



The

Volunteer State

Philatelic Gazette



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CHAPTER 0431

"The Postage Stamp is Our World"

Operation Cornflakes

Operation Cornflakes was a morale operation by the Office of Strategic Services during World War II that aimed to trick Deutsche Reichspost into inadvertently delivering anti-Nazi propaganda to German citizens through mail. The operation involved special planes that were instructed to airdrop bags of false, but properly addressed mail in the vicinity of bombed mail trains. When recovering the mail during clean-up of the wreck, the postal service would hopefully confuse the false mail for the real thing and deliver it to the various addresses.

Background

The OSS was formed from the division of the Foreign Information Service (FIS) and the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI), a division that President Roosevelt enacted by Executive order 9128. The remainder of the COI was renamed the Office of Strategic Services. The newly formed OSS was under jurisdiction of the Joint Chief of Staff, giving the OSS the capability and status of a military branch. The overarching goal of the operation was to disrupt the morale of the German people by using a large scale psychological warfare operation (PSYOP) that the British MI6 had been pushing into service with the help of the Royal Air Force (RAF). Using the same pattern of mission as a previous OSS operation in Hungary, the OSS crafted their more intricate Operation Cornflakes. The distribution of propaganda in letters and distributed by the German postal system was thought to be an ideal method of reaching the German population and undermining support for Adolf Hitler.

Operation CORNFLAKES began with OSS officials collecting any and all German POWs that had experience with the German postal service or Reichspost. These prisoners of war were given better meals in exchange for information in collection, sorting, canceling and delivery of the mail. The OSS did not infiltrate Germany directly because they felt it necessary to focus their efforts in the liberation of France in 1944, but by the waning years of the war Secret Intelligence agents of the OSS could be found trickling in. The information came from nearby outposts in neutral countries that would supply the OSS with information. With this information the OSS and German exiles scoured the telephone directories and pulled over two million, randomly selected names registered within the Reich to send forged letters to. A unit of the OSS in Rome claimed to have forged over 15,000 envelopes a week. The letters contained writings about family happenings and gossip about non-existent people, the idea being that the domestic mail was not censored unlike the business mail. The letters coming out of Rome to be mailed were completed in different cities around Rome. The envelopes were addressed and sealed in Siena, then went to Rome where they would be placed into the counterfeit mail bags where the mail would be finally sent to Bari to be routed and canceled.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Summer is over and Fall is just about over and it's getting close to Winter. It seems like 2023 has just flown by. I hope everyone has done OK so far this year. Only a few more months and we'll be looking forward to 2024. Things to look forward to:

- 1) Higher postal rates! Surprise..... (68 cents)
- 2) More stamp shows (hey!)
- 3) A new year (hopefully a better one)
- 4) prices (up, down, right, left - who knows)
- 5) The economy (you don't want to know my prediction)
- 6) and 23 stamp club meetings!!! :>

Matt Benward, President NPS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
Operation Cornflakes	1
The President's Corner	1
Nashville Stamp News	2
Club Information	2
Minutes of the Society	3
Minutes of the Society	4
Operation Cornflakes continued	5 - 7

Nashville Stamp Show 2024

Our annual stamp show will be held next year on March 9-10 at the Gallatin Civic Center located at 320 Albert Gallatin Avenue in Gallatin Tennessee. This is a same location we used in 2023 and it will be our new home for years to come. We'll be sending out contracts to the dealers in all the states nearby Tennessee and we've already heard from some dealers that they will return next year too! Thanks to everyone who volunteered at our stamp show this year and we couldn't have been such a successful one without you! Of course we'll need people for next year's show too. Please volunteer!

Roger Hunt asks for donations of old albums

Roger Hunt asked the members to donate old, partially-filled stamp albums for the "children's stamp table" our forthcoming stamp show. As you may remember during our 2019 show there were tables setup between the dealers tables and exhibits with loose stamps for children and some adults to pick through. So if you have any old albums just sitting around the house please think about donating them to help get children interested in stamp collecting again. You may contact Roger at the club meetings or contact the club and we'll get your message to him. Please email: show@nashvillephilatelic.org.

Walter Whinnery passes away

Walter Whinnery passed away on October 6th in Paducah, Kentucky. He'd been a member of our stamp club for several years. He was a stamp dealer and set up a our club show for the last two years. He will be missed.

