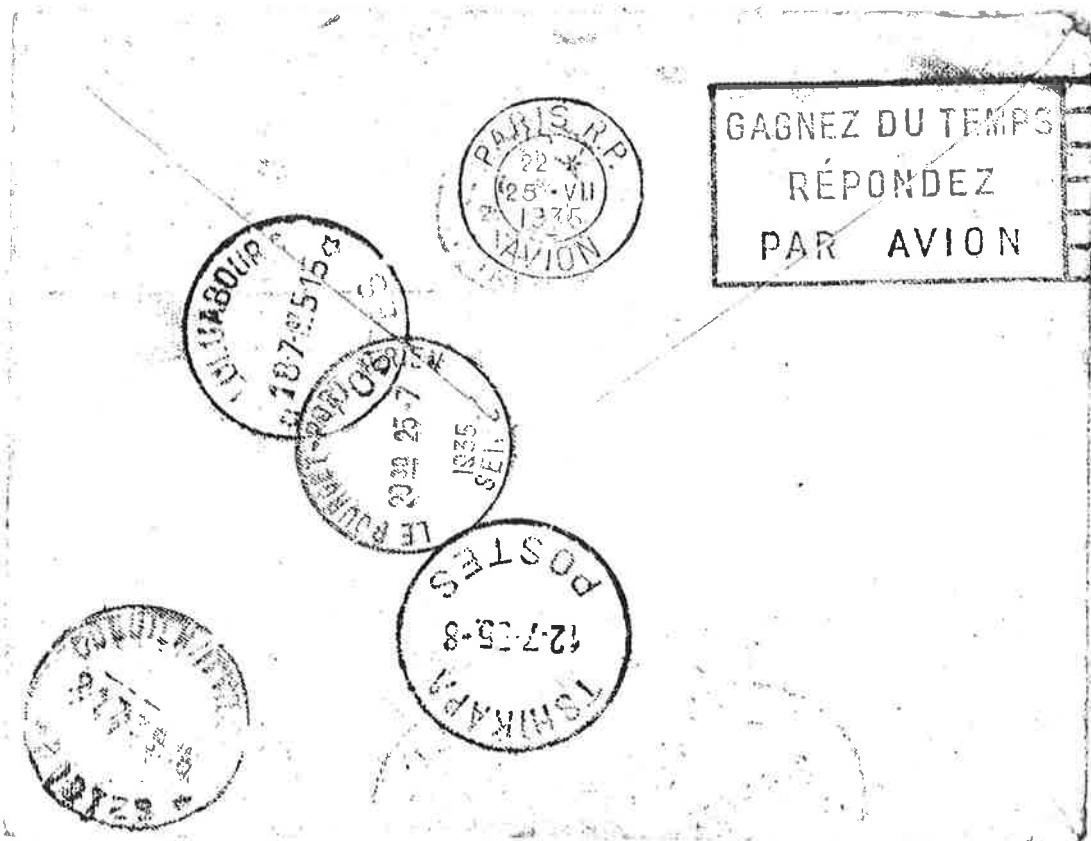
A number of questions arise: What is the significance of the Tshikapa datestamp? Was this the embarkation of airmail out of Congo? I thought the only exit was Leopoldville. (A number of covers during the early 30's went to or through Tshikapa). What does the mark of Luluabourg indicate?"

So far, the Secretary has replied "Tshikapa is relatively easy. It was the nearest Congo airfield to Dundo and was the point of first embarkation of the cover, hence also the point at which the Congo air surtax stamps were cancelled - air mail was a genuine surtax in the Congo and was simply added on top of the normal surface rate, although it wasn't always strictly franked by use of air mail stamps, but in the case of the mixed covers, I expect it was. Franking of 7 francs implies a weight of 10gm, as the air surtax in 1935 was (probably) 3,50fr per 5gm. We are then into the realm of internal Congo air routes and, although Leopoldville was the capital, and terminus of the route from Europe in August 1935, Coquilhatville was more the central point for internal routes (this is the unidentified cancellation). So it looks as if your cover flew from Tshikapa, 12/7, to Luluabourg, 18/7, then changed planes for Coquilhatville, 21/7, where it changed again to the Sabena flight for Europe. I don't know why it took this particular route, because we really don't know enough about the scheduling of the internal air connections, but this may actually have been the accepted and most expeditious route at the time. How much time this saved against a letter being carried from Dundo to the coast and going to Europe by sea, I have no idea."

Can any member add anything further?

EXPERT COMMITTEE

Stamps and cancellations for Certificates of Authenticity are invited to be received not later than 28 February 1987. They should be sent to R. H. Keach, 25 Kingswood Road, Tadworth, Surrey KT20 5EE, G.B. The costs of certificates were given in the June 1986 issue of this Bulletin.



THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL COLUMN

Since the very beginning I have usually managed to get into each Bulletin the odd snippet of information that has seemed to me new, worthy of reminding or of interest to at least myself. Subject to our Editor's approval I propose to accumulate such tid-bits into a Vice-presidential Column, hopefully filling a half-page or so, in each future Bulletin. This will be some inducement to record such information on a more systematic basis.

