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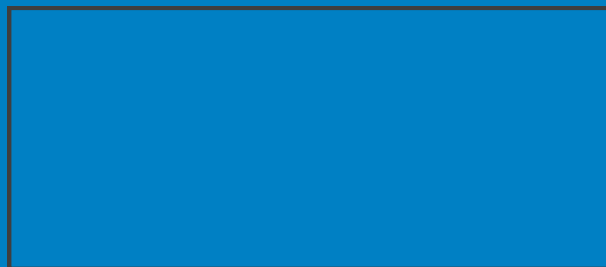
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Netherlands Philately

Magazine of the American Society for Netherlands Philately

Volume 44/5



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Editor's Message

May, 2020

Dear Fellow Collectors,

This issue of Netherlands Philately is back to the regular size of 28 pages. because I had plenty of copy on hand. It even looks like I will be able to produce 28 page-spreads for the next two *volumes* because we have started the process of translating the recently-issued Po&Po book on mail mechanization (see pages 101 through 106 of this issue).

This full-size issue may help you coping with Covid-induced boredom. As I am writing this, Texas will start to re-open within a few days, although we never experienced the strict lock-downs seen in Europe and elsewhere in the USA.

A positive benefit of the travel restrictions is that Marinus Quist, one of our members, has now found the time to write an article (starting on page 86), with hopefully more to come. I hope that more of you will take this opportunity to start pecking away at your computer or putting pen to paper!

Cheers,

Ben

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Advice to Authors

Please submit your text in MS Word, and indicate where each illustration belongs. Submit illustrations as full color scans (at 600 dpi). Contact the Magazine Editor in case of questions.

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The NEI Military Air Letter Sheets (1947-1950).

by Marinus Quist

Back in the 1980s, I purchased a collection of Netherlands and colonies aerogrammes. As I recall, I sent in a mail bid and won the rather sparsely-described collection at a very modest price. What really excited me, when I received the collection, were the numerous Netherlands East Indies (“NEI”) military air letter sheets (“militaire luchtpostbladen”), which I had never seen or heard of before. Because they were marked “militair portvrij” in the upper right-hand corner (thus no imprinted indicia of monetary value) they were not to be found in my 4th and 5th editions of Geuzendam’s “Catalogus van de Postwaardestukken van Nederland en Overzeese Rijksdelen”, which, by its own title, was limited to postal stationery with an imprinted franking value.

Some of the subject military air letter sheets (hereinafter referred to as “MALS”) in the collection were small in format (see Figure 1) and were clearly based on the pre-WWII letter sheets of the NEI, such as Geuzendam’s nos. 3, 4, and 5. The rest of the MALS came in a somewhat larger format; kind of like a number 10 business-size envelope reduced by about a third (see Figure 2). Unfortunately, even my Higgins and Gage “Priced Catalogue of Postal Stationery of the World” did not list these mysterious MALS.



Figure 1: Airmail sheet G1, 230x178 mm, first issued October 1947.



Figure 2: Airmail sheet G12a, 266x164 mm, first issued April 1949.

Shortly thereafter, through the generosity of my Uncle Bert, a fellow philatelist who lived in Holland, I became a member of the ‘Nederlandse Vereniging van Poststukken en Poststempelverzamelaars’ (‘Po & Po’). That was when I discovered that Po en Po had issued a series of Netherlands postal history booklets, including Postal History Booklet No. VII. It was “De Postbladenkwesitie” (the Air Letter Sheet Matter) by Ir. C. Stapel, and it answered most of my questions about the MALS. This well-illustrated 117-page booklet published in 1980 is both an interesting history and detailed catalog of the MALS.

It turned out that the NEI PTT had issued 14 different MALS between 1947 and 1950. They were developed and introduced in order to save space and weight with respect to the large amount of mail generated by the Netherlands military forces that had been sent to the NEI in order to try to re-establish colonial control immediately after the end of WWII. That was because, on August 17, 1945, with the ironic support of the Japanese, who had brutally occupied the NEI since April 1942 and who had already announced their surrender to the Allies (remember, August 14th is VJ Day), Indonesia declared its independence from the Netherlands.

This caused the Netherlands, herself just freed from five grim years of German occupation, to try to regain control of her colony by sending thousands of troops to the islands. At first, the Netherlands Forces were made up largely of units which had been part of General Douglas MacArthur's New Guinea and Borneo campaigns at places like Hollandia, Biak, Morotai, Tarakan, and Balikpapan. After the Japanese capitulation, surviving member of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army, the Koninklijke Nederlandsch Indisch Leger ("KNIL"), many of whom had just been freed from Japanese prisoner of war camps, joined the Netherlands' military buildup. Later, shiploads of regular Netherlands military units started to arrive from the Netherlands. According to the book "Onze Laatste Oorlog" (Our Last War) by A. Verhoog, there were as many as 170,000 Netherlands military personnel in the NEI in 1947, consisting of 105,000 regular army troops, 55,000 KNIL soldiers, and 10,000 naval personnel.

This military buildup, of course, created a huge mail volume problem for the authorities, because efficient mail service, especially air mail, was expected and demanded by the servicemen as being a critical link with friends and family in the far away Netherlands. Servicemen did have unlimited free franking privileges for cards and letters under 20 grams sent by surface mail, but that was fairly slow. Transport ships did not depart daily and the voyage to the Netherlands was nearly halfway around the world. As a result, surface mail took anywhere from 4 to 6 weeks! Unfortunately for the servicemen, this was a time of great limitations on available resources, such as paper, postage stamps, and air transport. Enter, then, the MALS to the rescue.

The MALS were introduced for much the same reason that the U.S.A. made use of V-mail in WWII – to greatly reduce the volume and weight of letters sent by military forces serving overseas. V-mail letters had to be written on special pre-printed single-sheet forms, which were then sent to a processing facility in the field to be photographed and miniaturized on 16 mm film. The film was then transported by air to another processing facility in/near the destination, where the film was developed, enlarged, and printed half life-size. These half-size letters were then put into pint-sized V-mail envelopes for delivery to the recipients. According to a postal history article by Richard B. Graham in the February 20, 1996, issue of Linn's Stamp News, three small bags of film weighing 20 pounds represented some 85,000 letters, which would otherwise have weighed about a ton! That was quite a weight and volume savings, but much too complicated for the chaotic post-war situation at hand in the NEI.

Instead, after much debate and many delays the first MALS finally went into use in late October 1947. However, there were many immediate complaints from the soldiers and sailors: the sheets were too small, each person was limited to only 20 MALS per month (apparently, this limitation was lifted in mid-November, 1947), nothing could be enclosed (as anything over 5 grams would be sent by surface mail, unless sufficient air mail franking was added), and the early issues didn't even have gummed flaps. Additionally, MALS cost 2.5 cents each, in order to pay for the paper and printing costs; and they were only postage free to the Netherlands, the Netherlands West Indies, Suriname, and within the NEI. MALS addressed to other countries had to be appropriately franked with the air mail rate to the destination country from Amsterdam.

