

What Can I Write About -- or Present as a Program?

by Phil Fettig

Over the years I have presented many programs and wrote many articles. I long ago agreed to keep supporting Francis in his efforts as Editor of this newsletter. However, I must admit I was starting to run a little dry. I was stalled on finding some item or subject for this last effort. As I was thinking back, I recalled many times club members would ask me how I kept finding subjects to write or talk about. Then it came to me – I would try to explain my method that helped to complete the task AND use this opportunity to ask you to try and do the same!

My pattern for years was to only talk or write about two things – 1. Something I hopefully knew a lot about and, 2. Something I knew little to nothing about! This concept allowed me to both share information that I knew, but even more important – learn something about a new collecting interest.



Figure B1

All the following examples were items that could have evolved into an article or part of a presentation. **Figure B1** shows a Naval Cover from the U.S. Navy Destroyer USS KANE (DD-235). On August 30, 1939, she was headed for Bilbao, Spain to evacuate American citizens who were endangered by the Spanish Civil War. The KANE fired three times at a German warplane that was dropping bombs near the ship. Nobody was injured and the Americans were transported to a port in France.

This cover could be developed into an article or be part of a presentation on the Spanish Civil War which was a precursor to World War II. I would have tried to find out what happened to U.S. Citizens in Spain during that time and a few lines could be dedicated to the type of shipboard cancel was used.

I am not an expert on Propaganda stamps or labels, but I do know they are popular. **Figure B2** shows a piece of business mail from Singapore to New York City. Unfortunately, the cancel does not clearly show the complete date, but does indicate October 1941. It has a really nice patriotic label and has censor markings and tape. My first research attempt was to determine how close this cancel was to the fall of Singapore to Japan – February 15, 1942, not close. Then I could have gone further on the nice label and see what I could find on the Malaya Patriotic Fund, the censor markings, and the business that the letter is from.

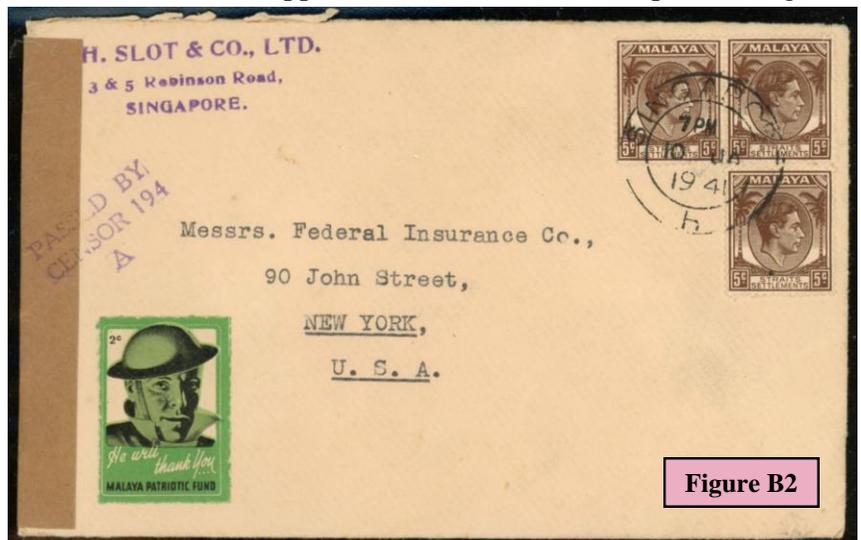


Figure B2

Mail usage for the American Expeditionary Force sent to Europe for WWI is a rich field for study. **Figures B3 and B4** are the sides of an envelope from a lady in NY to her brother, a bugler somewhere in Europe. The envelope is postmarked December 9, 1918. bounced around and was returned in April 1919.

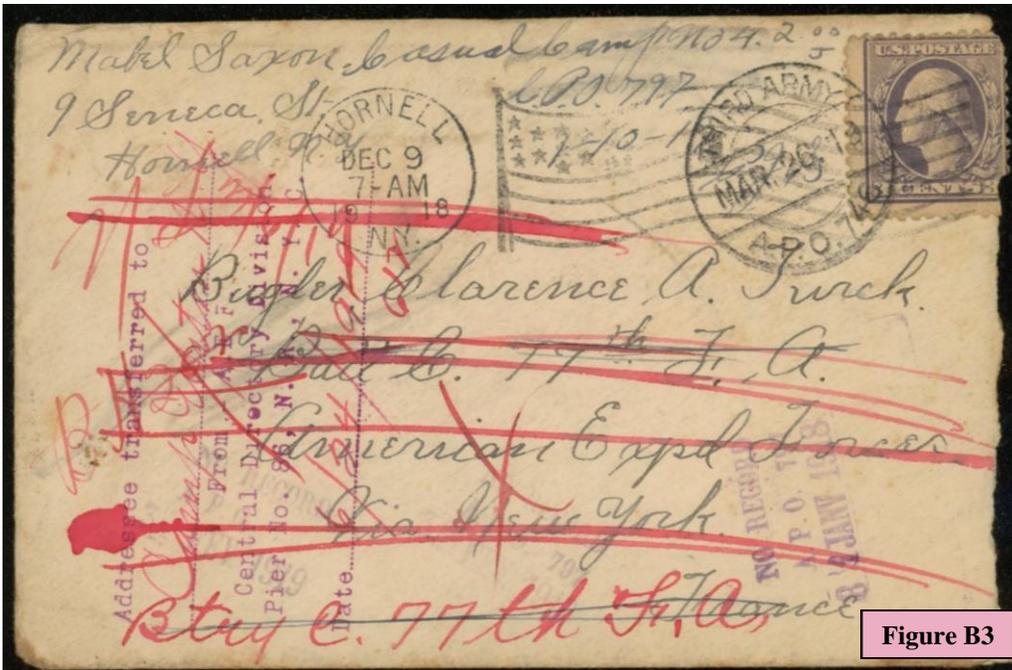


Figure B3

This one item could have provided a rich search for information on WWI mail markings, Flag cancels and the individuals involved. The letter inside from his sister described the 1918 Flu epidemic and how women were afraid they were going to lose their jobs “when the Boys come home from Europe” --- What a personal touch!

My point is – some of the above information I already knew something about and other subjects I did not. This could have provided the opportunity to do some research and share the data. Most of the club members have many things in common but I am sure that all of us know some philatelic fact that could be shared with interest to the rest of the club.

My story line – You don't have to be an expert; you just have to do a little research and share your knowledge with the rest of the club. For some reason public speaking came easy for me, writing did not. But with experience & practice I hope that some of



Figure B4

my articles and talks helped others. Now, it is your turn. Reach out, find something neat in your collection – I am sure it is there. Help your fellow club members grow in philatelic knowledge by writing an article or making a presentation.

Editor's note: This is the final article by Phil in the final issue of this newsletter -- with me as Editor. Phil's extraordinary ability to provide interesting material is one of main reasons that this newsletter continued for as long as it did. He was often able to pull material together when there was nothing else in my bit-bucket to use. To my dear friend, I can only say thank you – and you made an incredible difference with your efforts.