Mission Gatti

In connection with covers with stamps cancelled MISSION GATTI - CONGO BELGE and MISSION GATTI - RUANDA URUNDI, following my inability to find any reference to it in any reference books, I have wondered if there was ever a Gatti expedition and if the covers were a complete hoax.

Peter Foden has provided the answer by lending me a book 'South of the Sahara' by Attilio Gatti and published in 1946 by Hodder and Stoughton.

Gatti, an American, led several 'exploratory' expeditions to Africa during the 1930's and the main objective of the 1939 expedition appears to have been the capture of an okapi.

The book is a 'popular' travel work restricting its contents to nine experiences during a journey from Stanley Falls through Niangara, Irumu, Beni, Ruanda, Northern and Southern Rhodesia to Natal although this single journey covers three successive expeditions, the last in 1939.

Mr. Gatti had written two earlier books 'Great Mother Forest' and 'Saranga the Pygmy'.

It is evident that MISSION GATTI covers were sold to help finance the expeditions, are purely 'philatelic' in the worst sense of the word and have absolutely no postal significance. They contribute nothing to the postal history of the Congo.

The 'Abnormal' Stamps of the 1921 Issue

In Bulletin No. 61 I expressed my personal views on these stamps and listed the earliest dates on which I could find reference to them in the philatelic literature. Mr. Jacques Du Four has written that, as early as 1936 or 1937, his father had examples of all, including the 1915 stamps surcharged but excluding the 1 franc Princes'. He suggests that it may well have been the then unknown status of the stamps that deterred General Du Four from publicising them.

The 1921 30c/10c with Inverted Surcharge

The earliest reference to this stamp that I can find is in the 1940 edition of the Balasse Catalogue and 'in this and in the 1947 edition it was priced mint and used.

Joseph Wright had a mint block of four which I bought and, too late,

realised that it was a forgery, and a very dangerous forgery.

In his book 'Congo Belge - Cinquante Ans d'Histoire Postale' General Du Four stated that, although the stamp was listed in the Balasse Catalogue, he had never seen an example, presumably meaning a genuine example. The general was much the most knowledgeable Congo collector of his day, indeed of any time to date, and he had access to all the important collections of his time. It seemed probable that genuine examples of the stamp did not exist and all were the products of the forger.

Then, some years ago, one of our members bought a small collection which included the stamp, used at Elisabethville and with the TAXES mark indicating that it had been used for paying postage due. In due course we had no hesitation in giving it one of our Certificates of Authenticity.

By the best of good luck I have been able to acquire another copy, also cancelled Elisabethville (different canceller) and with the TAXES mark. Both stamps are printed from plates III2+C2 and perforated, uncommon enough with the normal 30c surcharge.

It appears very possible that there was a single sheet of the error sent to the Elisabethville post office and used there in the delivery section of the office only for postage due on underpaid packages with no unused copies sold to the public and none used in the ordinary way for prepaying postage.

If any other member has or knows of copies of this rate stamp, will he please inform me?

Forgeries of the EST AFRICAIN Overprints

Another different forgery of the EAAOB overprint has come my way and this makes the third. Inverted and doubled overprints, being very scarce and non-existent for most values, are obvious targets for the forger and have always to be scrutinized very carefully but, in this, I am writing of normal upright overprints which, genuine, are common enough.

The clearest point of difference between genuine and the forgeries seems to be the S of EST but it has to be borne in mind that of the genuine there are two types of S, used for what we now call L1 and L2 of the 'long' overprints.

The forgeries are obviously rarer and, for me, more desirable than the genuine!

Dates of Issue

One of our new members has written to me with a problem that I cannot solve. He has written-up his collection giving exact dates of issue of the stamps as given in Stanly Gibbons catalogue but, on receiving

a copy of the Catalogue Officiel, he finds there different dates. Which are true?

In the following tabulation I have added the information given in the Balasse catalogue.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Gibbons</u>	<u>Catalogue Officiel</u>	Balasse <u>'Arretes'</u>	<u>'Emis'</u>
1894	21.11.94	25.11.94	21.11.94	25.11.94
1900 10c	25.5.00	25.6.00	25.5.00	25.5.00
1925 Colonial Camp.	15.6.25	8.7.25	8.7.25	
1931 40/35c Vloors	4.5.31	15.1.31		
1931 2/,75 F Vloors	25.6.31	15.1.31		
1931 40/35c Stanley	25.6.31	4.5.31	24.4.31	4.5.31
1931 Paysage 2 F and 3,25 to 20 F	1.4.32	5.11.37	11.2.32	1.4.32
Costermansville Sheet	3.10.38	13.10.38	22.7.38	3.10.38
Palms 50 and 100 F	1.1.43	23.5.42	27.8.42	1.1.43
1949 UPU	21.11.49	5.10.49		
1952 Flowers 2 F	18.8.52	10.5.52		
1953 Xavier	5.1.53	20.12.52		
1953 Kivu	5.1.53	2.1.53		

What to make of those differences, some a few days, some months and in a few cases years!?

The greatest inconsistency is in the Paysages high values and it appears that their Catalogue Officiel is in error, the date 5.11.37 applying only to the two values 1,50 and 2,50 F which we know appeared later because of increases in postage rates.