In the catalog section of his booklet, Stapel points out that the philatelic world first heard about these MALS in various issues of the 'Nederlandsch Maandblad voor Philatelie' (Netherlands Monthly of Philately) from 1948 to 1950. I looked them all up, but the announcements, by J.H. Broekman in his postal stationery column, are brief and without illustrations. Stapel also mentions a number of previous air mail catalogs that include these MALS (such as those by Tocila, Kessler, and Godinas). While some of those catalogs did include some fairly good illustrations, none of the listings were complete, and some even mentioned issues based on printers' control numbers, which Stapel concluded never existed. He theorized that these were simply errors based on misread numbers due to crude/poor printing.

Ir. Stapel identified 14 separate issues of the MALS and numbered them accordingly, with some issues having several varieties, mostly based on slight type-setting differentiations. In 1989, Ir. Stapel told me in a letter responding to my written inquiries, that he had not identified any additional varieties since the publication of his book in 1980. He also said that he had personally seen examples of every issue and every variety, except issue No. 10, which was issued in very small numbers.

A few years ago, I purchased a copy of the 8th edition of Geuzendam's postal stationery catalog. Much to my delight, this much improved, full color catalog finally included the MALS under the heading of NEI Veldpost (Fieldpost). It was equally satisfying to note that Stapel's original catalog numbering system had been followed with only a few exceptions. The biggest exception was the addition of a MALS issue No. 15, which was illustrated in Stapel's booklet, but not given a number by Stapel because it was not issued by the PTT. However, since it was produced in large numbers under the initiative of the Welfare Service in Soerabaja, a military support arm, it was largely tolerated by the PTT. Interestingly, my only copy was demoted by the postal authorities from air mail to sea post, presumably because it was not an official PTT MALS issue (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: Airmail sheet G15, produced at the initiative of Welfare at Soerabaja.

Geuzendam made several other minor changes to Stapel's catalog numbers. These are:

1. Stapel listed 14 printing varieties for MALS issue No. 5, mostly based on small type-setting differences. Geuzendam ignored all the minor printing varieties and simplified the numbering by designating the version with "Afzender" (Sender) as the first word on the back as issue No. 5(a) and the version with "Rang" (Rank) as the first word on the back as issue No. 5(b).
2. While Stapel listed multiple minor varieties for issues 3, 6, 7, 8, and 12e, Geuzendam decided to overlook these in its numbering system and point to Stapel's booklet for a more detailed look at the various minor printing varieties.

Although I have been able to put together a fairly complete collection of these MALS (except No. 10) and could accompany this article with illustrations of each issue (except No. 10), there is no real need for me to do so. That is because they are reasonably well illustrated by Geuzendam and they are even better illustrated at the website www.postblad.nl.

(with excellent black and white illustrations) by J. Hintzen in a number of issues of Po&Po's periodical, *De Postzak*, between 1989 and 2008. However, the most comprehensive listing of these very elusive MALS, with excellent illustrations, is found on the aforesaid website. Unfortunately, these MALS with printed holiday greetings are very scarce (and expensive), and I have not been able to add any of these to my collection.

Even without an illustrated guide, I should be able to give a brief description which will enable the reader to identify all 15 MALS issues. First, however, a few general observations need to be considered. Nos. 1 through 11, plus No. 15, come in what I call small format (generally about 240 x 180 mm) when folded into fourths (1 vertical and 1 horizontal fold) for mailing. All of these, save for Nos. 11 and 15, are printed in black ink on off-white paper. No. 11 is printed on grey/tan paper in dark blue ink and No. 15 is printed on tan paper in black and green ink. Nos. 12 through 14 come in what I refer to as an elongated format (generally about 260 x 160 mm) when folded into thirds (2 horizontal folds) for mailing. Nos. 12 through 14 are printed in blue ink on white to cream-colored paper, with both the front and back panels covered with an endlessly repeating diagonal overlay of the word "Militairluchtpostblad" (Military airmail sheet) in very, very small letters.

Many of the MALS issues have small printer's control marks on the back or other unique identifiers, and each of the individual MALS issues can be specifically identified as follows:

I Small Format Issues

- No. 1 – No printer's control mark. The only issue with "Batavia" printed on the back in the area for return address.
- No. 2 – No printer's control mark. The front says "Actieven Dienst". The 5th line of the return address area on the back says "Standplaats". There is no printing on the inside.
- No. 3 – Printer's control mark "Nix w.o. 3968".
- No. 4 – No printer's control mark. The only issue with "Adres" printed on the front.
- No. 5 – Printer's control mark "Nix w.o. 5064". (No. 5a has "Afzender" on the 1st line of the return address area on the back, while No. 5b has "Rang" on the 1st line of the return address area.)
- No. 6 – Just like No. 2, but has lavender/pink overlay grid printed on the left inside panel.
- No. 7 – Printer's control mark "Nix w.o. 6211".
- No. 8 – Printer's control mark "Nix w.o. 7442".
- No. 9 – Just like No. 2, but the last line on the back says "(*) Naar omstandigheden doorslaan".
- No. 10 – Printer's control mark "Kolff SB 3738 35.000 11-'48". Holiday greetings printed on the inside in black, green, red and yellow ink.
- No. 11 – No printer's control mark. The only small format issue printed in dark blue ink.
- No. 15 – Has a cartoonish drawing of Wimpy Welfare (a.k.a. Neeltje NIWIN) writing a letter printed on the front and on the inside right-hand panel. "Welfare K.L. en K.N.I.L." (the sponsoring issuer) also printed on the inside right-hand panel. ("K.L." refers to Koninklijk Leger or Royal Army and "K.N.I.L." refers to Koninklijk Nederlandsch Indies Leger or Royal Netherlands Indies Army).

II Elongated Format

- No. 12 – Neatly printed with 30 lines of the above-described overlay in 50 mm. No. 12a has no printer's control mark.
 - No. 12b has printer's control mark "Nix 8068".
 - No. 12c has printer's control mark "van Dorp 8982".
 - No. 12d has printer's control mark "van Dorp 8983".
 - No. 12e has printer's control mark "van Dorp 8984".
- No. 13 – Neatly printed with 34 lines of the above-described overlay in 50mm.
 - No. 13a has printer's control mark "Landsdrukkerij-Batavia 2427 – '49".
 - No. 13b has printer's control "Landsdrukkerij Batavia STT-1256 – '50".
- No. 14 – Crudely printed with 31 lines of the above-described overlay in 50 mm.
 - No. 14a has printer's control mark "Landsdrukkerij Batavia ST-2233 – '49".
 - No. 14b has printer's control mark "Landsdrukkerij Batavia ST – 3368 – '49".
 - No. 14c has printer's control mark "Landsdrukkerij Batavia ST – 4129 – '49".

Production

During the difficult period following the end of WWII, paper supplies in the NEI were scarce and many different paper types were used in printing the MALS, especially the small format issues. Paper colors were mostly off-white, but they ranged from nearly white to cream, to greyish, to yellowish, and even to tan. For example, all of the copies of No. 11 that I own are printed on greyish tan paper and No. 15 was printed on brownish tan paper. No attempt has been made by Stapel or Geuzendam to differentiate between paper colors. Numerous varieties of paper types of varying thickness were employed in producing the MALS, with the early small format MALS being generally made of thicker paper, while the later MALS are printed on smoother, thinner paper. Stapel catalogs a thick and thin paper variety for No. 6, but Geuzendam simply states that the paper thickness of No. 6 varies widely.

