

Summer 2008

Araña

THE JOURNAL OF THE SPANISH PHILATELIC SOCIETY

How I Sold My Lifetime Stamp Collection

The Second Definitive Series from the Spanish Republic
Burgos Local Patriotic 18A
1875 War Tax Stamps & Philatelic Favorites!

Selling A 40 Year Stamp Collection

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

By Dennis Florence

PROLOGUE

In early 2006 I concluded with certainty that neither my wife nor any of my kids had any interest at all in stamps. I had insured my 40 year collection for \$400,000 based on "gut feel" only. The collection consisted of a very complete Spain proper, including much never hinged, classics with gum, many color and printing varieties, a wonderful collection of Spanish civil war local patriotics, a very nice collection of Nationalist locals, a good collection of Republican locals, a fair collection of Political labels and other specialized Spanish groupings. For the most part all the stamps were mint. I also had 3,500 Spanish civil war covers that I believe were the largest accumulation of these in the United States. I also had a closet full of US first day covers, CAMS, FAMS, Events plus UN first day covers and boxes of foreign covers. The only reason I bought these was because for several years I couldn't find any more Spanish civil war material (stamps or covers) that were worth buying in the States. This was pre-EBAY.

My wife was "bugging me" to give her the closet back to her that was filled with this other material. Given the nature of the total collection, I knew my estate would really "take a bath" on any liquidation sale. I was 62 years old with a lousy heart since birth and was diagnosed and treated in 2005 for prostate cancer. It was time for me to unload everything. I felt I would always need stamps to play with, so I simultaneously started buying large cheap worldwide collections on EBAY.

This is my story of selling. I wrote this article because many of you will be going

PUBLIC AUCTION #320
October 19-20, 2007



U.S. AND WORLDWIDE STAMPS AND POSTAL HISTORY
featuring
THE DENNIS E. FLORENCE COLLECTION OF SPAIN AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR;
THE EARL L. "BILL" BAILEY COLLECTION OF WORLD WAR II;
THE RICHARD E. VAN HOUSE COLLECTION OF UNITED STATES STAMPS;
and THE WILLIAM W. PINCH COLLECTION OF UNITED STATES GRILLED ISSUES 1867-1875

MB
MATTHEW BENNETT INTERNATIONAL
www.bennettstamps.com

One of the reasons the author chose Matthew Bennett as auctioneer was the quality of their auction catalogs.

through a similar exercise in the future and I believe the lessons that I learned were worth sharing.

THE STORY

I spent the remainder of 2006 sorting and cataloging the material I had. In November or December I finished except for my Civil War locals. In January 2007, I selected an auction house. I had bought from many major auction houses both domestic and European over the years so I was familiar with quite a few. Even though I felt my stock would do well in a Spanish, Swiss or German auction, I decided to go domestic because the buy commissions are generally 3% or so lower in the States, some buyers could get hit with the VAT in Europe and my sources suggested that I could expect to pay about 15% on the sell side. If my collection valuation was correct, I would pay no more than 10% here.

There were three auctions auction houses I considered, all of which produced beautiful catalogs. The first was Schreve but I was concerned they wouldn't find my collection up to their standards. The second was Cherrystone which only had a 10% buyer's commission, but specialized more in Eastern Europe although I had bought many outstanding Spanish items from them over the years. The last was Matthew Bennett International who was known for producing great catalogs. I didn't want to play one against the other, so I settled on Bennett as my starting point.

In January I gave them a call and asked whether my collection might be of interest to them. I described what I had and they expressed interest so we set up an appointment for them to visit me here north of Detroit in Michigan. On February 13, Jeff Schneider a vice-president of the Bennett firm paid a visit to my home. Jeff had good knowledge of the regular issues of Spain and went through the classics and pre war material in fair detail. He seemed like a kid in a candy store as he went through the Spanish civil war covers. I could picture his brain working on the question "What the heck am I going to do with all this stuff".

Jeff mentioned that Bennett had a describer who could figure that out. After five hours or so, he said he was interested. I asked him what he wanted as a seller's commission and he responded 7.5%. I immediately accepted because it was better than I had anticipated. In retrospect, I think I could have negotiated a lower rate. He was going to charge me 1% for insurance but I said I used the same insurance company so there was no fee. Shipping back and forth was free. There was no charge

GERMAN AREAS

The Rare Unissued 2 Peseta and 5 Peseta Airmails



253 ★ 1939, Unissued 2p and 5p Airmails (Edifil NE39s-42s, NE43p-45p), seven values complete, 5p values on laid paper; large margins and bright colors, without gum as issued, Extremely Fine and rare (photo).
Edifil €13,825 (\$19,162) for 2005

Expertization: 1976 Comex Certificate.

These 2p and 5p stamps were to be the high values of a proposed set of five airmails. However, the end of the Civil War resulted in the set never being issued.

The Edifil value for this set perforated went from €15,000 in 2005 to €17,500 in the 2007 basic Edifil catalogue, a rise of 16.7%. The imperf set is not listed in the basic catalog. If we assumed that the imperf set would have increased by the same percentage, the current Edifil value would be €16,125 (\$21,787).

Including the 15% commission, this rare set Edifil NE 39s-42s, NE 43p-45p sold for \$20,700.

for unsold lots and when I found I could put a reserve on each lot, that really sealed the deal because while I didn't have lot control, I did not have to give anything away. Since I did not really need the money instantly, it was not crucial if a lot did not sell. Jeff called the office for acceptance and we had a verbal deal. I drove him to his hotel and I agreed to meet him for dinner to sign a contract

The contract was pretty much a typical "boiler plate" document. The terms were as earlier mentioned. The key sentence in my mind was; "The sale is currently scheduled to be held on or about October 2007 or on such other date as may be designated by Bennett." Again, looking back, had I to do over again I would never agree to this language. You'll see why later. Another sentence was added;balance (of the collection) to be delivered on or about May 31, 2007. We both signed the contract and I was committed. I decided to take a couple weeks off.

I shipped all the material I had prepared, and began cataloging the remainder of my Spanish civil war locals. The shipping went perfectly. Bennett provided me a blanket or-

der number with United Parcel Service (UPS). Every time I was ready to ship, I would pack some boxes, fill out the provided forms, call UPS and they would come to my house, scan the prepared boxes, give me a form for each box and haul them away. Between then and May 31, I would pack about 24, 40-50 pound boxes. When each of the boxes arrived at Bennett I would call them and make sure all were accounted for.

Every few weeks I was on the phone trying to nail down a specific auction date. Over and over I would hear, "That's a new auction season and we don't have a date yet". I wanted a date so I could promote the sale to all the Spanish Philatelic Society members as I considered each to be a potential buyer of one or more lots. By May 23, 2007 I had shipped the last of my material and still no date. I did manage to get Bennett to put a couple ads in "ARANA" so the members would at least know that an auction was coming up with my material in it. After shipping the last box I needed a break so I went off to Las Vegas for a week.

After I returned, the first three weeks of

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COLLECTION

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June were spent working in my back yard preparing for a garden tour. Six-hundred people came through the garden and I needed another rest after the show. My mind was not at all on stamps the month of June but it must have been sometime that month I had my first lotting conversations with Les Bosclair who was the auction describer for the Bennett firm and who had spent a lifetime in the philatelic business.