The date of the Costermansville sheet would appear to be a typographical error in Catalogue Officiel.

We know that the 50 F and 100 F 'Palms' were issued after the lower

values and the Catalogue Officiel is wrong.

What of the remainder? I have considerable faith in Gibbons; without pretending that all the information in their catalogues is factual they have always endeavoured, indeed still endeavour, to make it so.

The exact meaning in this context of 'arretes' is not clear to me; does it mean 'decreed on that date by the government for issue on some other date, unspecified' or 'decreed some time earlier for issue on that date'? Perhaps one of our Belgian members can clarify the meaning. Nor is it clear if 'emis' means issued at the philatelic bureau in Brussels or at the main post office in the Congo? Prior to the introduction of the aeroplane for the transport of stamps a new issue could have been made available in Brussels three or four weeks earlier than in the Congo and at Boma or Leopoldville several weeks earlier than at the distant and isolated post offices in the Congo.

There are particularly wide differences in dates in some of the 1931 surcharges and the 1952 2 F Flowers.

In order to clarify the situation our best plan would appear to be to endeavour to find cancelled copies, preferably on cover and with confirmatory transit or arrival cancellation, dated before the later date of issue given in one of the catalogues. Study of contemporary philatelic journals may help, particularly those announcing new issues. At least during the post-war period the Belgian post office distributed leaflets announcing new issues; does anyone have such leaflets announcing any of these particular stamps?

R. H. KEACH

SALES DEPARTMENT

Mr. E. Barstow Smith, an enthusiastic member of the BCSC until 25 years ago when he stopped collecting Congo in favour of Switzerland, decided to dispose of his collection and has passed it to me for sale through the Study Circle. The collection, in 13 bulging albums, included many very good things. Beginning in October I have been gradually working my way through the collection allocating stamps to members whose wants lists I have and many members have benefited. To date I have progressed only as far as the 1909 Unilingual issue and it will be some weeks, maybe months, before I get to the TAXES marks, cancellations and postal stationery.

Many of the wants lists that I have are of ancient date and undoubtedly incorrect. Revised lists will be welcomed and I will do my best to provide wanted items if they are available.

Barstow Smith was I think, after myself, the first who made a study of the Mols stamps by endeavouring to reconstruct sheets from single copies of the commoner values. Partly reconstructed sheets of some of the commoner values will be available and any member, apart from the existing 'platers', who thinks that he may be interested in this fascinating

area of Congo collecting should get in touch with me.

Available from Mr. Barstow Smith's property are:

CONGO - CINQUANTE ANS D'HISTOIRE POSTALE - General Du Four. Price £ 70. Alternatively, highest offer more than £ 50 received before 28 February 1987.

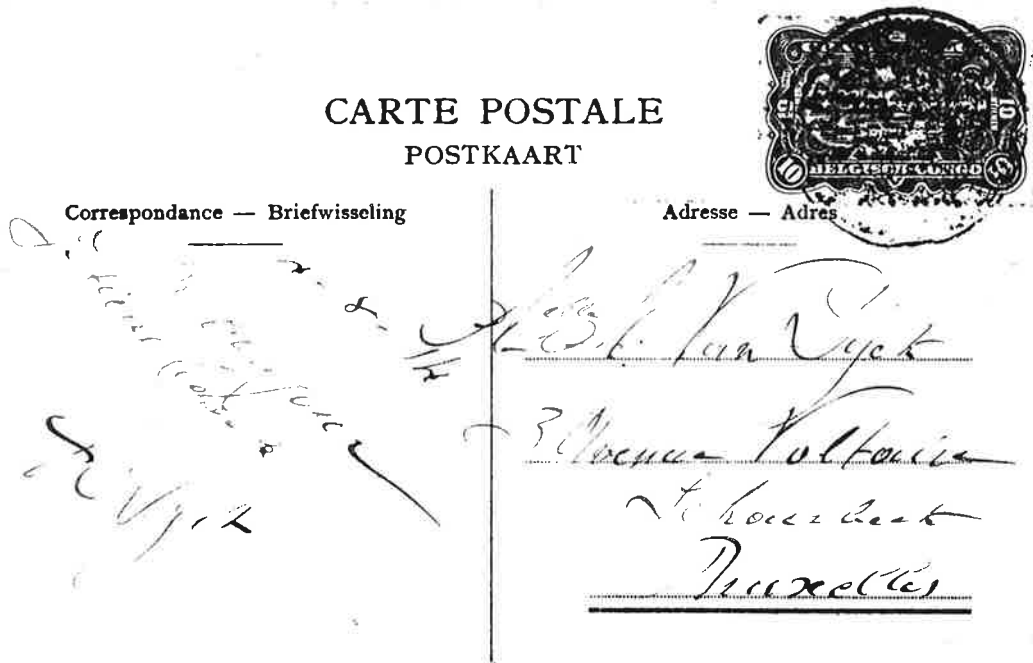
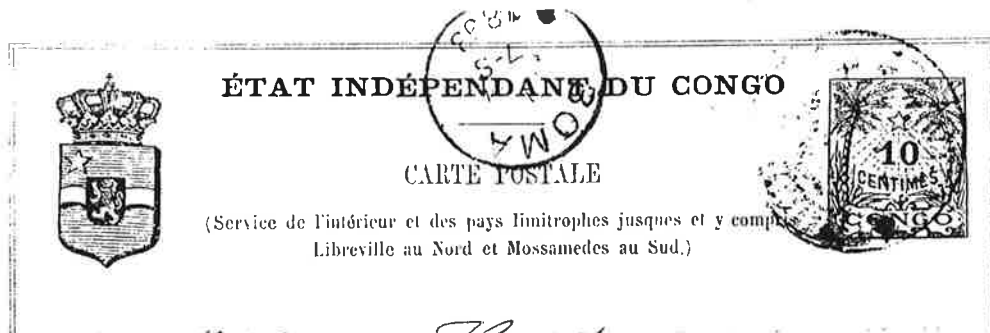
THE BELGIAN CONGO - Stewart Adair (1925 and of historical interest only - 166pp) - £ 1.00.