According to Stapel and Geuzendam, Nos. 1, 2, and 4 were issued without gum on the flaps. This can sometimes be seen on used copies where the sender has employed stamp selvages or stickers to secure the flaps. Similarly, where home-made glue was used, sometimes the glue residue has darkened with age, resulting in unattractive discoloration of the flaps. Strangely, I have several mint copies of No. 2 with gummed flaps. When I asked Stapel

about this back in 1989, he replied that he could not remember where the information had come from about No. 2 having no gum, as he did not have a mint copy of No.2 in his collection, but that he doubted that my mint copies of No. 2 were privately gummed, as I had speculated.

Before I get into the number of MALS printed, there is one additional production feature of interest. This involves No. 11, which was the first MALS issue to be printed with blue ink and the first one to carry the label “Luchtpostblad” instead of “Luchtpostbrief” (Airmail sheet and Airmail letter, respectively). Some portion of the very large production of No. 11 included rouletted fold lines for the flaps. Presumably, this was done to minimize damage when opening; but it must not have been worth the trouble, as this feature was not repeated on any of the subsequently produced MALS. Neither Stapel nor Geuzendam ascribe any difference in pricing between the rouletted and non-rouletted versions of No. 11.

Although MALS were produced in huge quantities, they are not often seen today in the philatelic trade, maybe because they are very plain in appearance and maybe because they had no franking value imprinted on them like real postal stationery. Doubtless, however, most have probably been destroyed or discarded over the past 70 years. Stapel, citing printing order figures from the PTT archives in Bandoeng, indicates that at least 49 million MALS were ordered in various installments from four different printers between 23 December 1947 and May of 1949. Those printing figures probably do not include Nos. 1 through 4, as these were all issued before December 1947. Additionally, while Stapel and Geuzendam indicate that 15 million copies of No. 11 were produced, that number does not seem to correspond with any of the printing order details listed by Stapel as coming from the PTT Archives in Bandoeng. My educated guess, then, is that the total number of MALS produced likely exceeded 65 million, certainly a huge number.

Based on the foregoing production figures, my own observations, and Stapel’s comments in his booklet, No. 11 was probably the most widely produced MALS issue and the one most frequently encountered. On the other extreme is No. 10, which, according to Stapel and Geuzendam, only had a production of 35,000. According to Geuzendam, a mint copy is not known and even Stapel considers used copies to be extremely rare. I have certainly never seen a used or mint copy of No. 10. Similarly, most of the MALS with privately-printed holiday greetings were also produced in small numbers and should be considered scarce to rare.

Prices/Valuation

In his booklet, Stapel observed that the high prices indicated for MALS in the Godinas and Kessler catalogs were not justified as huge quantities of many of the MALS still existed. However, Stapel then went on to state that all mint MALS are rare. This is not justified either. But Stapel wrote his booklet before the internet came into existence which made it possible to find needles in the worldwide haystack. Think of how many other collectibles that were thought to be rare have come out of the woodwork since eBay and other electronic marketplaces have proliferated on the internet. Even the passage of time after the publication of Stapel’s booklet (1980), but before the establishment of the internet caused Stapel to change his mind a bit about the rareness of mint MALS, because in 1989 he wrote to me that MALS issue No. 1 was, apparently, not rare in mint condition. Similarly, Geuzendam’s prices in 2008 do not seem to indicate much difference in prices between used and mint copies.

Stapel’s pricing table divides the MALS issues into four categories: i) extremely rare; ii) rare; iii) moderately rare (to which he assigned a monetary estimate of 20 to 50 guilders); and iv) common (to which he assigned a monetary estimate of 1 to 5 guilders). Only No. 10 was put in the extremely rare category, while Nos. 11, 12a and 12b, and 14a, 14b and 14c fell into the common category. The rest fell somewhere in between, with Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 being considered rare. My experience is that No. 5 with “Rang” before “Afzender” on the back (Stapel No. 5g / Geuzendam No. 5a) and No. 6 are rare, but otherwise Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 7 are not. I also consider No. 15 to be fairly rare. Stapel did point out that these value estimates only serve to give a rough idea, since the quantities of MALS printed were very large and the number of interested collectors was/is probably very small. Geuzendam, on the other hand, states that, while demand for mint copies, which are fairly scarce, is low, demand for used copies is fairly strong, especially for copies with unusual/scarce fieldpost marks (such as those from outside of Java and Sumatra), copies sent to the Netherlands Antilles/Curacao or Suriname or within the NEI, and copies sent to places outside of the Netherlands’ kingdom and, therefore, franked with stamps.

My own collection contains many MALS sent within the NEI, so I do not agree with Geuzendam on that score. However, I have never seen any MALS addressed to the Netherlands Antilles/Curacao or Suriname, so those are undoubtedly scarce. Also scarce are MALS which have been sent to the Netherlands but had to be franked because of prohibited enclosures (see Figure 4). Similarly, I have only rarely seen franked copies mailed to countries outside the Netherlands kingdom, and I consider these real gems when I can find them at reasonable prices (see illustration No. 5). Think of how many MALS were probably sent to Dutch communities in Michigan, Iowa, and California! There are probably some stamped MALS still to be found in the U.S. Tell your families to check their attics for old Christmas cards from 1947-1950. Maybe a used No. 10 will be uncovered!

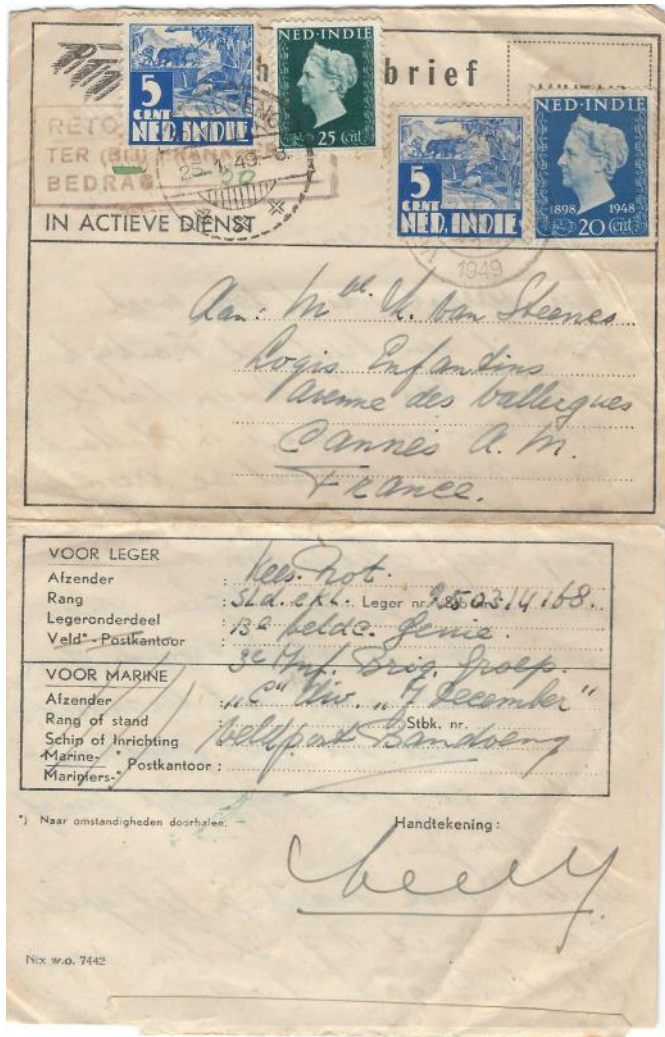


Figure 4: Airmail sheet requiring 25 ct postage because of destination. It received a greyish/violet boxed marking "Retour Afzender Ter (Bij) Frankeering Bedrag 30" (Return to sender for additional postage). "Bij" is underlined and "30" has been entered in green ink (upper left corner). The sender then added 30 ct more franking and the sheet was canceled a 2nd time.