Carl Shaff passes away

Carl Shaff passed away on August 13th in Old Hickory. He'd been a member of our stamp club for a year and had moved here from California. He collected plate singles and had recently sold them at our local stamp show. He will be missed.

Our New Members

- Robert Umberger
- Gary Sides
- Nancy Fox
- Diana McKlusky
- Tom Bain
- Ronald Stover

The Volunteer State
Philatelic Gazette

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Matt Benward
Editor-in-Chief

Tom Tribke
Associate Editor

Editorial Consultants:

Matt Benward President
Al Bollmeier First Vice-President
David Bodkin Second Vice-President
Madeline Seibert Jr. Vice-President
Tom Tribke Secretary
Mark Thompson Treasurer

Meetings: Second and Fourth Mondays of each month. Philatelic Fellowship at 5:30 p.m., Business meeting at 6:30 p.m., Program or Auction at 6:45 p.m., out by 8:00 p.m.

Meetings are held at the Bavarian Bierhaus, 121 Opry Mills Drive, Nashville, Tennessee 37214.

Kids under 17 get a FREE stamp packet at their first attendance. Ages 6 and up are WELCOME!

THE Volunteer State PHILATELIC GAZETTE is an official Publication of the Nashville Philatelic Society

Opinions expressed in THE GAZETTE are those of the writers. These opinions do not necessarily reflect the views of the Nashville Philatelic Society or its members.

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Nashville Philatelic Society

Minutes Review for August 2023 – October 2023

The NPS held its 8/14/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus at Opry Mills Mall with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty-three members and one guest were present. Minutes of the 7/24/23 meeting were read and approved. Tom Bain's application for NPS membership received second reading and he was approved and welcomed to the NPS membership. Diana McKlusky won the Door Prize. Jackie Cargill won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. NPS was saddened to learn of recent death of NPS member Carl Shaff. A card was sent to offer our members' sympathies. Reports were presented from the Phone and Stamps committees. Our social media websites had 1206 "followers" on Twitter and 819 "likes" on Facebook. Matt mentioned that our 2023 Stamp Show was scheduled for March 2024 at the Gallatin Civic Center. The business session was then adjourned for an interesting program and handout on "U.S. Beer Stamps" by Tom Tribke and other NPS members.

The NPS held its 8/28/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus at Opry Mills Mall with Matt Benward presiding. Thirty members and two guests were present. Minutes of the 8/14/23 meeting were read and approved. Ronald Stover's application for NPS membership received first reading. Buzz Bolton won the Door Prize. Mark Thompson won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Mark Thompson and Rudy Caduff reported on the recent National Stamp Show. Mark also mentioned that he won the "Champion of Champions" for his exhibit at the show. Congratulations to Mark for his hard work and effective exhibit presentation. A report was presented from the Phone and Stamp committees. Our social media websites had 1204 "followers" on Twitter and 819 "likes" on Facebook. The business session was then adjourned for our auction with David Perry as auctioneer.

The NPS held its 9/11/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus at Opry Mills Mall with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty-eight members and four guests were present. Minutes of the 8/28/23 meeting were read and approved. Ronald Stover's application for NPS membership received second reading and was approved and he was welcomed to NPS membership. Dennis Fielding won the door prize. Roger Hunt won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp and Social Media Committees. Matt reported that social media websites had 1202 "followers" on Twitter and 817 "likes" on Facebook. The business session was then adjourned for an interesting presentation and handout on "The 1898 Trans-Mississippi Stamp Issue" by Tom Tribke and others.

The NPS had its 9/25/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus at Opry Mills Mall with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty-eight members and two guests were present. Minutes of the 9/11/23 meeting were read and approved. Randy Coble won the door prize. Mark Thompson won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp and Social Media Committees. Matt reported that social media websites had 1201 "followers" on Twitter and 824 "likes" on Facebook. Mark Thompson gave a formal Treasurer's report. Al Bollmeier reported on a service that sold individual country sections from the current "Scott International Catalogs". Several members mentioned that they had used this resource instead of having to buy the entire catalog set. Matt mentioned that our next Nashville Stamp Show would be in March 2024. The business session was adjourned for our auction with David Perry as auctioneer.