LE TIMBRE A 5 FRANCS DE 1894 - J. Crustin - £ 7.00

Apply to Keach. Postage extra on the above.

CURIOUS CANCELLATIONS

Illustrated below are two curious cancellations.



At first they puzzled me but after seeing generally similar cancellations from other countries I realised what they are; ink strikes from seals intended for applying to wax for sealing bags of mail. It is not possible, for me, to read the wording on them.

The use of such seals for cancelling stamps is presumably due to accident or to the postal clerk being too lazy to find the correct canceller.

R. H. KEACH

FOREIGN MAIL POSTED IN USA STATE DEPARTMENT DIPLOMATIC POUCHES

In Bulletin 41, page 28, Mr. Keach poses some questions relating to a cover in his possession which travelled by (USA State Dep't.) pouch from Leopoldville to Washington, D.C. with Congo stamps affixed, was cancelled in D.C. and sent on. Someone had pencilled a note on it: 'Stamped in country of origin as required, sent in diplomatic bag and posted on.' ...

For five years the writer has looked for diplomatic pouch covers and provides a partial answer as follows:

For some decades the USA State Dep't. has permitted its personnel at overseas Embassies and Consulates to place mail to USA destinations in its diplomatic pouches. Until 1964-65, such mail had to be franked (at the proper rate) with stamps of the country of origin. When the pouch arrived in D.C. the stamp(s) were cancelled Washington D.C. and posted on as indicated on the cover (i.e., surface mail or airmail).

The USA has an Embassy in Cairo and a Consulate in Leo. The writer has six covers and a Xerox of another - two ex Leo and five ex Cairo. All but one bear the inscription 'This article originally mailed in country indicated by postage'. Prior to 1960 this was a 2-line handstamp in magenta. A 1964 cover ex Cairo is machine cancelled in D.C. and the portion of the canceller we call the 'killer' (usually parallel wavy lines or straight-line killer bars but sometimes a slogan or advertisement killer) reads as follows:

 THIS ARTICLE ORIGINALLY -----
 MAILED IN COUNTRY INDICATED -----
 BY POSTAGE -----

My Congo covers are franked (a) 50c Palms, cds Jan 5 1946, the proper rate at that time for Imprimes, and (b) 10F using a pair of 5F 'Five Kings' (CO 347, Scott 303) on airmail letter to Montgomery Ward in Chicago, the proper rate at that time, cds Sep 11 1959.

Of the Egypt covers, two not marked for airmail each were franked with

62/17



MAIL



*Montgomery Ward
Chicago 7, Illinois
U.S.A.*

THE FOREIGN SERVICE

OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

*H.S.
American Consulate General,
Leopoldville, Belgian Congo.*

Don V. Catlett
American Consulate General
Leopoldville, Belgian Congo



Miss Cornelia Bassel
Department of State
Washington, D. C.