Postscript

After two major police actions by the Netherlands' forces in 1947 and 1948, strong international pressure, especially from the USA, forced the Netherlands to the bargaining table, and Indonesia gained its full independence on 27 December 1949. Shortly thereafter the Netherlands withdrew its military forces and their use of the MALS ended, probably in 1950. Very likely, some MALS may have been subsequently used with appropriate franking by civilians, but the only example that I have of such usage (Figure 6) was clearly for philatelic purposes (maakwerk) and not to save paper or because of a shortage of suitable postal stationery.



Figure 5: Airmail sheets requiring postage because they were mailed to Chicago, USA.

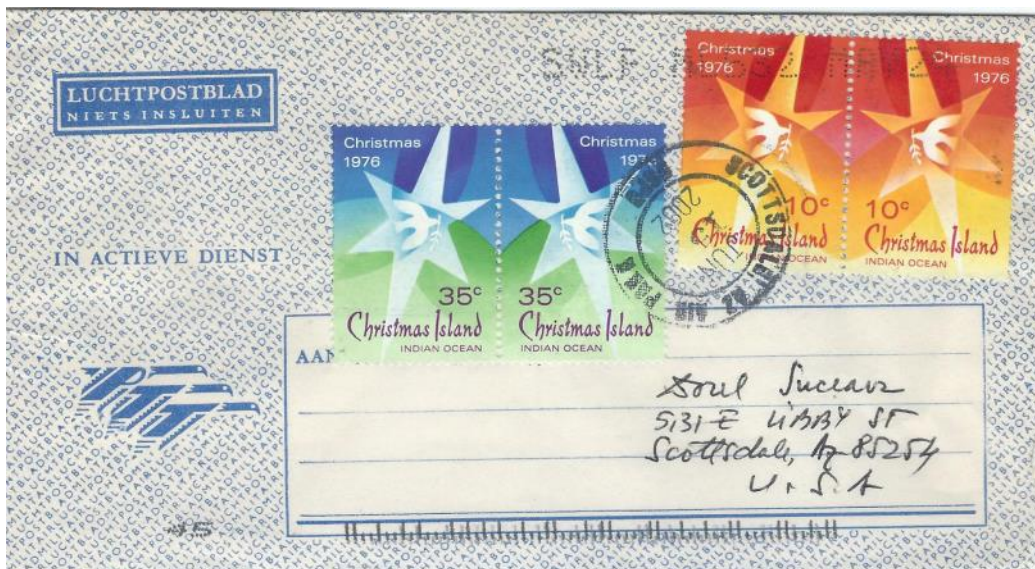


Figure 6: Airmail sheet used on June 15, 2002 in Scottsdale, Arizona.

New ASNP Member

We welcome Les Doti as the newest member of the ASNP. Les lives in Boynton Beach, Florida, and collects stamps from the Netherlands, including perforation and color varieties, booklets, coils and semi-postals. He is also a member of the American Philatelic Society.

Netherlands Philately Down-Under.

by Ben H. Jansen

In March I had the opportunity to visit Australia with my wife. Yes, we managed to get back to the States despite all the Covid scares.

Two ASNP members, Robert (Bob) Finder and Alex Nuijten (past Editor of Netherlands Philately) live in (the suburbs of) Adelaide. Since Adelaide was on our itinerary, I explored the possibility of visiting them. Bob and his wife Sheryl were so kind to invite Alex and us over to their art-filled house on the beach for an afternoon of Netherlands' philately (Figure 1).

Bob, a retired executive of a biotech concern, collects stamps from South Korea prior 1972 and (mint, never hinged) stamps for the Netherlands and Colonies prior 1972. He serves as the co-chair of the Korea Stamp Society (<https://koreastampsociety.org>) and if you are a member of the American Philately Society, you may have seen his recent articles on collecting Korean stamps. By the way, the Korean Stamp Society has an interesting membership and publication model. Membership is free, and articles are published on the web-site as soon as they are ready. Every so often, these articles are bundled in a magazine format, which



Figure 1: From right to left: Bob Finder, his wife Sheryl, Alex Nuyten, your Editor, and my wife Caroline.

members can download and/or print at their own costs through <https://www.blurb.com>. Bob was so kind to give me a copy of the most recent issue (Figure 2). The booklet has a very professional look with its own ISBN, is in full-color (!) and its front and back cover are printed on relatively thick paper. I wish the ASPN could follow a similar approach.



Figure 2: Magazine of the Korean Stamp Society.

Alex works as a land surveyor for the government of South Australia to document Aboriginal heritage sites. He has recently become a philatelic judge accredited by the South Australian Philatelic Council (Figure 3). The medal that comes with this honor is shown in Figure 4.



Figure 3: Alex (left) receiving his judging medal from Eric Hurrell (picture courtesy David Figg).



Figure 4: The judging medal of the South Australian Philatelic Council Inc..

Alex's collecting is focused on the 'fur collar' issue, picturing Queen Wilhelmina and which was issued between 1899 and 1921. One of his quests is to document the many printing varieties that exist (Figure 5). This entails sorting through thousands and thousands of copies of this stamp. Alex explained that he got so many of these stamps through a dealer he knew, who was willing to give him the stamps in exchange for painting his house.



Figure 5: Alex showing some of his discoveries of 'fur collar' varieties.

Our visit concluded with a 'barbie' of steak and prawns, expertly prepared by Bob and served on the backyard patio, overlooking Gulf St. Vincent (Figure 6).



Figure 6: View across Gulf St. Vincent.



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From South America to Holland around 1850.

by Erling Berger

Here we shall discuss two letters mailed from South America to The Netherlands around 1850.

The first letter (Figure 1) was sent from the West Coast of Chile to Holland. The letter was conveyed by a steam ship across the Pacific Ocean from Valparaiso (Chile) to Panama City. From there it was carried by mules, canoes and train across the Isthmus of Panama to Chagres (near Colon), a port by the Caribbean Sea. The final stage was a voyage from St. Thomas to Southampton. From Southampton there were a few hours by train to London and from there by Packet to Rotterdam, a few miles from Schiedam.



Figure 1: Letter posted on 1 March 1853 in Valparaiso (Chile) to Schiedam. (Found in the Delcampe Internet Auctions.)

The letter was written 28 February 1853 in Valparaiso (Chile) and posted and hand-stamped the next day on March 1. The upper-left corner has the hand-written directive *via Panama* (see Figure 1).

Following its arrival in Southampton on Friday 22 April 1853 at 12:50 o'clock, the letter's itinerary was published in various newspapers. For example the Sun of April 23 reports:

In the Pacific Ocean the steamer Santiago left Valparaiso March 1st heading for Panama. The mails left Panama on the 20th and Chagres on the 26th. On April the 2nd the steamer Great Western left St. Thomas for Southampton calling in Fayal in the Azorean Islands on the 15th of April. Arriving in Southampton the Great Western was delayed by some six days to the annoyance of the merchants.