I consider my conversations with Les to be one of the most positive highlights of this whole auction experience. While not a Spanish civil war expert, he was certainly knowledgeable about regular Spanish stamps and knew his paper varieties, printing techniques and had the stamp auction catalog descriptive language down pat. My Philatelic Agent Charles Cwiakala of Chicago knew him well and spoke very highly of him. Les was forthright and honest and I would strongly recommend him to anyone who needed assistance writing philatelic descriptions. We discussed everything from which catalog to use, to minimum bids, to dollars vs euros, to lot sizes and descriptions, what sells and what does not, etc., etc., etc.

In mid July I received my first catalog proof of what was at least a portion of my auction. Discussions continued between Les and I, proofreading, suggesting language changes, setting minimum prices I was willing to accept and countless other topics for the remainder of July and most of August. My email file indicates as of August 8, I still did not know the date of the auction let alone what would be in it. This was one of the negatives of this auction experience.

I forget exactly when I first spoke to Harvey Bennett the principal of the auction house. My impressions of him when I look back are: he's been around stamps a long time; he knows the stamp auction business cold (knows all aspects very well); he's a very charming guy; one who makes the seller initially feel firmly in control of the events. Harvey could truly sell "ice cream to Eskimos" at least one time. What I later recognized was that the nearer to the expected auction date, the less control the seller has. Even if the catalog draft is not completely what the seller is expecting, aside from a few minor tweaks, about all one can do is try to pull lots if he is not happy. I'm not saying I would do anything different if the sides were reversed and I was in Bennett's place, but as a philatelic seller I was now less than completely satisfied with this auction process.

Looking back, I would probably do sev-



Edifil 43 did not sell in the first auction and was later added to a bulk classic lot in the second auction and sold quickly.

eral things differently. The auction was to be in New York. That's good. It was in October. That's good too. The catalog was a work of art. That's wonderful. The auction results were excellent, slightly exceeding my expectations.

Then what's my problem?

We only auctioned about one third of my collection. From an auctioneer's viewpoint though, we auctioned the material that was most easily described and the most readily salable so it was a big win for the auction house. "Cherry picked" would probably be a good term to use here.

Events took a turn for the worse after my celebration of the results from the first auction. I found that the auction house didn't plan on doing much that already hadn't been done with the remainder of the material. I found out that the next auction was going to be on December 16-19 in Baltimore. The time-frame may be a good one in Spain where many workers get bonuses and buy stamps but I couldn't think of a worse time in the States for a stamp auction. Christmas parties go up, work level goes down and few even think about stamps. The location of Baltimore also was terrible for the key material I had to sell. Ninety percent of my choice Spanish civil war covers had yet to be sold. The remainder of the general Spain collection was still to be auctioned as well as three collections of Spanish civil war locals and a collection of civil war patriotics.

Many cover lots had been prepared but not used in the first auction, so from a lotting perspective that was fine. The closet full of my US first day, first flight, special event, UN and miscellaneous covers also had been earlier described and that too was fine. Even the large lots of what I'll call "cheap" (\$20. Or less) civil war covers (over 2,000 of them) were good to go. I put no reserve on any these because my wife would divorce me if 800



The certificate on this example of Edifil 45 described it as "one of the finest examples of this stamp in existence." It sold for \$6,325 including commission.

pounds of philatelic material showed back up on my doorstep.

After a not very satisfactory phone conversation with Harvey Bennett and thinking it over for a day, I pulled all Republican, Nationalist and political label stamps from the auction. I had no compunction doing this as I had mentioned from the very beginning that I refused to sell these in just three lots. Remember there are no current price reference other than Ebay and several price lists for this material. I had sent the auction house the LaBarga, Rodriguez and Llach lists plus my personal Ebay Civil War file for reference. I wanted to pull back the classics and pre 1954 Spain proper stamps too, but was told if I pulled these they would not auction the remainder of my material either. I had some real neat color errors, impression errors, Muestra and much never hinged post classic and classics with gum. I had never catalogued all this, but knew it was worth much more than it would realize sold in bulk. In this case they prevailed as I didn't want to face my wife when the bulk stamps and covers were returned. I also believe they had a bidder for these lots. They were within their rights to do this because of contract language. So I took the lots that didn't sell in the first auction and added them to other lots and raised the respective reserve prices on the Spanish bulk lots, and the local patriotic lots. Because the auction was in Baltimore, I raised the reserves on the individual and small group civil war covers, fearing they would otherwise be sold at ridiculously low prices. I felt that was the best I could do under the circumstances.

As predicted this auction was a disaster for the auction house and me. The only stuff that sold were all the lots without reserve (that was good), the pre 1954 Spain bulk lots and a few Civil War covers. The Civil war covers were auctioned as the final lots on the last day De-



Many of the local patriotics did not sell as well as expected even though most had expertizing marks. In retrospect, the author wishes he had obtained full certificates for these issues before the auction. Without including commission, # 1281 sold for \$375, #1282 sold for \$300, #1283 did not sell and #1291 sold for \$210.

December 19, 2007. I expect there weren't many people in the house bidding. I also found out later that a customer in Germany had twice asked for a bidding number, was told they would get back to him, but never did.

After the buyer and seller commissions were deducted and I was paid for the lots on extension, I ended up with a net payment total of \$181,531.43 which gave me a net return of approximately 10% over a 40 year time period. I took a real bath (LOST MY BUTT) on my non-Spain material or the rate of return would be double that. The funds were paid to me between December 5, 2007 and May 19, 2008. In the big financial scheme of things, this is nothing to brag about, but in addition to the money I received, I had 40 years of enjoyment with the stamps and covers that were sold, a great increase in my knowledge of geography, Spanish Civil war history and probably best of all the people I have met in "stampdom" especially since my retirement some nine years ago.

THE GOOD

- Beautiful auction catalog.
- Les Bosclair, the auction describer.
- The experience of it all. I am a lot smarter now.
- My estate will not have to deal with something they know nothing about.
- Auctioning of my premium Canary Islands covers to Irwin Weinberg (Miner Stamps) in business for 60 years who is the dean of philatelic arbitrage in the USA, and the wonderful comments about me and my collection he made in three of his price lists when reselling my items. I consider myself truly honored.



This Canary Islands local surcharged Monuments souvenir sheet (Canarias Edifil 63) sold for \$650.

THE BAD:

- Taking at least twice the personal time to complete everything than I had anticipated..
- Selling two of my best bulk lots to a company connected to a person who used unethical methods in a business dealing with me some 25 years ago.

THE UGLY

- Taking 6 months trying to get a firm auction date.
- Ending up with a late December second auction date in Baltimore. This did not seem to me very close to the October date that was in the contract.
- Having three items on extension for ex-

pertization, two of which remained unpaid until May 19, 2008 (This could make for a whole separate article)

LESSONS FOR ALL

- Whatever personal time you have allowed from "I am going to sell my collection" to "I am fully paid for all auction items sold" take the number of man hours and multiply it by 2.5. I am not kidding unless you want to be taken to the cleaners.
- Read, and clearly understand every point of your contract before you sign it. If you don't understand or don't agree, then modify the contract language. If they are unwilling to do this, find another auction house.
- Assuming you are very knowledgeable

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COLLECTION

Continued from page 7

about your collection, get as much lot control as you can. If you read enough auction catalogs and have the time, write your own descriptions. Do not assume the auction house has more knowledge about the item than you have.