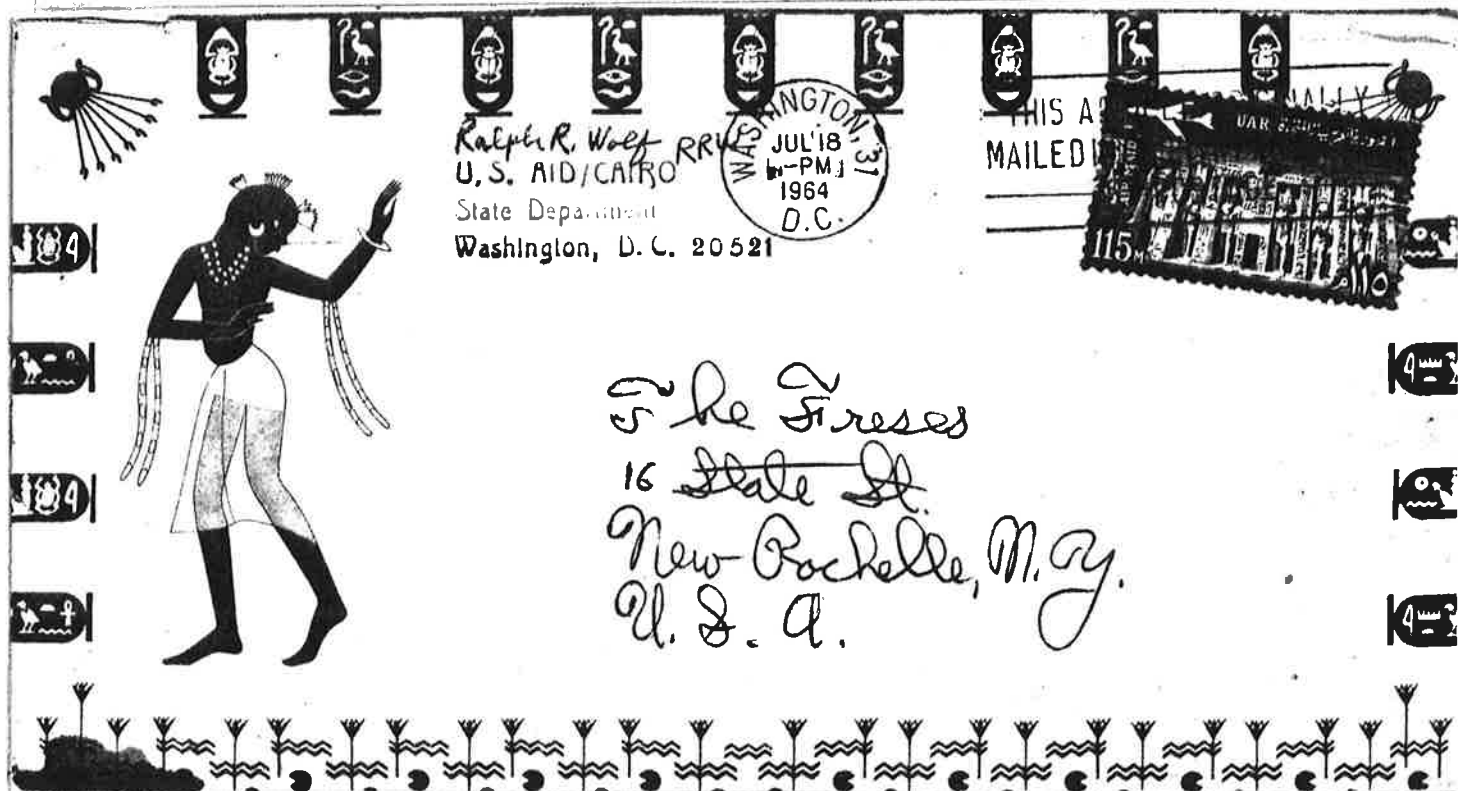
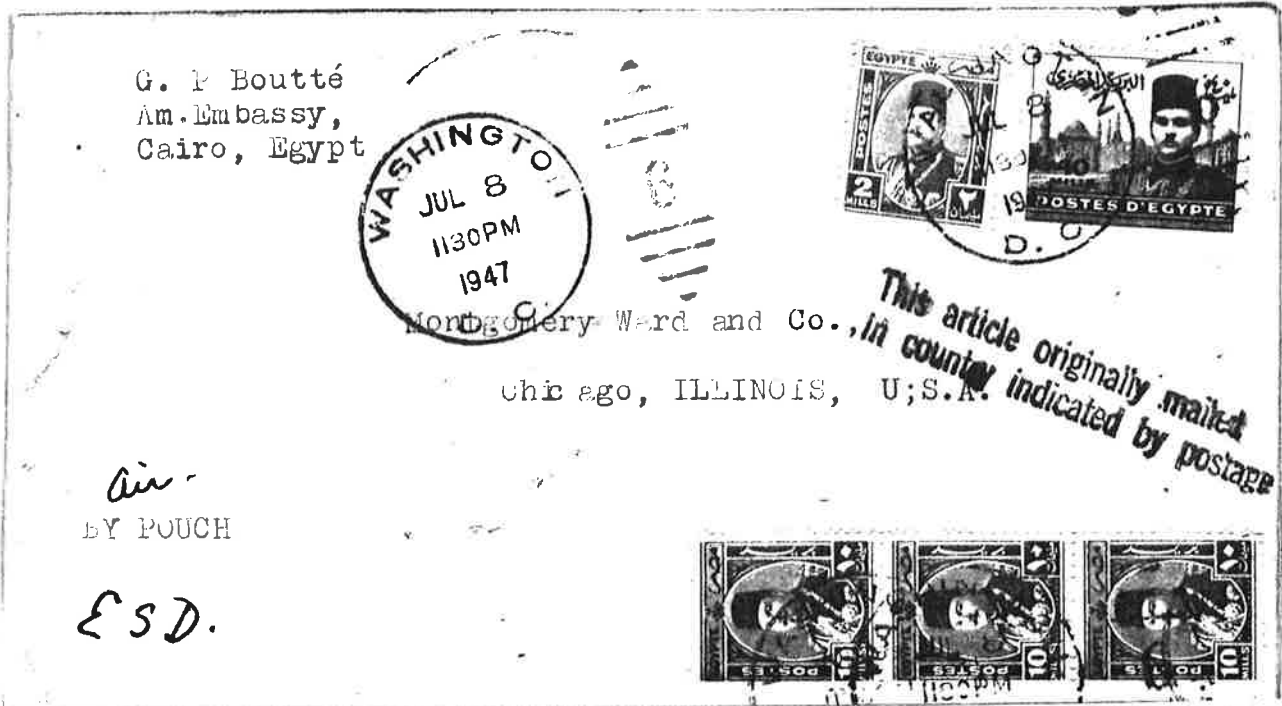
*3334 Reservoir Rd. NW
Washington 6-DC*