On the 10th of April a female servant had died from yellow fever. She had been attended by Dr. Hyde, 69th regiment during her illness. The regular surgeon, Dr. Morgan had been left behind ill at Barbados.

The letter arrived in London in the evening of Friday the 22nd and stamped in the morning of Saturday the 23rd. This very morning the packet left for Rotterdam.

The steamer *Great Western* mentioned in the *Sun* is pictured on a British stamp (Figure 2). Also, a St. Thomas newspaper reported that the *Great Western* shall leave the Island on the 2nd of April or on the next day (Figure 3).



HER B. Majesty's sloop-of-war *Calypso*, arrived here this morning from Barbados, and exchanged salutes with the Fort. She will leave again on Monday.

THE R. M. S. "Magdalena," with the European Mail of the 17th ultimo, arrived here yesterday in fifteen days from Southampton.—European summary in our next.

The *Great Western* will leave this evening or to-morrow for England.

Figure 3: St. Thomas newspaper reporting on the departure of the *Great Western*.



Figure 2: The *Great Western*.

A report of the departure of the packet appeared in the *Shipping and Mercantile Gazette* (Figure 4), which identified the mail carrier as the *Moselle*.

The mail **steam** packets sailed from London to Rotterdam since 1 September 1832. In the beginning the packet sailed Tuesday and Friday evening, but later on the departures were on Wednesday and Saturday morning making it possible for the early mails arriving in London to come onboard the mail packets.

The *Moselle* arrived in Brielle near Rotterdam in the early morning of Sunday the 24th (Figure 5).

THE SEA-BORNE MAILS.

[FROM THE LONDON POST-OFFICE LIST, PUBLISHED THIS DAY.]

HOLLAND AND HAMBURG.—The *Moselle*, with the Holland mails of the morning of the 23d inst., sailed 23d inst.—The *Concordia*, for the Holland mails of the morning of the 27th inst.

Figure 4: *Shipping and Mercantile Gazette* of Monday 25 April 1853, reporting that the *Moselle* left London on the 23rd,

BRIELLE den 24 dezer. Heden voor posttijd binnengekomen *Moselle* (st.), S. Frost, van Londen, en *Prins van Oranje* (st.), D. Visser, van Duinkerken; de wind W.

Figure 5: The *Rotterdamsche Courant* of 26 April 1853 reported that the *Moselle* with Captain S. Frost arrived in Brielle.

Schiedam was located a few miles from Rotterdam so the addressee received the letter on the 24th. If the letter needed a response, there were departures from Southampton on the 2nd and the 17th.

The red hand-stamp **Engeland/over Rotterdam** was applied in Rotterdam since 1823 for ship letters and since 1832 also for packet letters.

The receiver had to pay 180 cents and Holland had to pay 2 shilling/8 pence = 160 cent to the UK.

The second letter was mailed from Venezuela to Schiedam and is shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6: 1847 November 21st from La Guaira (Venezuela) to Schiedam via St. Thomas, Southampton, London and Rotterdam.

The letter was posted in the port of La Guaira and marked in red

**+CORREO DE VENEZUELA
GUAIRA
FRANCA**

According to the *St. Thomæ Tidende* of 8 December 1847 the mail bag was picked up November 22 in La Guaira and sailed to St. Thomas. Here the steamer *Trent* was waiting for the local steamer *Conway* with the bags from the Lesser Antilles (Figure 7).



The *Trent* arrived in Southampton in the morning of Monday 27 December 1847 just after 9:00 am. The mails were sent to London by the 11:00 am train. The mail for Holland was in this case made up Tuesday evening and brought onboard the packet *Rainbow* heading for Rotterdam (Figure 8).

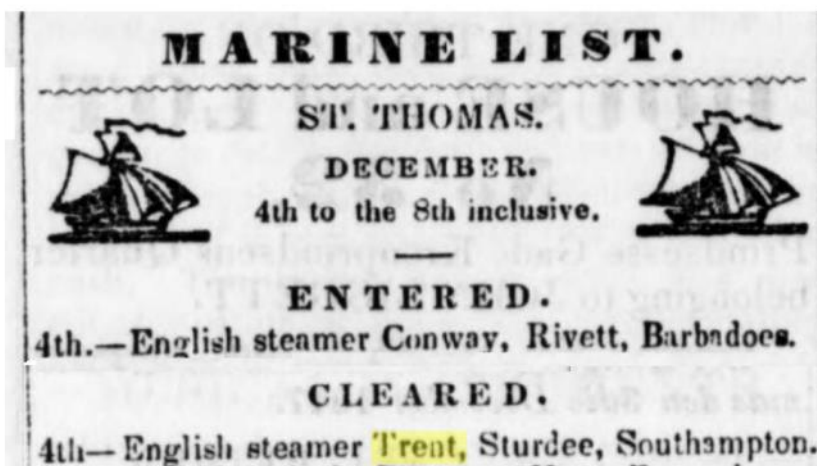


Figure 7: A clipping from a St. Thomas newspaper showing that the *Conway* arrived on the very same day as the *Trent* left St. Thomas for Southampton (December 4th).

POST-OFFICE—(THIS DAY).

HOLLAND AND HAMBURG.—The **Rainbow**, with the Holland mails of this morning.—The *Princess Royal*, with the Hamburg mails of the evening of the 28th inst., sailed this morning.
FRANCE AND OSTEND.—The *Garland*, with the French mail of the 27th inst., sailed the 28th inst., at 2 35 A.M.—The *Violet*, with the Ostend mail of the 27th inst., sailed the 28th inst., at 2 25 A.M.

Figure 8: The Shipping and Mercantile Gazette of Wednesday 29 December 1847 reports that the packet *Rainbow* left for Holland early in the morning of Wednesday the 29th.

According to the *Rotterdamsche Courant* of 1 January 1848, the *Rainbow* arrived in Hellevoetsluis on 30 December 1847 (Figure 9) rather than Rotterdam, because the river was full of ice. Hellevoetsluis is situated on the Dutch coast along the Haringvliet. Hellevoetsluis was so close to Rotterdam that the addressee received his letter on December 30th after 39 days in the hands of the Postal Service.

HELLEVOETSLUIS den 30 dezer. Gisteren na den middag zijn alhier binnengekomen *Skandinayien*, C. Hartvig, v. Corsoer, en *Neptunus*, M. J. Mogensen, van Nestved; heden morgen **Rainbow** (st.), W. Norwood, en *Ranger* (st.), G. Pearson, v. Londen. Al descheppen liggen in het Kanaal en alhier op de haven. Veel ijs op den stroom; de wind Z. O.

Figure 9: The *Rotterdamsche Courant* of the 1st of January 1848 reports that the *Rainbow* arrived in Hellevoetsluis, because of 'Veel ijs op den stroom' (lots of ice on the river).

Sources

British newspapers with paid access:
<http://britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Holland newspapers with free access:
<https://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten>

Danish/In particular St. Thomas Newspapers with free access:
<http://www2.statsbiblioteket.dk/mediestream/avis>

References

Kenton, P & Parsons, H: The Early Routings of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. 1842-1879, Postal History Society, 1999.

