

AFFILIATE #207

# THE POSTAL LABEL BULLETIN

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## A show piece



Courtesy of Darus Greathouse: an interesting piece of (postal) history. First of all, this cover from 1871 is genuine, because it was accompanied by a certificate of authenticity. This certificate contains also relevant information regarding the use of the label and in which catalogue it is documented.

The letter was "...sent from Thun,

Switzerland, to Correge, France, posted on 28 February of 1871, bearing one "free frank" stamp issue especially for use by French military personnel interned in Swiss military installations, inscribed "Gratis", printed in black on violet ordinary paper, Maury Catalogue Internees #1, and alongside the dispatch circular datestamp "THUN / 28 II 71 - 8" and on reverse a partial French arrival datestamp..."

"The free frank facility was awarded to French prisoners of war by Switzerland in a decree of August 5th of 1870. The adhesive label went into use on 3 February 1871, and was replaced by other adhesives (Red Cross, etc.) on 27 March of 1871. Therefore, this letter falls within the correct period of the label's usage. The issue of the free frank label consisted of 224,000 examples."

But why and how ended French soldiers up in Switzerland during this French-German war 1870-1871? Thanks to the internet I found the answer.

It regards the Armée de l'Est (Army of the East), also known as the Bourbaki army, named after its first commander Charles Denis Sauter Bourbaki. It numbered about 90,000 men. The task of the army was intended to be the relief of the besieged fortress of Belfort and the interruption of the German supply lines. However, it suffered a defeat at Belfort in the battle of the Lisaine. The retreat to the south went chaotically and slowly, and the army was surrounded in the area of Pontarlier, close to the Swiss border.

*to be continued on page 4*

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think  
of your  
dues  
payment!

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## Literature



I could buy on eBay this book: R.M. Startup & G.I. Robertson, *New Zealand Parcel Post Labels, Cards & Forms. A study of New Zealand Post Office Parcel Post Stationery - Forms, cards, labels, postcards, 1887-1987.* Published by The Postal History Society of New Zealand, May 2003, 124 pages, many images, however in black/white.

I was particularly happy to find images of forms that go with the usage of labels.

BK



Georges Guignard, Louis Vuille, *Les Etiquettes Postales Suisses, 1876-1997*, 1998 Consilium Philateliae. 128 pages, full colour images.

This is really a fantastic book. It contains images of all postal labels you can think of. And they are all described with their characteristics: colour, format, mode of separation, tirage, date. Researching literature on C.O.D. labels and 'valeur déclarée' labels, I came across this book and found it even for sale on the internet.

It would be much appreciated when members make known relevant literature they come across, even if it is written in other languages than English.

### THE POSTAL LABEL BULLETIN

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# Membership News

## President's Message

I apologize for neglecting to put a report in the last bulletin. I wish everyone all good wishes for the New Year. There are a number of things I'd like to mention.

First, Gunter Mair is working readily on his Air Mail Etiquette revision and has completed North America. He is uncertain when it will be made available to members.

I have been gratified at the slow but steady increase in our membership. As we all know, that is a difficult thing to manage these days. There is no question that what we collect adds immeasurably to the postal historical interest of the covers they are found on. For those who eschew covers, they become items of beauty for the pleasure they give us, much as postage stamps and other Cinderellas do.

Please make an effort to send interesting items that come your way to Bas for inclusion in this Bulletin. The bulletin is the glue that holds the Group together.

At the risk of repeating myself, I'm reminding everyone that we will meet this year during the 2016 New York International at the Javits Center where we will be sharing a booth with the Ephemera Society of America and the Poster stamp Collectors Club. Our membership meeting, open to the public, will be held on **Sunday, May 29 at 11 AM in Room 1E18**. I am sure that many of our members will be attending the show and, I hope, will come to the meeting. I ask those among you who plan to attend let me know as soon as possible, so we can perhaps arrange some sort of dinner.

Art Groten

### Burt Robbins

It was with great sadness I learned about the passing of Burt Robbins. I was wondering why he had not replied promptly, as he always used to, to a couple of emails I sent after the passing of his wife Genny only a few months ago.

I was hoping to visit him again in the next few months. I regularly traded labels with Burt over a period of 20 years and have dozens of emails to & from him over the years on my computer. He kept me supplied with all the latest varieties of the US Priority labels, the last received about 4 months ago. I stayed with Genny and Burt twice in their home in Massachusetts and once in their winter home in Port Charlotte, FL. They were a lovely couple and I will miss them greatly.

*Neville Ritchie*

Burt's daughter replied to Neville:

Hi. This is Burt's daughter, Marguerite Rountree. Just checking Dad's emails. I'm sorry to let you know that he passed away peacefully in his sleep at Hope Hospice Care Center on October 26th. He never bounced back after Mom's death. They are together forever now. They were married for 64 years and together for 67.