RIB

*This article originally mailed
in country indicated by postage*

32 milliemes Egypt definitives and are cds May 31 1951 (addressed to a bank in D.C.) and Feb 11 1952 (to an insurance co. in Maryland which is a state contiguous to D.C.). From many Egypt covers I have, I think 32m was the proper international surface mail rate from Egypt at that time.

Three Egypt covers clearly marked for airmail are (a) cds Jul 8 1947 to Montgomery Ward in Chicago franked with 72m; (b) cds Dec 27 1952 to a man in New Jersey franked with 92m; (c) cds Jul 18 1964 to a family in New Rochelle, N.Y. with the proper 115m Egypt airmail stamp thereon obliterated with the 5-line 'slogan killer' described earlier.



Of these 7 covers, the three with surface mail franking had D.C. (for one, a nearby co. in Maryland) as the destination and would not have travelled in the USA by air even if the covers had so indicated. The four with airmail franking had destinations in N.Y., N.J., and two in Chicago, Illinois and almost surely travelled by air at those times.

I have read in some philatelic article, but failed to record the time and source, that the USA State Dep't. in 1964 or 1965 eliminated the requirement that stamps of the country of origin be used for pouch mail and concurrently authorized the use of USA stamps for that. The foregoing makes it obvious that, by 1964, the amount of incoming pouch mail had become so massive as to justify the dedication of a full-time machine canceller in D.C. with the 5-line 'slogan killer' to cancel it.

E. A. HIRDLER

THE 10FR GROSSEBARBE OF 1891 WAS PRINTED IN SHEETS OF 150

Stamps of the 1887-94 "Big Beard" issue of Congo were printed in sheets of 150 stamps consisting of three panes of 50 stamps (5x10). Full sheets of the 5c, 10c, 25c, and 50c exist in the author's collection and elsewhere. Full sheets of the 5fr & 10fr are not known and it has been conjectured whether they ever existed.

Only 3,000 stamps of the 10fr value are said to have been printed. Some believe that it would have been very wasteful for Malines to have prepared a plate of 150 stamps and then taken only 20 impressions from it. The following indicates rather conclusively that the 10fr was, indeed, printed in sheets of 150.

Balasse Magazine #247, Dec. 1979, has black & white photographs of two multiples that are reduced in size and which do not lend themselves to clear reproduction in this Bulletin. We will describe these multiples, therefore, and those members who have B.M. #247 may wish to examine those two photos in context with this article.

Each sheet of 150 stamps consists of 3 panes (5x10) horizontally arranged. We will refer to these as the l(eft), c(entre), R(right) panes and number the stamps in the top row of the L pane #1-5, C pane #51-55, R pane #101-105.

The author's sheets of 150 of the 5c, 10c, and 25c each have hand-stamps in the upper selvedge in vermillion. These vary in distance above the top row of stamps but are uniformly above certain stamps on all 3 denominations (also, on the multiples in B.M. 247):

	TIMBRES·POSTE a 5 cmes	NO 001013			
	TIMBRES·POSTE a 10cmes	NO 000970			
	TIMBRES·POSTE a 25cmes	NO 001689			
ALL THOSE ARE	} GUTTER	} 101	} 102	} 103	} 104
OVER STAMP POS. 55					

B.M. 247 photos the upper $\frac{1}{2}$ pane of the 10fr with L & R attached gutters. The TI of TIMBRES is above position 55 and MBRES·PO in the gut-

ter, as above. This block of 25 clearly was separated from L & R panes by vertically tearing along the perforations to the R of positions 5,10,15,20,25 and to the L of positions 101,106,111,116, 121 .. To this point, all this tells us is that the block of 25 was printed in the C pane - not whether the paper to the L & R of the perforations had stamps printed thereon, or was blank.

But, adjacent to the photo of this block, B.M. 247 also pictures a horizontal pair, used, clearly positions 101 and 102 because they have the upper selvage attached and it has the STE a 10fr No on it. The 6-digit sheet number does not appear because all 6 digits appear above #103 & 104 on the author's sheets and, therefore, on stamps to the right of the pair in B.M. 247.

Therefore, the 2 multiples in B.M. 247 clearly establish that the 10fr was printed in at least the C and R panes (presumably also the L) of a sheet of 150. Du Four's monumental book states (twice) that the 2nd issue was printed in sheets of 150. We KNOW he was correct on the 5c, 10c, 25c and 50c. We now know he was correct on the lowest printing of all, the 10fr. Presumably he was also correct on the 5fr and the unissued 25fr and 50fr.