- Put as much specificity into the contract regarding lots sent out for expertization. Do not leave it open-ended. Get a maximum time period and the right to know where the item to be expertized was sent.

- Be cognizant that you and your auction house are not entirely on the same mission. You are both out to maximize profit. Your definition of profit and theirs is not the same. Think about that one for a while.

- Time and skill permitting, auction the items not suitable for big auction houses on EBAY first. I cannot yet prove it, (someday I be may be able to) but I believe you really get killed on auction realizations from large lots. Here its clearly between maximizing your profit and minimizing your time spent.

My bottom line is, despite my difficulties and my complaints my total experience has to be considered positive. My cash flow went up over \$180,000 and I still have 60% of my collection left. I am selling my Spanish civil war covers on EBAY (denflo) and in two months my cash flow has increased by another \$8,000.

EPILOGUE

It turns out that December 19, 2007 was the last auction day as an independent company for Mathew Bennett International. Through an article in Linns I discovered that the company was sold to Maury, a French company and the Baltimore office was closed in January. The extremely knowledgeable Les Bosclair lost his job when that office closed. The name remains but with an office operating out of New York, and with a new person from Maury as principal. You can bet I spent a ton of effort insuring that all my unsold material was returned and all three of the lots from the October auction were paid. Jeff Schneider was very helpful in returning all my material promptly. I was paid for the December auction sold items promptly. One of the three lots out on extension was paid in January 2008 again thanks to Mr. Schneider. After a very irritating delay, I finally got paid for the other two extension items on May 19, 2008, which is the date I concluded this article. ■



Irwin Weinberg, owner of Miner Stamp Company and the former owner of the famous 1cent British Guyana purchased almost all of the high quality Canary Island covers in this auction. When they later appeared in his widely circulated price list, he described these covers as, "an extraordinary offering of rarity and quality from a world famous collection."

We Need Your Material for the Next SPS Auction

By Hal Shelton

The Auction Catalogue sent with this issue of Arana offers substantially fewer lots at lower average minimum prices. While this makes the Auction Chair's job easier, it does not satisfy our members' interests in adding to and upgrading their collections. I would appreciate members sending me items for inclusion in our auctions. The process is very simple: (1) put each proposed lot in some type of envelope, (2) provide some type of catalogue identification and (3) indicate your minimum price (optional). I do the rest and will work with you on the identification. The auction terms are noted on the bid sheet available with previous auction catalogues or at the SPS Forum web site www.spsforum.net.

Another reason for supporting our auctions is to support the publication of Arana and maintenance of our web site. Both receive high praise from members, but neither is free. Along with member dues and Arana advertisements, auction commissions are the way the Club raises funds. Lower auction commissions will lead to more frequent dues increases. Some members participate by contributing articles to Arana and a few

provide material for our Auctions. We need more involvement from more members. SPS members are serious collectors. We all have

duplicates and over time our collecting interests change so we have items no longer needed. Why not monetize this material. Currently both U.S. and European collectors are interested in our auctions, which are dollar denominated.

Over the 10 previous auctions, spanning three years, the average per auction has been:

- Number of lots offered: 322
- % lots sold: 54
- # Sellers: 6
- Commissions earned: \$271

The current auction, #34, with its 110 lots, will probably earn commissions in the range of \$65-\$85. The average cost of producing and mailing Arana is \$500, so while past auctions have funded slightly more than half these costs, the current auction is only 15%.

Our next Arana and Auction Catalogue publication is planned for October 2008, so I would appreciate auction material by September 1st. Let me know if you plan to participate so I can be prepared. If you have questions, want to better understand what is of most interest

to our membership or need further information please contact me by email or mail at addresses noted inside front cover. ■

SPS AUCTION #33

CLOSING DATE: APRIL 4, 2008

2

This auction has a good mix of classics, cancellations, back of the book, civil war and covers. Bids to Hal Shelton, 5828 Edson Lane, N. Bethesda, MD 20852. Bids by e-mail, in a format similar to the paper bid sheet, to h.shelton@verizon.net are welcome and will be acknowledged—please include mailing address. If you plan to pay by PayPal, mention this with bid so I can calculate the cost. A recap of auction #32 appears at the end. Please send material for auction #34, submission deadline May 1, 2008; issuance in June 2008.

Catalogue Name and Lot Condition Abbreviations

S=Scott	MNH=mint never hinged	vf=very fine
E=EDIFIL	MHM=mint hinge mark	v=fine
G=Galvez	MHR=mint hinge remnant	g=good
GG=Gomez Guillamon	NG=no gum	p=picture included
SF=Sofima		