Postscript by the Editor:

Both letters are addressed to P. Loopuyt & Co. Pieter Loopuyt (1791-1872) was the first private owner of the Koegras polder in the province of North Holland. He was a very wealthy banker, and member of the Dutch Senate ('Eerste Kamer') from 1856-1862. The Koegras polder was later developed into Juliana dorp (village) by his grandson, also name Pieter. A street in Schiedam bears the name Pieter Loopuyt, and a gin distillery in Schiedam bears his name.

www.julianadorp-parelvandekop.com/het-koegras



Figure 10: Pieter Loopuyt, the addressee of the two letters.

Collecting automatic mail processing, a world hobby!

Group Postal Mechanization

The volume of mail to be processed increased from year to year in parallel to the economic boom following World War II. In order to cope with the expected further increase, companies were asked to develop automatic cancelling and sorting machines in the fifties and sixties of the last century. Well-known companies such as Telefunken, Standard- Elektrik Lorenz (SEL), Bell ITT, Pitney Bowes, Nippon Electric Company (NEC) and Toshiba participated. The development of such machines also took place in laboratories run by the postal service (such as the Dr. Neher laboratory in the Netherlands). As a result, mail processing has become highly automated over time. A brief explanation of the steps involved is provided next.

Automatic Mail Processing

1. Culling, facing and cancelling

Culling is the process to separate the mail that can be processed automatically from the mail that needs to be processed manually. The latter may include over-sized or thick envelopes. Culling does not leave a postal marking on the mail items.

Facing arranges all mail such that they are all facing in the same direction (hence the use of the term ‘facing’ for this operation). In a random stack of mail there are eight ways in which letters can be stacked. Since by long-standing custom the stamp is placed at the top right-hand corner of a letter on the address side, a machine can determine the orientation of a letter if it can detect the stamp.

Stamp detection can be achieved by applying a certain tagging to the stamps such as a fluorescent or phosphorescent chemical. When exposed to ultraviolet light, both the fluorescent and the phosphorescent tagging will light up (see Figure 1). A fluorescence detector recognizes the color and provides a signal to guide the envelope to the *cancelling* system. When the UV light is extinguished the phosphorescence will continue to glow for a short time. This afterglow is recognized by a phosphorescence detector, after which cancellation follows.

The terms fluorescence and phosphorescence together are referred to as luminescence.



Figure 1: Left: Stamp with a fluorescent chemical incorporated in the paper pulp. Center and right: Stamps with a phosphorescent bar.

2. Indexing

Indexing converts the addressee's postal code into a machine readable sorting code which is applied to the envelope. Of course, a postcode system must first be introduced and be widely used by the public. A sorting code can consist of a series of bars applied in a specific spatial pattern (matrix code) or in a one-dimensional row of bars (linear code). See Figure 2.

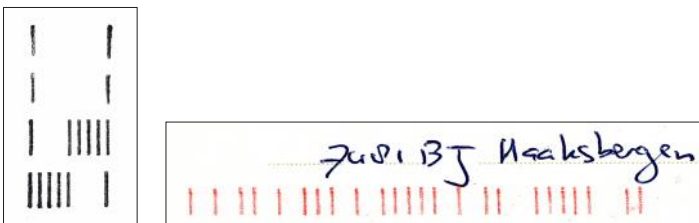


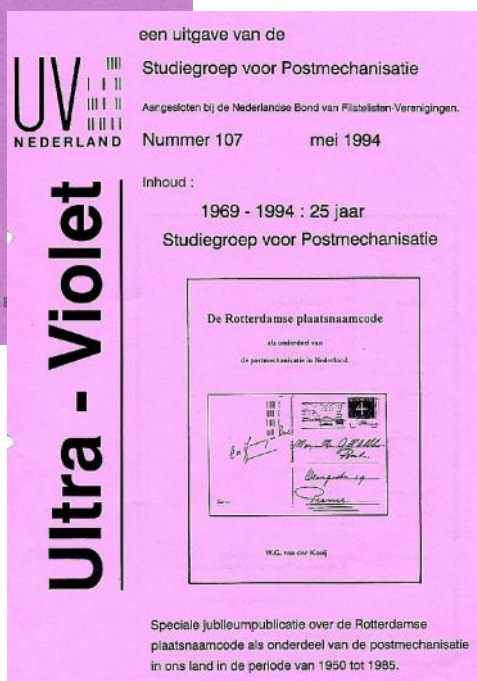
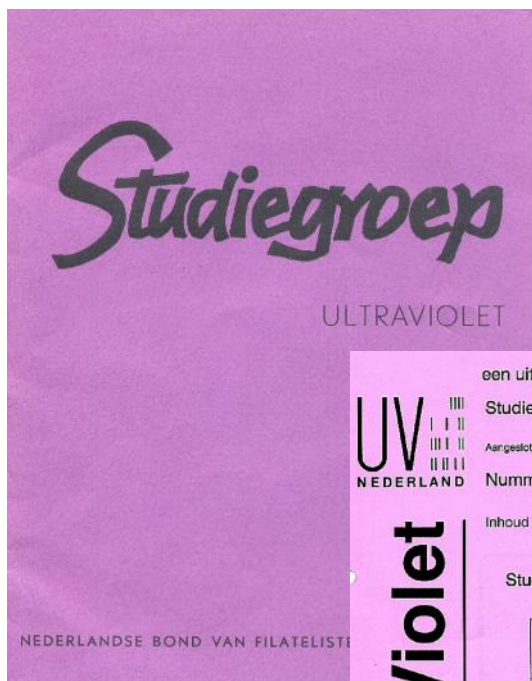
Figure 2: Left: Matrix code. Right: Linear bar code.

3. Sorting

Mostly, the *sorting* machine ‘reads’ the sorting code on each postal item and distributes it to one of the many stackers, each representing a certain destination. In some cases, a sorting machine leaves a postal marking on the mail items, for example the Transorma placed an ident on the mail to identify the operator of the machine.

The Group Postal Mechanization

When postal automation markings appeared on stamps and envelopes, all over the world philatelists began to collect them. So too in the Netherlands. On February 15, 1969 'Ultra Violet, Studiegroep voor Postmechanisatie' was founded. In 2000 the Study Group joined the Nederlandse Vereniging van Poststukken- en Poststempelverzamelaars (Po & Po). The name was then changed into 'Groep Postmechanisatie'. Since its founding, the technical developments have been published (in Dutch) in its own periodicals (see Figure 3), all of which have been digitized and are available on CD-ROM.

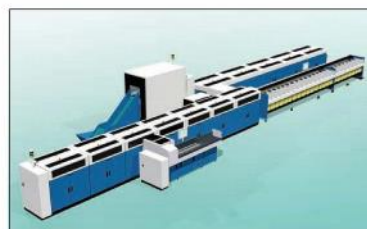


Post & Techniek is een uitgave van de Groep Postmechanisatie binnen Po & Po.
Post & Techniek 04, mei 2010 Contact via: postmech@kpnmail.nl Blad 1

Nieuwe postverwerkingsmachines in aantocht!