The NPS held its 10/10/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus at Opry Mills Mall with Matt Benward presiding. Eighteen members and two guests were present. Minutes of the 9/25/23 meeting were read and approved. Dimples won the door prize. John Kwasniewski won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. NPS was saddened to learn of recent death of NPS member Walter Whinnery. A card was sent to offer our members' sympathies. Matt reported on the INDPEX show that he and several others had recently attended. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamps and Social Media committees. An update was given on our social media websites with 1204 "followers" on Twitter and 836 "likes" on Facebook. Matt mentioned that our next Nashville Stamp Show would be March 9–10, 2024. The business session then adjourned for an interesting presentation and handout on "100 Greatest American Stamps" by Matt and other NPS members.

The NPS held its 10/23/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus with Matt Benward presiding. Eighteen members and one guest were present. Minutes of the 10/10/23 meeting were read and approved. Courtney won the door prize. Bill Bowman won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp and Social Media committees. An update for our social media websites showed 1204 "followers" on Twitter and 824 "likes" on Facebook. Mark Thompson reported that he had been representing NPS with the Southeastern Stamp Conference and asked to continue in this roll. An NPS vote agreed that he should continue. Mark also mentioned that the SE Conference was asking for agreement to support higher level cooperation with other philatelic organizations. NPS agreed. And further the SE Conference is considering replacing stamp show exhibits with non-judged displays. NPS also agreed. The business session was then adjourned for our auction with David Perry as auctioneer.

Nashville Philatelic Society

Minutes Review for May 2023 – July 2023

The NPS held its 5/9/2023 meeting (Note: Held on Tuesday due a meeting room schedule conflict) at the Bavarian Bierhaus with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty-three members and three guests were present. Minutes of the 4/24/2023 meeting were read and approved. John Kwasniewski won the door prize. Jim Young won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp and Social Media committees. An update was given on our social media websites with 1211 “followers” on Twitter and 803 “likes” on Facebook. A concern was expressed about NPS not properly following the NPS By-Laws. A motion was passed to provide a copy of the Constitution and By-Laws to all members at our next meeting. Also due to the high noise level at our meeting, Bob Winters was appointed to be our Sgt-of-Arms for 90 days to help lower lack of attention and excessive talking. The business session then adjourned for an interesting program and handout on “Stamp Inverts” conducted by Matt, Tom Tribke and other members.

NPS held its 5/22/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty-one members and four guests were present. Minutes of the 5/9/2023 meeting were read and approved. Dan Hubbard and Mack Farmer’s applications for NPS membership received first readings. Buzz Bolton won the door prize. Dennis Fielding won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp and Social Media committees. An update was given on our social media websites with 1211 “followers” on Twitter and 804 “likes” on Facebook. As requested, a copy of the NPS By-Laws was provided to all members at our meeting. The business session then adjourned for an Auction conducted by David Perry.

The NPS had its 6/12/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty-six members and four guests were present. The minutes of the 5/22/23 meeting were read and approved. Robert Umberger and Gary Sides’ applications for NPS membership received first readings. Mack Farmer and Dan Hubert’s applications for NPS membership received second readings and they were approved and welcomed to the NPS. Bob Winters won the door prize. Bill Bowman won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. It was reported that a new postal rate would go into effect in July 2023. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp and Social Media committees. An update was given on our social media websites with 1211 “followers” on Twitter and 809 “likes” on Facebook. The business session then adjourned for an excellent program and handout on “The Different Types of Stamps” by Matt, Al Bollmeier, Tom Tribke and other NPS members.

NPS held its 6/26/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty-six members and four guests were present. Minutes of the 6/12/2023 meeting were read and approved. Nancy Fox’s application for NPS membership received first reading. Robert Umberger and Gary Sides’ applications for NPS membership received second readings and they were approved and welcomed to the NPS membership. Jackie Cargill won the door prize. RG Wolf won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp and Social Media committees. An update was given on our social media websites with 1209 “followers” on Twitter and 816 “likes” on Facebook. It was mentioned that our 2nd Premium Auction would be held in August. The business session then adjourned for an Auction conducted by David Perry.

The NPS had its 7/10/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus at Opry Mills Mall with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty-three members and two guests were present. Minutes of the 6/26/23 meeting were read and approved. Diana McKlusky’s application for NPS membership received first reading. Nancy Fox’s application for NPS membership received second reading and she was approved and welcomed to the NPS membership. Diana McKlusky won the door prize. Gary Speich won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone and Social Media committees. An update was given on our social media websites with 1211 “followers” on Twitter and 818 “likes” on Facebook. Mark Thompson provided the Treasurer’s Report and a list showing NPS members with 2023 paid dues. It was mentioned that our 2nd Premium Auction would be held in August 24th. Auction lots were to be coordinated with Dennis Fielding. The business session was then adjourned for an interesting program and handout on “Tagging on Stamps” by Dennis Fielding.