Lot # Description Condition Min Bid \$

Regular Issue and Back of the Book—EDIFIL Catalogue Primary Sort

1	E#6 & 6b, S#6; 2 stamps		
2	E#12 & 12b, S#12; 2 stamps		
3	E#12, S#12 & 12a; 2 stamps		
4	E#17, S#19 & 19a; 2 stamps		
5	E#24, 24a & 24b; 3 stamps		
6	E#33 & 33a, S#32; two stamps		
7	E#33A & 33Aa, S#32; two stamps		
8	E#40, 40a & 40b; 3 stamps		
9	E#41 & 41a, S#38 & 38a; 2 stamps		
10	E#42, 42a & 42b, S#39 and violet gray all with black ink		
11	E#44 and 44a, S#41; two stamps		
12	E#47 & 47a, S#44 & 44a; 2 stamps		
13	E#48, 48a & 48b; three stamps		
14	E#49, 49a & 49b, S#46, 46a, 46b, 46c, 46d, 46e, 46f, 46g, 46h, 46i, 46j, 46k, 46l, 46m, 46n, 46o, 46p, 46q, 46r, 46s, 46t, 46u, 46v, 46w, 46x, 46y, 46z, 46aa, 46ab, 46ac, 46ad, 46ae, 46af, 46ag, 46ah, 46ai, 46aj, 46ak, 46al, 46am, 46an, 46ao, 46ap, 46aq, 46ar, 46as, 46at, 46au, 46av, 46aw, 46ax, 46ay, 46az, 46ba, 46bb, 46bc, 46bd, 46be, 46bf, 46bg, 46bh, 46bi, 46bj, 46bk, 46bl, 46bm, 46bn, 46bo, 46bp, 46bq, 46br, 46bs, 46bt, 46bu, 46bv, 46bw, 46bx, 46by, 46bz, 46ca, 46cb, 46cc, 46cd, 46ce, 46cf, 46cg, 46ch, 46ci, 46cj, 46ck, 46cl, 46cm, 46cn, 46co, 46cp, 46cq, 46cr, 46cs, 46ct, 46cu, 46cv, 46cw, 46cx, 46cy, 46cz, 46da, 46db, 46dc, 46dd, 46de, 46df, 46dg, 46dh, 46di, 46dj, 46dk, 46dl, 46dm, 46dn, 46do, 46dp, 46dq, 46dr, 46ds, 46dt, 46du, 46dv, 46dw, 46dx, 46dy, 46dz, 46ea, 46eb, 46ec, 46ed, 46ee, 46ef, 46eg, 46eh, 46ei, 46ej, 46ek, 46el, 46em, 46en, 46eo, 46ep, 46eq, 46er, 46es, 46et, 46eu, 46ev, 46ew, 46ex, 46ey, 46ez, 46fa, 46fb, 46fc, 46fd, 46fe, 46ff, 46fg, 46fh, 46fi, 46fj, 46fk, 46fl, 46fm, 46fn, 46fo, 46fp, 46fq, 46fr, 46fs, 46ft, 46fu, 46fv, 46fw, 46fx, 46fy, 46fz, 46ga, 46gb, 46gc, 46gd, 46ge, 46gf, 46gg, 46gh, 46gi, 46gj, 46gk, 46gl, 46gm, 46gn, 46go, 46gp, 46gq, 46gr, 46gs, 46gt, 46gu, 46gv, 46gw, 46gx, 46gy, 46gz, 46ha, 46hb, 46hc, 46hd, 46he, 46hf, 46hg, 46hh, 46hi, 46hj, 46hk, 46hl, 46hm, 46hn, 46ho, 46hp, 46hq, 46hr, 46hs, 46ht, 46hu, 46hv, 46hw, 46hx, 46hy, 46hz, 46ia, 46ib, 46ic, 46id, 46ie, 46if, 46ig, 46ih, 46ii, 46ij, 46ik, 46il, 46im, 46in, 46io, 46ip, 46iq, 46ir, 46is, 46it, 46iu, 46iv, 46iw, 46ix, 46iy, 46iz, 46ja, 46jb, 46jc, 46jd, 46je, 46jf, 46jg, 46jh, 46ji, 46jj, 46jk, 46jl, 46jm, 46jn, 46jo, 46jp, 46jq, 46jr, 46js, 46jt, 46ju, 46jv, 46jw, 46jx, 46jy, 46jz, 46ka, 46kb, 46kc, 46kd, 46ke, 46kf, 46kg, 46kh, 46ki, 46kj, 46kk, 46kl, 46km, 46kn, 46ko, 46kp, 46kq, 46kr, 46ks, 46kt, 46ku, 46kv, 46kw, 46kx, 46ky, 46kz, 46la, 46lb, 46lc, 46ld, 46le, 46lf, 46lg, 46lh, 46li, 46lj, 46lk, 46ll, 46lm, 46ln, 46lo, 46lp, 46lq, 46lr, 46ls, 46lt, 46lu, 46lv, 46lw, 46lx, 46ly, 46lz, 46ma, 46mb, 46mc, 46md, 46me, 46mf, 46mg, 46mh, 46mi, 46mj, 46mk, 46ml, 46mm, 46mn, 46mo, 46mp, 46mq, 46mr, 46ms, 46mt, 46mu, 46mv, 46mw, 46mx, 46my, 46mz, 46na, 46nb, 46nc, 46nd, 46ne, 46nf, 46ng, 46nh, 46ni, 46nj, 46nk, 46nl, 46nm, 46nn, 46no, 46np, 46nq, 46nr, 46ns, 46nt, 46nu, 46nv, 46nw, 46nx, 46ny, 46nz, 46oa, 46ob, 46oc, 46od, 46oe, 46of, 46og, 46oh, 46oi, 46oj, 46ok, 46ol, 46om, 46on, 46oo, 46op, 46oq, 46or, 46os, 46ot, 46ou, 46ov, 46ow, 46ox, 46oy, 46oz, 46pa, 46pb, 46pc, 46pd, 46pe, 46pf, 46pg, 46ph, 46pi, 46pj, 46pk, 46pl, 46pm, 46pn, 46po, 46pp, 46pq, 46pr, 46ps, 46pt, 46pu, 46pv, 46pw, 46px, 46py, 46pz, 46qa, 46qb, 46qc, 46qd, 46qe, 46qf, 46qg, 46qh, 46qi, 46qj, 46qk, 46ql, 46qm, 46qn, 46qo, 46qp, 46qq, 46qr, 46qs, 46qt, 46qu, 46qv, 46qw, 46qx, 46qy, 46qz, 46ra, 46rb, 46rc, 46rd, 46re, 46rf, 46rg, 46rh, 46ri, 46rj, 46rk, 46rl, 46rm, 46rn, 46ro, 46rp, 46rq, 46rr, 46rs, 46rt, 46ru, 46rv, 46rw, 46rx, 46ry, 46rz, 46sa, 46sb, 46sc, 46sd, 46se, 46sf, 46sg, 46sh, 46si, 46sj, 46sk, 46sl, 46sm, 46sn, 46so, 46sp, 46sq, 46sr, 46ss, 46st, 46su, 46sv, 46sw, 46sx, 46sy, 46sz, 46ta, 46tb, 46tc, 46td, 46te, 46tf, 46tg, 46th, 46ti, 46tj, 46tk, 46tl, 46tm, 46tn, 46to, 46tp, 46tq, 46tr, 46ts, 46tt, 46tu, 46tv, 46tw, 46tx, 46ty, 46tz, 46ua, 46ub, 46uc, 46ud, 46ue, 46uf, 46ug, 46uh, 46ui, 46uj, 46uk, 46ul, 46um, 46un, 46uo, 46up, 46uq, 46ur, 46us, 46ut, 46uu, 46uv, 46uw, 46ux, 46uy, 46uz, 46va, 46vb, 46vc, 46vd, 46ve, 46vf, 46vg, 46vh, 46vi, 46vj, 46vk, 46vl, 46vm, 46vn, 46vo, 46vp, 46vq, 46vr, 46vs, 46vt, 46vu, 46vv, 46vw, 46vx, 46vy, 46vz, 46wa, 46wb, 46wc, 46wd, 46we, 46wf, 46wg, 46wh, 46wi, 46wj, 46wk, 46wl, 46wm, 46wn, 46wo, 46wp, 46wq, 46wr, 46ws, 46wt, 46wu, 46wv, 46ww, 46wx, 46wy, 46wz, 46xa, 46xb, 46xc, 46xd, 46xe, 46xf, 46xg, 46xh, 46xi, 46xj, 46xk, 46xl, 46xm, 46xn, 46xo, 46xp, 46xq, 46xr, 46xs, 46xt, 46xu, 46xv, 46xw, 46xx, 46xy, 46xz, 46ya, 46yb, 46yc, 46yd, 46ye, 46yf, 46yg, 46yh, 46yi, 46yj, 46yk, 46yl, 46ym, 46yn, 46yo, 46yp, 46yq, 46yr, 46ys, 46yt, 46yu, 46yv, 46yw, 46yx, 46yy, 46yz, 46za, 46zb, 46zc, 46zd, 46ze, 46zf, 46zg, 46zh, 46zi, 46zj, 46zk, 46zl, 46zm, 46zn, 46zo, 46zp, 46zq, 46zr, 46zs, 46zt, 46zu, 46zv, 46zw, 46zx, 46zy, 46zz		

SPS AUCTION #33

CLOSING DATE: APRIL 4, 2008

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Airmail Envelope

282 Euskadi, listed as Bilbao E#2 (1937); unused, excellent condition17.00

LITERATURE

283 "Catalogue Cross References" by Jerry Wells. With Sofima Catalogue as the base, cross references four other catalogues covering SCW locals: Barrata (1990), Edifil (1995-6), Felix Gomez-Guillamon (1987-8) and Galvez (1960). 190 pages, 8 X 11, Xeroxed, spiral bound. A must have reference for the serious collector. Several copies are available.40.00