In de zes sorteercentra die ons land kent staat nog veel postverwerkingsapparatuur die dateert van rond de eeuwwisseling. Die apparatuur is inmiddels dus zo'n 10 jaar oud. Natuurlijk zijn er in de tussentijd allerlei onderdelen vervangen en is de software regelmatig geüpdatet. Maar langzamerhand ontstaan er problemen met het verkrijgen van reserveonderdelen, vooral printplaten.
TNT Post heeft dan ook besloten om in de loop van 2011 te beginnen met het vervangen van een groot aantal schift-opzetstempelmachines (Sosma's). De nieuwe generatie Sosma's heeft zoveel nieuwe mogelijkheden op het gebied van beeldherkenning, dat TNT Post daarvan op grote schaal gebruik van gaat maken. Om de beeldanalyse techniek te testen, komt er in het SC Rotterdam een proef met een Sosma nieuwe stijl.
Heel interessant voor de mechanisatie verzamelaars is dat TNT Post ons de mogelijkheid geeft om verzamelerspost te verwerken tijdens de proefperiode. Lees meer daarover op blad 22 !!!!!

En dit is 'm dan: de NS-10 IP schift-opzet-stempelmachine van NEC



Kijk ook eens op onze website!

U weet toch wel dat Post & Techniek in full colour op onze website te vinden is? En dat daarop tevens al enkele hoofdstukken van onze Handleiding "Mechanisatie en automatisering van de briefpostverwerking in Nederland" staan? Neem eens een kijkje op www.po-en-po.nl en klik op de knop Postmechanisatie.



Figure 3: The journals of the Studiegroep voor Postmechanisatie.

In 2019, the Group celebrated its 50th anniversary. To mark the occasion, the book 'Under the spell of UV-light, postal markings and code bars' was published. See Netherlands Philately volume 44/4 for a comprehensive review. With this book we wanted to capture the technical developments in the Netherlands from 1930 onwards and inspire philatelists to start this fascinating hobby as well. It is never boring! New developments in this field still take place every day.

To make the book's content available to a wider audience, translations of its most important chapters will be published in Netherlands Philately, starting with this issue. We wish you a lot of reading pleasure!

Website: www.po-en-po.nl, button 'Postmechanisatie'

Contact: postmech@kpnmail.nl

Why is there an L-shaped phosphorescent bar on the Van Gogh stamps?

*by Eddie IJspeerd
(translation assistance by Ben H. Jansen)*

[This article appeared in the book *'In de ban van UV-licht, merktekens en codestreepjes,'* published by Po & Po, 2019. Reproduction of this translation is not allowed without written approval by the author and Po & Po).]

Sometimes, very occasionally, sand gets into the well-oiled mail processing machinery of our national (The Netherlands) postal organization. But when that happens, it immediately causes a big problem. We are talking about many thousands of postal items with which the postal service got into trouble and which had to be processed in a different, much more inefficient way. What is the case?

For many years a phosphorescent tagging on stamps has been used for automatic detection of a stamp on an envelope. The cover is exposed to ultraviolet light. The tagging lights up and still glows shortly after the UV exposure has stopped. Photocells detect the afterglow (phosphorescence effect) and send a signal to the canceling device. So far nothing new, because this system has been working fine in our country for decades.

The Cause

However, the Van Gogh stamps (NVPH 2139a) (Figure 1) issued in 2003 led to major problems in the culler-facer-cancellers (CFC) in the six Sorting Centers. The reason? The word "Nederland" is written vertically on the stamp, a frivolity of the designer which was severely punished. Many people, out of habit or out of a deep-seated sense of patriotism, placed the stamp across the envelope in such a way that "Nederland" becomes legible. The result is that the phosphorescent bar on that stamp got into a horizontal position (Figure 2).



Figure 1: Sheet with ten Van Gogh stamps with a phosphorescent tagging in the form of a vertical bar. The word "Nederland" is applied vertically to the stamp.



Figure 2: Many people placed this stamp in a transverse way on the letter so that the word "Nederland" is legible. This results in a horizontal phosphorescent bar.

The Consequence

As a result, many letters in the CFC were not automatically set up and postmarked. They all ended up in a 'reject' stacker of the CFC and had to be set up by hand (that is, stacking such that all stamps are at the upper right position), followed by postmarking with a manually-fed canceller. A Klüssendorf machine, recognizable by its characteristic postmark (Figure 3), was often used for this purpose.

A Bit of Postal Technique



Figure 3: Mail item with a transversely placed Van Gogh stamp that is not cancelled in a CFC because the phosphorescent bar has not been recognized. The postmarking was done in a Klüssendorf machine with manual letter input.

Why was the horizontal phosphorescent bar on the transverse stamps not recognized in a CFC? To answer that question we have to take a look into the detector compartment of a CFC (Figure 4).

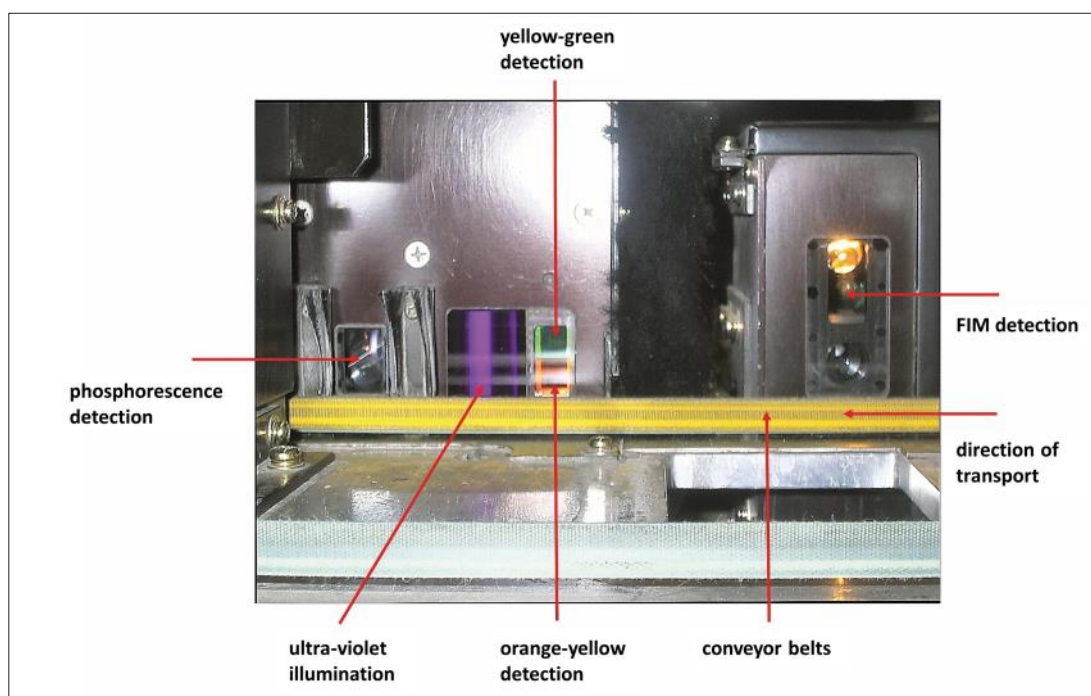


Figure 4: Compartment with the different CFC detectors.

The envelope is transported from right to left through the detector compartment. First a letter passes a window for the detection of a possibly present Front Identification Mark (FIM). The FIM is a nine-bit code consisting of vertical bars ('ones') and spaces ('zeros') printed on the mail just left of the postage area. This code is applied by the manufacturer of the envelope or postcard. Often used on (postage-free) business reply mail, such items do not need to be cancelled and are sorted out. Next the letter is exposed to ultraviolet light (the purple bar in Figure 4). A phosphorescent bar on the stamp lights up yellow-green or orange-yellow. The color is detected by one of the two color detectors (the green or orange squares in Figure 4). Although the UV lamp is positioned to the left of these detectors, the luminescence can be detected because the UV-light is wide spread (and not focused as a narrow beam). Once the letter has passed the UV lamp, the stamp is no longer exposed. However, the afterglow (phosphorescence effect) of the bar is still detected when passing the phosphorescence window.