E. A. HIRDLER

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Comdt. Peter Farry
Naval Base,
Havlbowlne,
Co. Cork
Ireland
12.8.86

The Bulletin Editor
BCSC

Ref.- Mr. R. H. Keach's article on "United Nations Mail from the Congo" in Bulletin No. 60.

1. I wish to offer some comments on the subject which might/might not throw some light on his query.
2. While I did serve with the U.N. in the Congo on two years of duty in 1961/62, I don't have any experience of the official postal system there and in any case I was only interested in the adhesive stamps then.
3. What I can comment on is the UNIFIL postal system pertaining in Lebanon in 1981, which was probably not much different to the Congo operation, particularly in relation to official mail.
4. Among other postal systems in UNIFIL a U.N. mail room was operated at U.N. HQ Nagoura, principally for official mail to:-

- a. U.N. HQ New York
- b. UNTSO Jerusalem
- c. UNDOF Damascus
- d. UNTSO Amman
- e. UNIFIL Beirut
- f. UNFICYP Nicosia, Cyprus

All above mail was dispatched from Najoura (with no adhesive stamps) in a sealed diplomatic pouch as follows:

- a. Each Friday carried by hand across the Israeli border to catch a regular Swissair flight from Tel Aviv to New York via Zurich.
- b.)
- c.) By road.
- d.)
- e. By road or Italaire heli flight.
- f. By road to Jerusalem, then by regular U.N. aircraft flight to Cyprus.

5. U.N. New York stamps were on sale in the mail room in Najoura for use on official mail to any other location (other than contingents home country, to which they could send it free through their own postal system).

This mail received the U.N. New York cancellation on arrival via the diplomatic pouch and was dispatched through the normal U.S. mail system (presumably) to its destination.

As far as I could establish anyone could use this system (see fig. 1).

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FORCE INTERIMAIRE AU LIBAN



Mrs TERESA FARR
5 MONTENOTTE GROVE,
MONTENOTTE,
CORK.
IRELAND.



FIG I.

However the French-run Forces post office in Najoura provided this service for all the contingents mail (private) to destinations other than home countries.

This received a French stamp and Field Post Office No. 125 postmark and travelled via Paris to its destination (see fig. 2).

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FORCE INTERIMAIRE AU LIBAN

Mrs. Teresa Farry,
5 Montenotte Grove,
Montenotte,
Cork,
IRELAND.



302



2,60



FIG 2.

6. There is no distinctive handstamp applied in the U.N. Najoura mail room, so unless there is some office/unit cachet with a date signifying the items place of origin, there is no way of distinguishing Najoura U.N. mail from the regular mail posted from HQ New York.

7. Enough of this rambling, what of Mr Keach's two covers?

Working on the premise that the system was somewhat similar in the Congo, his first cover was sent from U.N. HQ Leopoldville, stamped because of the fact that it had to be posted on to Canada. It went in the New York diplomatic pouch on presumably a regular flight from Leopoldville to New York.

His second cover obviously originated in Usumbura, Burundi, but whether it went to Leopoldville for stamp and transmission in the pouch or was stamped and sent in a pouch direct from a mail room in Usumbura, I don't know.

Were these facilities (U.N. stamps, mail room and diplomatic pouch) available in Burundi? Maybe some reader could help in this area.

In relation to the cachet "Certifying Officer" I will quote you the U.N. directive in relation to official mail:

"The cover of official mail shall be endorsed 'official mail' and signed by an officer indicating his rank."

This is by way of certifying that

- a. It is official mail and
- b. That there are no prohibited articles enclosed i.e. firearms, explosives, drugs, etc.