Pictures for Auction #33

Lot 31

Lot 14

Lot 44

Lot 249

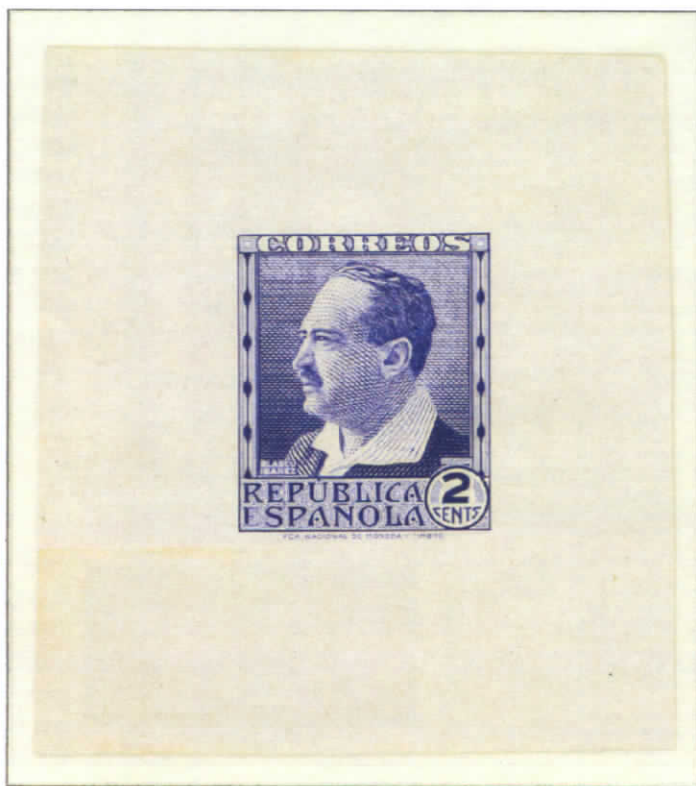
The Second Basic Series Issued by the Spanish Republic (Españoles Ilustres Y Monumentos)

By Arturo Martín de Nicolás

I decided to continue my articles with the second basic series issued by the Spanish Republic, since it immediately followed the first series, and it is a very similar set of stamps; many are the same as those of the previous series. They are differentiated by the fact that this new set does not have a control number in the back of each stamp. The new Government of the Republic had canceled this requisite by law of April 18, 1932 and starting with this issue control numbers were no longer used.

The same seven stamps of the first basic series, with the same colors, started to circulate in July 1932, without the control numbers. Two additional values were issued: a 20c Pi y Margall in violet and a 60c Castelar in olive green. In addition a 2c stamp was added to honor Vicente Blasco Ibáñez. The higher values which were missing in the first basic series were also added, namely the 1, 4 and 10 peseta stamps.

Vicente Blasco Ibáñez (1867-1928) was born in Valencia, where he founded the newspaper "El Pueblo" in 1891 and became active in politics, as a conservative in his early years and later as a dedicated republican. His criticism of the king Alfonso XIII led to his forced exile in France. He retired from active politics in 1909 and became an active writer. His novels "Blood and Sand" and "The Four



Enlarged copy of the finished die proof of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez in a trial blue color. He was a dedicated republican and a writer of world fame. Blasco Ibáñez was the only new personality added in the second Basic Series

Riders of the Apocalypses" are world known. He received an honorary doctorate from Washington University in 1920.

The 1 peseta stamp shows "Las Casas Colgadas de Cuenca" (The Hanging Houses of Cuenca) which were built on rocks formed over the centuries on the east side of the city by erosion from the river Huécar. These houses overlook the deep gorges surrounding the city and were once used as private homes. Only a few remain today

and one is used as a restaurant and the others as the Museum of Spanish Abstract Art of Cuenca.

The 4 pesetas stamp shows "El Alcázar de Segovia", an architectonic jewel if there ever was one. It was probably the site of a Roman fort and later of an Arab fortification. Following the reconquest of Segovia it was rebuilt by Alfonso VIII as his principal residence in the XII century and it became a key fortress in the struggle against the Moors. Throughout the years it has served as a royal palace, a state prison, a Royal Artillery College and a military academy.

The 10 pesetas stamp shows "La Puerta del Sol de Toledo" which was built in the XIII century by the Order of Knights Hospitalers. It was one of the entry points into the walled city of Toledo.

My exhibit starts with the die proofs of those new stamps which were incorporated in this second basic series. All those

shown are final die proofs and the engraver of all was Camilo Delhom. The blue color of the Blasco Ibáñez was a trial color as were the blue and green colors of "La Puerta del Sol de Toledo".

All the stamps of this series are available imperforate and I present the complete set in blocks of four, which is my preferred way of collecting imperforate stamps, although it must be said that sometimes

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Enlarged copies of the final die proofs, in the colors of the issued stamps, of two new values added in this Series. The 1 Pta corresponds to "Las Casas Colgadas de Cuenca" and the 4 Ptas to "El Alcázar de Segovia", which was rebuilt by Alfonso VIII in the XII century to be used as his principal residence. The Alcázar remained one of the favourite residences of the monarchs of the Kingdom of Castile throughout the Middle Ages.



Enlarged copies of the final die proof, in trial colors of blue and green, of the other Monument which was added in this second Basic Series: "La Puerta del Sol de Toledo". Built by the Order of Knights Hospitalers in the XIII century it was one of the entry points into the walled city of Toledo. In the top level there is a relief depicting Saint Ildefonso receiving the chasuble, under the Sun and the Moon, which gives rise to the name "Puerta del Sol".



The second Basic Series differs from the first by the fact that it does not have control numbers in the back of the stamps. There are also several additional values added: the 2c of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, who is also new to the series, the 20c of Pi y Margall and the 60c of Castelar. In addition to the "Distinguished Spaniards" of this series there are three Monuments added, which gives rise to the title "Españoles Ilustres y Monumentos". The Monuments shown are: "Las Casa Colgadas de Cuenca" (1 Pta), "El Alcázar de Segovia" (4 Ptas) and "La Puerta del Sol de Toledo" (10 Ptas).

ESPAÑOLES ILUSTRES

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blocks of four are very difficult to obtain as we have seen in my two previous articles.

This series has some important perforation varieties and I show the following ones: (a) a block of twelve stamps of "La Puerta del Sol de Toledo" missing the vertical perforations; (b) a block of four stamps of the Salmerón 50c orange stamp missing the vertical perforations and the lower horizontal perforation at the edge of the sheet; (c) a pair of "El Alcázar de Segovia" with the horizontal perforations displaced.

There are a number of very interesting covers which could be shown with stamps of

this series but I will limit myself to one cover which is unique. It is the only cover known originating in Spain which was carried on a catapult flight in the North Atlantic.

These flights are very well documented in the catalog prepared by James W. Graue and Dieter Leder titled "German North Atlantic Catapult Flights 1929-1935". The cover shown went on flight K 131 of September 22, 1932. Based on a study of the marks and cancellations which appear on the cover, together with the information available in the above mentioned catalog, and above all based on a personal conver-

sation with Dieter Leder, one of the authors of the catalog, we can establish the detailed route taken by our cover as follows.

It was mailed in Reus (Tarragona) on September 13, 1932, registered air mail and went by land to Barcelona, where it took the night flight of Lufthansa to Stuttgart with stops in Marseille and Geneva. On the back there is a datestamp of arrival September 14th, between 6 and 7 PM, and there is also a rectangular red mark in the front showing the arrival in Stuttgart. From Stuttgart it went by land to Cologne, where

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The complete series is shown imperforated in blocks of four. The imperforated stamp is basically less common than the perforated stamp, and in some cases they are very rare. Imperforated blocks of four are therefore an important addition to any specialized collection.