Two narrow conveyor belts, between which the envelopes are clamped, transport the mail through the detector compartment. To properly "grip" the letters, a small part of the bottom of the envelope is completely clamped between the two belts. But note: the letters pass the detector compartment in an upside down position. In other words, the bottom of the envelope in the belts is in reality the top of the envelope. Therefore, a horizontal phosphorescent bar at the top of the envelope (Figure 5) will pass through the CFC at the bottom and therefore the phosphorescent bar will most likely be covered by the conveyor belts (Figure 6).



Figure 5: Letter with a transversely placed Van Gogh stamp under UV lighting.



Figure 6: The same letter, standing upside down and clamped between the conveyor belts, covering the phosphorescent bar.

The Solution

To avoid the problem of the many reject letters in the future, a new version of the Van Gogh stamp was released, now with a phosphorescent tagging in the form of an L-shaped bar (NVPH 2139b) (Figure 7). This solved the problem of covering the bar by the conveyor belts (Figure 8).

Thanks to the technical manager of the department of Information Management Mail NL of the former TNT Post at Rotterdam for the technical information about the CFC detectors and to Jos Stroom for providing images from his 'Surprises under UV light' Power Point lecture of March 9, 2009.



Figure 7: The sheet with ten Van Gogh stamps with a phosphorescent tagging in the form of an L-shaped bar.



Figure 8: Letter with a transversely placed Van Gogh stamp with an L-shaped bar that is clamped between the conveyor belts. Now the vertical part of the phosphorescent L-bar remains available for detection.

Editor's Note

This article on the Van Gogh stamps is the first translated from the book *'In de ban van UV-licht, merktekens en codestreepjes,'* published by Po & Po in 2019. The book's authors and the Board of Po&Po have given their permission and cooperation to translating and publishing the most relevant chapters in *Netherlands Philately (NP)*. Since most chapters are too long to appear in a single issue of *NP*, serialization will be necessary. I intend to devote about ten pages per issue, and I expect that the project will take three to four years, depending on how much other copy I receive.

Recent Issues

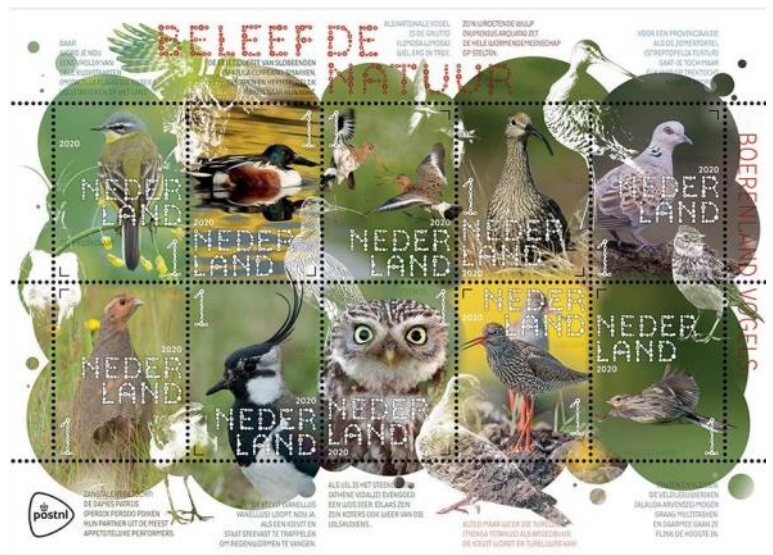
Typically Dutch: Carrots February 24, 2020

The six identical stamp show the carrot, which is used in the typically Dutch meal of 'hutsot' (mashed carrot and potatoes).



Experience Nature: Farm land birds February 24, 2020

Ten stamps depict birds that are on the edge of extinction. Most of the birds are on the Red List of breeding birds, or on the Red List of overwintering birds in the Netherlands.



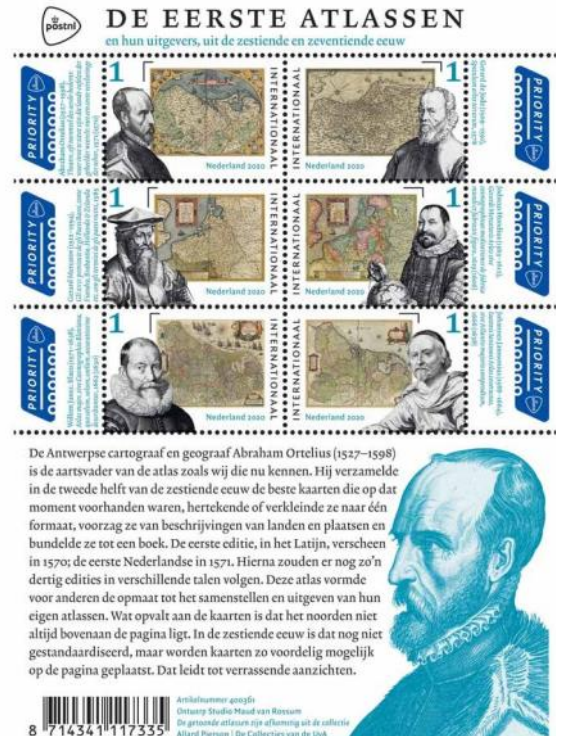
Typically Dutch: Chocolate sprinkles March 23, 2020

The sheet with six identical stamps shows the typically Dutch sandwich topping of chocolate sprinkles.

Atlases

March 23, 2020

The very first atlas in the world appeared in 1570 in Antwerp, 450 years ago this year. On this occasion, PostNL issued a sheet with six stamps devoted to maps which appeared in The Netherlands in the 16th and 17th century. The publishers of the six maps are depicted next to their products.



75 Years Liberty

April 4, 2020

The stamp sheet 75 years freedom has six stamps in two designs. One shows a portrait of Jan van der Linden, born on May 5, 1945. The second design presents a portrait of the expecting Yvette Hartman-Mercier. It is expected that her son will be born on May 5, 2020. These dates are printed on the stamps with the text 'born in freedom.'



Typically Dutch: Tom Pouce

April 6, 2020

The sheet shows six identical stamps depicting the typically Dutch pastry known as Tom Pouce (we called it Tom Poes). The pastry consists of two layers of puff pastry with a yellow filling (custard or cream). The top puff pastry is covered with a rose glazing (orange on King's Day).





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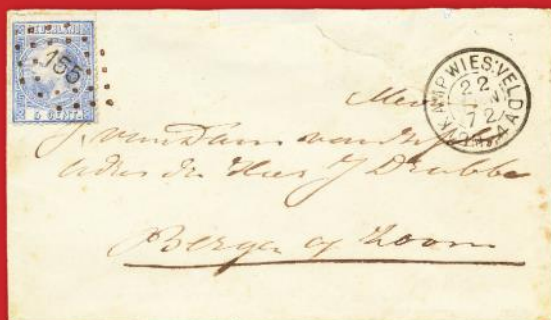
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