See fig. 3 - UNFICYP cover

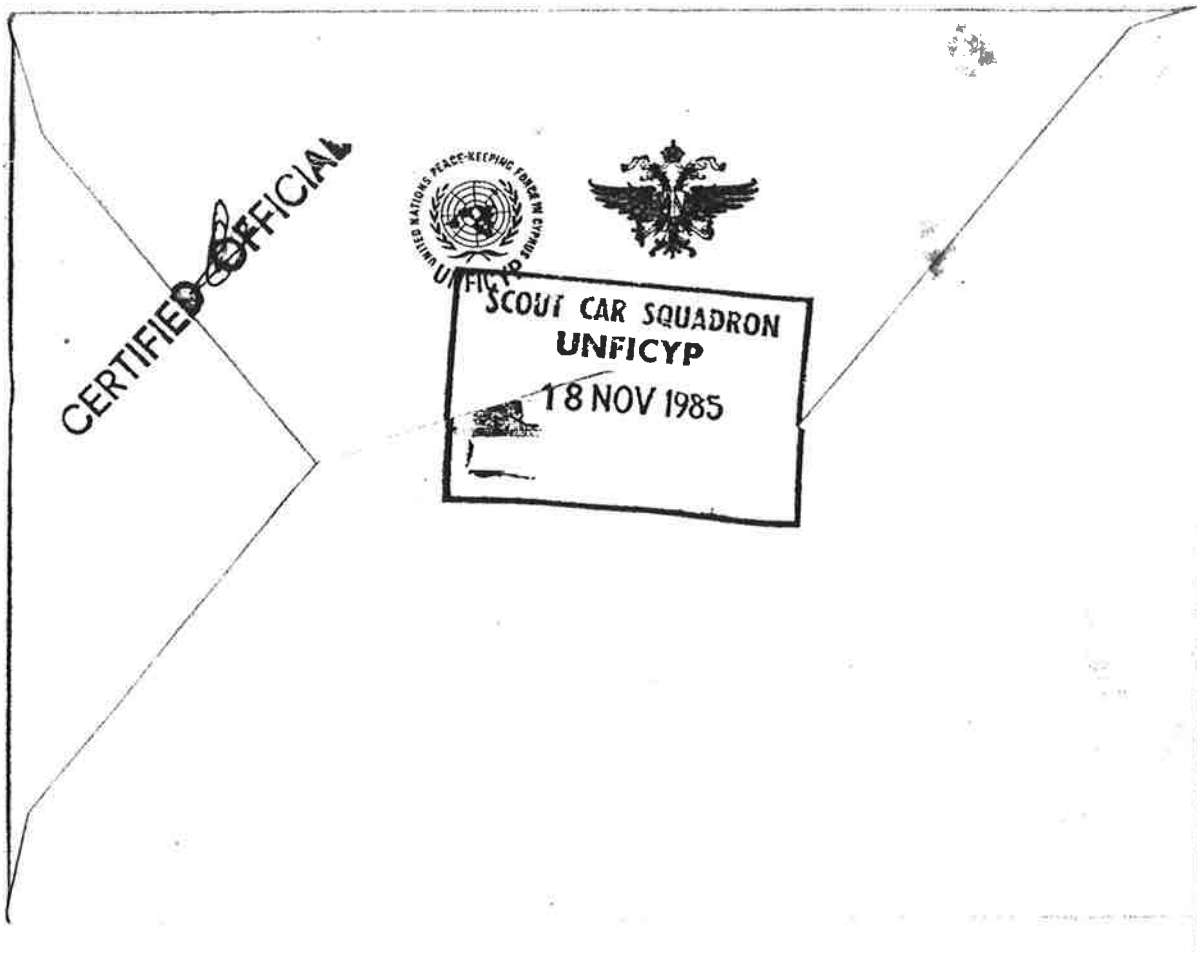
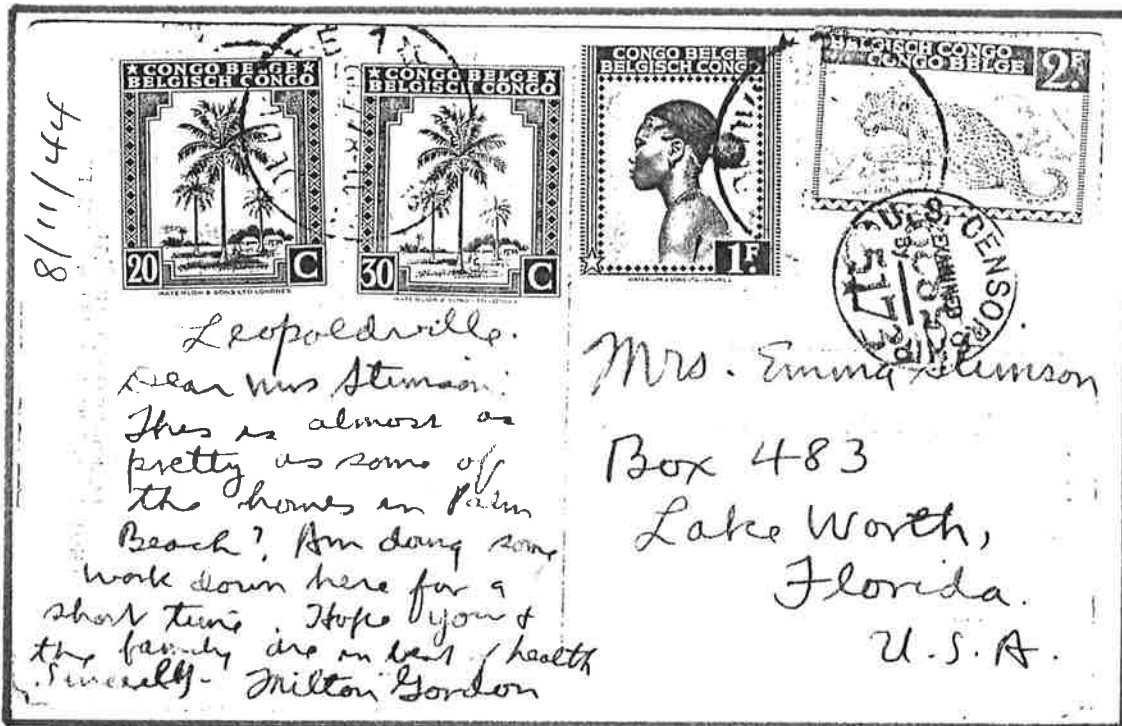


FIG 3.

8. Trusting this may go some way towards answering Mr. Keach's query.

s/ P. Farry

CENSORED POSTCARD OF WORLD WAR II



FROM THE COLLECTION OF EDGAR HIRDLER

PLATES IIII + B5
POSITION NO. 46