RECONSTRUCTED COMPLETE SHEET CONTROL NUMBERS 1-50





RECONSTRUCTED COMPLETE SHEET CONTROL NUMBERS 51-00

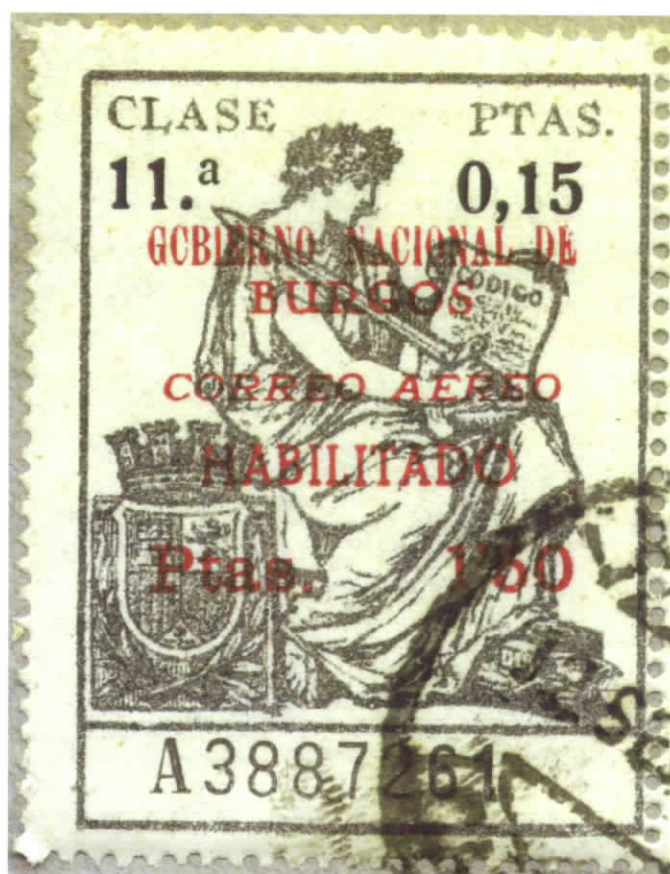




TYPE 1 (Ahe) POSITIONS 18,19,20,68,69,70
6 STAMPS OF 100, INVERTED "G" IN "GOBIERNO" & MISSING 2nd "E" IN "AEREO"



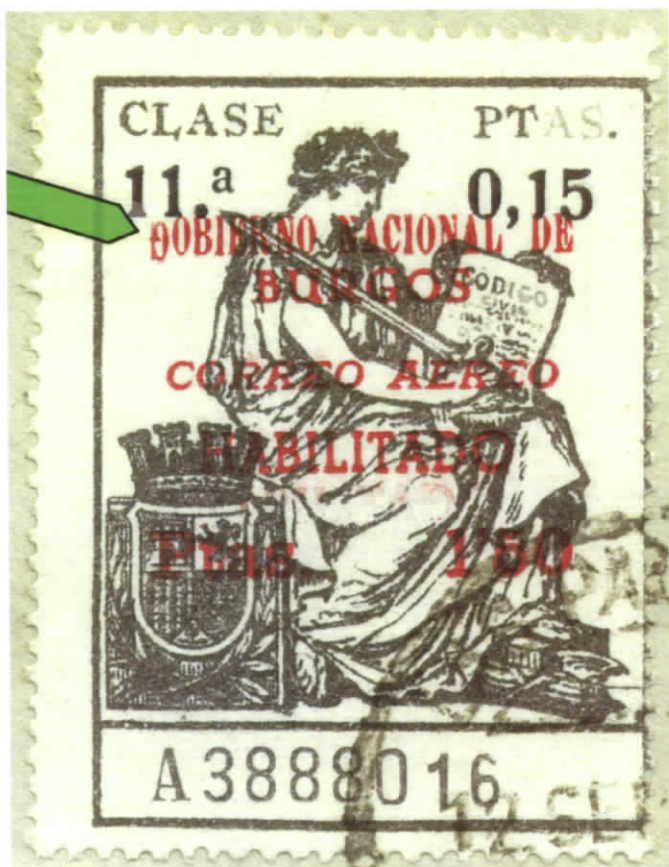
TYPE 2 POSITIONS 01-05 & 51-55
10 STAMPS OF 100, GOBI"LRNO INSTEAD OF GOBIERNO



TYPE 3 POSITIONS 11,12,61,62
4 STAMPS OF 100, G"C"BIERNO INSTEAD OF GOBIERNO



TYPE 4 POSITIONS 13-15 & 63-65
6 STAMPS OF 100, G"C"BIERNO INSTEAD OF GOBIERNO & DROPPED SECOND "I" IN HABILITADO



TYPE 5 POSITIONS 16,17,66,67
4 STAMPS OF 100, G"C"BIERNO INSTEAD OF GOBIERNO



TYPE 6 POSITIONS 39,40,89,90
4 STAMPS OF 100, AER"R"O INSTEAD OF AEREO



TYPE 7 POSITIONS 25 & 75
 2 STAMPS OF 100, CORRE"S" INSTEAD OF CORREO
 & HA"LIB"ITADO INSTEAD OF HABILITADO



Reconstructed sheet A3887401-A3887450 with selvage on top and left side of sheet. This sheet has the only 45 examples of Burgos Local Patriotic 18Ahh. The right column of 5 stamps are single overprint with at least 1 stamp having only a portion of the overprint. The top selvage has 10 examples of the double overprint. The left side selvage has 6 overprints with GOBI"LRNO, which is normally in the first column of stamps.



- Double overprint, one inverted from sheet A3887801-A3887850. 10 examples exist only in the bottom row of this sheet. The remainder of the sheet contains the stamps normally in each of the positions.
- I have examined 5 of the existing 10 stamps as well as 24 others from the remainder of this sheet.
- If this stamp was listed in Edifil, it would be 18Ahi.

Author's note: I have the greatest admiration for the Edifil Specialized catalogs of Spain especially Volume IV. Every new edition since its inception supercedes the information quality contained in the previous edition. I hope someday all Civil War locals now found in Gomez Guillamon, Galvez, Sofima, Caminal etc will be included and priced in Edifil. Until then I encourage the continued gradual improvements including the updating the listing for Burgos local patriotic 18A based on the information contained in the above monograph. I believe it is factual and accurate and they certainly have my permission to use any/all of the information provided above as they see fit.

SUMMARY OF BURGOS LOCAL PATRIOTIC 18A

- 1200 STAMPS
- 735 NORMAL OVERPRINT

18AHE INVERTED G & MISSING SECOND E IN AEREO	68STAMPS
INVERTED G	46 STAMPS
BOB'L'RNO	114 STAMPS
G'C'BIERNO	46 STAMPS
G'C'BIERNO, DROPPED "T" IN HABILITADO	68 STAMPS
CORRE"S", HA"LIB"TTADO	22 STAMPS
AER"R"O	45 STAMPS
18 AHH DOUBLE OVERPRINT	45 STAMPS
18 AHHI DOUBLE OVERPRINT, ONE INVERTED	10 STAMPS
ONLY HALF OF THE OVERPRINT WHICH IS SHIFTED LEFT	1 STAMP
TOTAL	1200 STMAPS

- PLUS 16 SECTIONS OF SELVEDGE
- 11 WITH DOUBLE OVERPRINT
- 5 WITH GOB'L'RNO

Philatelic Favorites

Featuring the Most Interesting Items
from the Collections of SPS Members



Both the French and Spanish postal services accepted this cover with invalid war tax stamps as valid postage.

