

The Cover Story by Phil Fettig

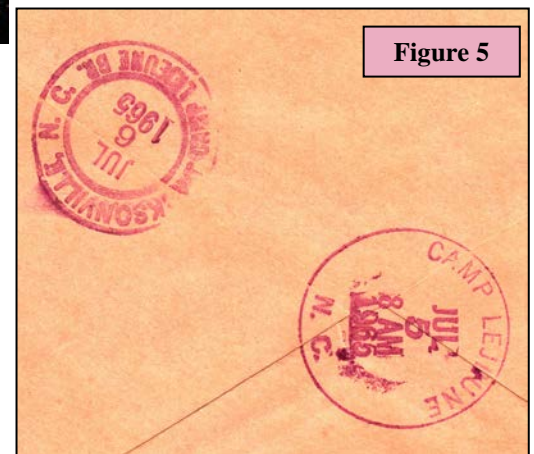
Do You Have Your Ticket To The Weiner Internationale Postertzeichen Ausstellung?

The “Vienna International Stamp Show” (WIPA 1965) took place over 52 years ago, in June 1965. I was too busy to go between my submarine being overhauled in the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard and, certainly more important, getting married to a cute young stamp collector in July that summer!

It is very common to see stamps or souvenir sheets from major shows in collections. A collector of Austria or a topical collection with a stamp theme could have a copy of the WIPA 1965 “Cinderella” souvenir sheet, a reprint of the 1933 WIPA stamp Scott B110, shown in **Figure (1) on front cover**. It is a common item and sells for a few dollars on eBay. However, many collectors want to go that one more step to add related articles to their collection. Tickets to shows, especially Internationals, fall into that category. **Figure (2) on front cover** is the front of an unused ticket to WIPA 1965 Vienna. The back of the ticket, shown in **Figure (3) on front cover** has ads for a philatelic publication and envelope blanks for first day covers.



Now, by going one step further this is where I got both interested and frustrated. The ticket and souvenir sheet were mailed, via registered mail as illustrated by **Figure (4)**. It is addressed to a Herrn Sgtnj L.G. LeBlanc, USMC. Spelled out this translates to Mr. Sergeant Major L. G. LeBlanc, U.S. Marine Corps. As you can see from the cover, he is stationed at Camp Lejeune, NC. **Figure (5)** has a nice cancel with that postmark on the reverse. SGTMAJ LeBlanc has been an interesting “mystery” man to me for years.



It appears he was a new issue dealer while still in the Marines. Trying to track his life since then has completely baffled me. I remembered seeing his name in ads with a P.O. Box address in Rockledge, FL. During the 1980s – 1990s I was involved in promoting most of the shows in Central Florida. This included inputting the show registration slips into a computer and I never saw his name as attending a show. I also attended shows for years in Eau Gallie and would ask around about him to no avail. In time, I gave up my search and figured to respect his privacy.

Now Jump ahead to 2011 – I was reviewing an auction catalog and found a lot described as a large accumulation built by a new issue dealer. Further inquiry indicated this was the philatelic estate of L. G. LeBlanc of Rockledge.

On July 11, 2011, I purchased the lot at auction and was presented with further mystery. It was clear he specialized in Austria, Sweden and South Africa as shown in **Figure (6)**. The final unanswered question was trying to figure out why Ann had to unseal several years of new issue shipments that had never been opened or processed. We will never know, but I still would have like to meet this U.S. Marine who appears to have loved stamps!