The NPS had its 7/24/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus at Opry Mills Mall with Matt Benward presiding. Thirty members and four guests were present. The minutes of the 7/10/23 meeting were read and approved. Tom Bain’s application for NPS membership received first reading. Diana McKlusky’s application for NPS membership received second reading and she was approved and welcomed to the NPS membership. Bill Bowman won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. NPS was saddened to learn of recent death of Bill Vance’s wife. A card was sent to Bill in memory of his wife’s passing. Reports were presented from the Phone and Stamps committees. An update was given on our social media websites with 1208 “followers” on Twitter and 818 “likes” on Facebook. The business session was then adjourned for our 2nd Premium Auction with David Perry as auctioneer.

Operation Cornflakes continued

In hopes of shaking the morale further in the German people, the OSS called upon master forgers similar in nature as MI6 once had, but rather than having an image of Heinrich Himmler replacing Hitler, the OSS used a stamp of Hitler, but with some minor modifications. The modifications included a skull overlay that resembles a portion of Hitler's jaw having been "eaten away". The German subscript at the bottom of the stamp was also altered from 'Deutsches Reich' (German Empire) to 'Futsches Reich' (ruined empire). These stamps were known as the "Death Head" and were usually placed in the letter with other subversive materials. The letters were arranged in Reichspost bags that the OSS had forged to resemble the original bags. These precisely made bags were indistinguishable from the real German mail bags and were mimicked down to the material used. The bags would then be loaded aboard bombs specially designed to deploy the bags near a destroyed train, preferably one carrying mail, and drop the forgeries in amongst the originals in hopes that they would be put into circulation with the rest of the mail. However, all the prior planning was almost for naught because in August 1944 the Reichspost altered their franking machines on the domestic mail making the thousands of letters previously written void.

The OSS obtained a copy of the frank design and went to work again drafting up new letters and with the letters, subversive material. By September the next blow to the OSS operation was intelligence gathered that no domestic mail would be delivered due to wartime internal power struggle within Germany. One page newspaper leaflets called Das Neue Deutschland which contained material that the official newspaper would never print were placed into some of the outgoing letters to be dropped by the 15th Air Force. The 15th Air Force and fighter group detachment would be tasked with the destruction of the mail train and the planting of the mailbags of propaganda (Cornflakes) amongst the debris. The first mission of Operation Cornflakes took place on 5 January 1945, when a mail train to Linz was bombed. Bags containing a total of about 3,800 propaganda letters were then dropped at the site of the wreck, which were subsequently picked up and delivered to Germans by the postal service. Within 1944–45 twenty missions had been completed, reporting a success rate of 50%, leaving the 15th Air Force with over 320 delivered mailbags of propaganda.

Aftermath

A major oversight by the OSS and its task force in Rome was that the ravages of war shut down many of the cities' critical services and in some cases the postal service. While some cities continued its services of mail delivery, the allied bombing had turned many residences into piles of rubble; millions of people without a home were displaced and forced to leave and seek refuge elsewhere, in many cases with relatives. Without a physical address left to deliver the mail to, much of it was discarded. Another oversight was simply the fact that when people received mail from an unknown source they would usually destroy it, especially if the letters contained allied propaganda, either out of loyalty or fear of punishment.

Fake postage stamps

The British were the first to forge the Hitler head stamp in 3, 4, 6 and 8 Pfennig values from 1941 until the end of the war. These stamps were of better quality versus the Americans' attempt at forgery because the British used actual stamp production facilities whereas the Americans did not have access to quality ingredients such as paper, ink or engravers. The American forgeries focused much of their efforts on the 12 Pfennig stamp which hosted Hitler's head and exposed skull. The postage stamps used on the envelopes were forged 6 and 12 Pfennig Hitler-head stamps intended to look identical to genuine German stamps of the era, though these forgeries were printed by the Office of Strategic Services.

Operation Cornflakes continued

Germany

1944

OSS Forgeries



Genuine



Forgeries



Operation Cornflakes continued

Phantasy Issue



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