1875 War Tax Stamps Paying Postage to France.

By **Jaume Balsells**

One of the aspects of Spanish Philately that I am interested in is the war tax stamps and their use in the mail. A war tax on the mail was first introduced in January 1st, 1874, to help raise money for the ongoing civil war against the Carlist rebels. Although the war ended in 1876, the war tax period would continue until December 31st, 1881, with different stamp issues and rate changes.

Since the war tax was mandatory on domestic mail, domestic covers bearing these stamps are very common. However, because of all the different stamps and rate changes, building a collection of this period is an interesting challenge for the postal historian.

As with any other Postal History study, the collection can be spiced up with incorrectly franked covers. The two obvious examples include the use of war tax stamps to pay postage and the use of postage stamps to pay war tax. In some cases, misuse of stamps was not accepted and the covers were considered insufficiently paid. In other cases, incorrectly franked covers were accepted by the mail.

The cover I am showing here is an example of the latter. It was posted on March 26th, 1875 in Castro Urdiales, a small town near Santander, and addressed to Castets des Landes, in France. Postage for a letter to France up to ½ ounce was 40 céntimos. No war tax stamps were required since mail going

abroad was exempt from paying war tax. The letter is franked with a 10 céntimos stamp (1874 coat of arms, Edifil 153) and 6 copies of the 5 céntimos war tax stamp (1875 coat of arms, Edifil 154). Stamps are cancelled with the Castro Urdiales datestamp. The cover also has an Ambulante Norte transit on the back, French border transit cancel on the front and a faint arrival cancel on the back.

Although the total amount paid by the sender was 40 céntimos, the six war tax stamps were not valid for postage and the cover should have been taxed. Uncomprehensibly, both the Spanish and French postal services accepted the war tax stamps as valid postage as shown by the PD cancel on the front.

Several other covers going abroad and bearing war tax stamps exist. On most of these, however, the war tax stamp was added on top of the correct postage by mistake and was thus ignored by foreign mail services. The cover shown here is the only example I know of war tax stamps being intentionally used to pay postage to a foreign destination. ■



When the author picked up this old cover, he could never have predicted how it would touch his own and his family's history.

An Old Cover Brings Back Modern Memories

By Dennis Niemira

Northeast of Seville on the road between Constantina and Piñáflor sits the little village of Puebla de los Infantes. I acquired this advertising cover mainly because covers from this town are seldom seen and it had the word Constantina which is a place I used to live.

When I received the cover, I discovered I got more than I bargained for. The stamps are unremarkable, Edifil 816x2 and a Sevilla local Sofima 16 with a Puebla de los Infantes circle date postmark 29 Jul 37. On back is a Lora del Rio boxed censor mark and a machine receiving mark 31 Jul 37, 1er Repato. Lo and behold when I opened the the back flap my heart took a few big beats. Printed on the flap was "Imprenta ROJO, Constantina." To anyone else this would mean nothing.

But to me this cover says a lot. First, I lived in Constantina for a number of years

in the early sixties. I have been in los Infantes numerous times and more likely that not, had a few glasses of wine in Jose Liñán's bar. In Constantina on Calle Mesones, (Mesones Street) there is a building with the name, IMPRENTA ROJO stuccoed to the facade. My wife's best friend while living in Constantina was Marine Lazano Rojo, whose father owned the Imprenta back then. Señor Fernando Lozana owned and operated the store along with the original owner who was Marine's grandfather. When Sr. Lozana died, the family sold the business. Ironically my brother in law bought the building about a year before I bought the cover.

This cover represents two eras of history for me, old and new. One of philately and postal history of the Spanish Civil War, the next my own modern history and memories. This cover started out seventy one years ago in a building that a family member owns today. Although

not unique, to me it has all the elements one could ask for — history, memories and my tie to it all, What a beautiful hobby. IMPRENTA ROJO is still on the front of the building today. ■



American Airmen In the Spanish Civil War

By Jerry A. Wells

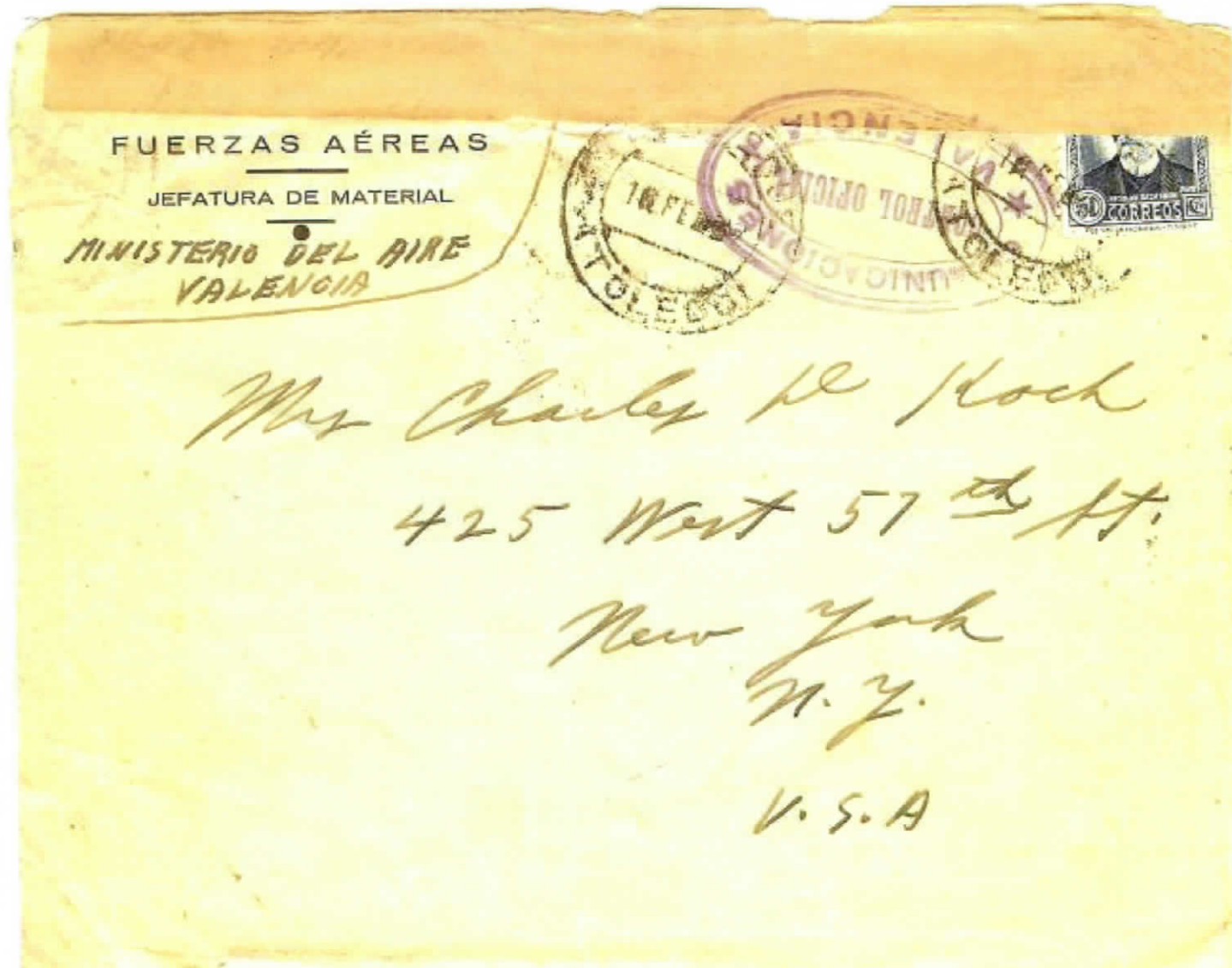
Over 3,000 Americans volunteered to fight in the Spanish Civil War as part of the Republican International Brigades — even though the United States government had refused to permit its citizens to do so.

By January 31, 1937, 21 pilots had volunteered for Republican service, but these were well paid mercenaries rather than idealistic

leftists. The first contingent of American pilots arrived in Spain in late September of 1936 using aliases so as to remain undetected by American authorities:

NAME.....	ALIAS
Joseph Rosmarin.....	Jaime Field
Ed Lyons.....	Ed Lebowitz
Harold Evans Dahl	Hernando Diaz Evans

These 21 pilots included twenty-one pilots included Bert Acosta; Jim Allison; Albert J. (Ajax) Baumler; Orwin Dwight Bell; Gordon Berry; Sam Brenner; Nord Caldwell; Derek Dickinson; Eugene Finick, Manuel Gomez, Charles Koch; Benjamin David Leider; Frederick Ives Lord; Ed Lyons; Joseph Rosmarin; Vincent Schmidt; Edward Schneider; Edmond Semens; Ar-



Charles "Tiny" Koch was the oldest U.S. volunteer flying for the Republic and he accounted for three kills. This cover is addressed to his wife in New York.

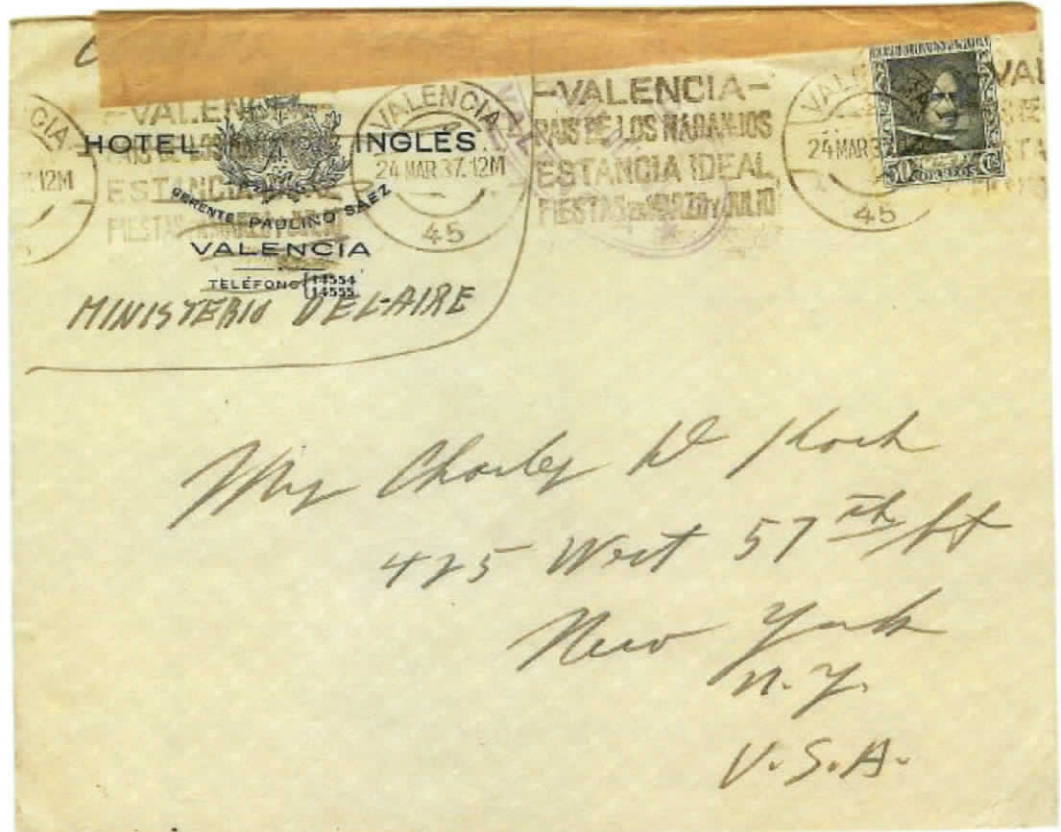
thur Shapiro; and John Glasgow Tinker who would become the first Republican ace.

Although all had stories to tell, the two most interesting were Charles Koch and Harold Whitey Dahl.

Charles Koch, at 42, was the oldest U. S. volunteer and the most experienced flyer with over 2,285 hours prior to service in Spain. Koch arrived December 9, 1936 graduating as a fighter pilot (Piloto De Caza) one month later and became known as "Tiny". Arriving at the airfield Los Alcazares at the end of January 1937, Koch shot down two CR 32s on February 11, and a Fiat in February 18 — the same battle in which Jim Allison's plane was shot down by Italian fighters (Allison was wounded but lived to go home). Two envelopes from Koch to his wife are shown, one dated February 16, 1937 — five days after his first two kills— and one sent March 24, 1937 — a few weeks after his third.. Koch was discharged April, 1937.

Harold Whitey Dahl (alias Hernando Diaz Evans): Dahl was 28 years old when he arrived in Spain in December of 1936, having previously received his wings after graduation at the Army Air bases at Kelly and Randolph Fields in San Antonio, U.S.A. Dahl was quite a colorful character, who had lost his commission as a result of compulsive gambling and a civil court conviction. He contracted to fly for the Republicans on one condition: that the Valencia government include his wife in his travel allowance. Dahl married Edith Rogers — a Swedish American bombshell showgirl who gave up her singing career with Rudy Vallee's orchestra. Dahl was to be shipped to Spain on the Normandie, but missed the boat when he was arrested while training in Texas. He was released after a week — and did not arrive in Spain until December. While in Spain he was known as El Rubio (blonde headed) and like Ernest Hemingway, favored the Florida Hotel in Madrid. On February 18, 1937 he was shot down in the same battle with Charles Koch and Jim Allison but returned to continue flying for the loyalists.

On July 12, 1937 Dahl's luck ran out again on July 12, 1937 when he was shot down over Madrid and captured by the Nationalists. Dahl, along with two Russian pilots, was charged with rebellion against the state and was condemned to death. An



This letter from Charles 'Tiny' Koch to his wife was sent to his wife a few weeks after his third kill.



H. E. DAHL
He may face firing squad.



MRS. DAHL
She hopes and prays.

American colonel who had fought with Franco in Morocco, telephoned Franco for clemency and Dahl was sentenced to life. However, the October 8, 1937 Dallas Dispatch paper reported that his life was spared after his wife sent a photo of herself to Franco and pleaded for the life of her

husband begging "please don't destroy the only happiness I have ever known." Franco "was apparently touched by the letter, which appealed to his Latin love of youthful romance." Dahl later returned to the United States in November of 1940. A very lucky man in more ways than one. ■