### New member:

Peter Bertschinger  
Eichenweg 7  
Bülach 8180, Switzerland  
interests: 30% A; 30% R, 40% other (exp, priority, etc.)  
Special interest: cinderellas  
would like to exchange and correspond  
pe.bertschinger@bluewin.ch

## DUES

### Message from the Treasurer:

**Dues notices were mailed at the end of November. If you have not already done so, please pay them now. If your dues have not been paid by January 31, 2016 we will have no choice but to drop you from the membership rolls. I hope to meet some of you at the Stamp Expo in New York in May. - Milt Keiles**

Any comment, story, news, remarkable item will be welcomed by your editor.

### Auction #119 Realizations

7	6.50	53	4.00	139	14.00	157	4.00	182	1.50	190	9.59
25	1.00	83	8.00	141	5.00	164	6.00	183	2.25	193	4.50
26	1.00	86	5.00	142	5.00	172	2.00	184	3.50	194	3.25
27	4.00	104	4.00	144	3.00	173	3.00	185	3.00	196	12.00
29	3.00	112	15.00	150	15.00	180	3.00	186	1.00	198	1.00
52	4.00	138	6.75	155	2.00	181	3.00	187	1.00	199	1.50



Part of the Bourbaki Panorama: the French army crosses the border and is handing in their weapons.

In the absence of a field post service the postal traffic of internees remained cause of civilian post. As the French military men were fairly evenly distributed across the whole of Switzerland, it did not have any major difficulties. For letter post, the internees between Switzerland and unoccupied France consisted franchise. To this end, a red label imprinted with 'French soldiers interned in Switzerland Free' was issued.



On the internet I saw that loose labels are offered but no covers with this label on it. I think that those covers are much more scarce.

By the end of March 1871, the last contingents of the Bourbaki Army were returned to France. On May 10, the Franco-German war was officially end. These events in Switzerland gave rise to extensively reporting in papers. It also gave rise to an remarkable painting: The Bourbaki Panorama, a cilindric painting (112 x 10 meters) which still can be admired in the city of Lucerne. Its painter, Edouard Castres, witnessed the war as Red Cross volunteer.

General Bourbaki was relieved of his duties and made a suicide attempt. The new commanding general, Justin Clinchant, requested military asylum in Switzerland. From 1 to 3 February 1871 87,000 men crossed the Franco-Swiss border at Les Verrières, and had to hand in their weapons. The soldiers were interned and distributed over almost all of the country. The internment eventually took 6 weeks. Between 13 and 22 March the detainees were able to return to France. The French government paid an amount of CHF 12.1 million for the expenses.



the internment of 87,000 men means that Swiss villages must accommodate a lot of soldiers, as can be seen on this photograph.



from Art Groten: 1945 air cover tpo Australia with **five** different air etiquettes. Itg doesn't like a philatelic cover. I've never seen one like this.

## Air Mail Etiquettes for Sale

Art Groten      agroten43@icloud.com

These collections comprise post-1941 material. Each group includes numerous singles (mint and used), booklets, multiples, a few sheets and many covers, all organized by Mair numbers. Some of the common types, of which there are many, have not been worked up.

These collections are a marvelous for someone just starting out or for the serious collector looking for varieties. Many of the covers have postal history interest in their own right. There is mild to considerable duplication of some labels; most are singletons. There is strength in 3\* to 5\* items. Clearly, these characteristics will vary from lot to lot.

Because of the volume of material, detailed lists cannot be supplied nor can requests for single items be accepted.

Personal checks in U.S.\$ drawn on a US bank are referred. Payment by Paypal is OK provided their 3% charge is added to the price.

The collections (all include at least 1000 items, some considerably more):

U.S.: massive holding of many thousands, by far the largest group. \$1250

G.B.: a large group with many full sheets with different marginal imprints, an ideal lot for expansion. \$800

Australasia: mostly Australia and New Zealand and a nice group the scarcer small islands. \$650

Europe: another very large lot including all of Europe with strength in multiples and covers. \$1000

Rest of the World: similar to the European lot, again with strength in multiples and covers. \$800

Total: \$4500 or \$3250 the lot. Terms available. I am open to serious offers.

The image gives some idea of the magnitude of the entire holding.



## Miscellaneous



Hi Art,

Sometime ago you asked me what the meaning is of the brown label on the cover.

With the help of others I have found the answer.

This label was used to seal a damaged envelop.

Knowing this, now it is striking, even on the scan, that something is wrong with the envelop. That is probably also the reason why the address is written again.

Over the label is placed a marking (difficult to see) which says: 'Postoffice the Hague, parcel post'.

Unlike the similar US label, on the Dutch label it isn't stated that it is used for sealing a damage.

That's it.

Bas





From Art Groten: what does the label 'VELDPOST' mean?

I think I can answer this question as follows:

This is a (domestic) money order used by a soldier in the Netherlands Indies.

This is clear from the orange coloured label "Veldpost". Literally translated: mail in the field. The meaning is similar to the indication 'APO', and implies reduction of postage or even exemption.

It passed the (Dutch) censor according to the marking "CENSUR GEPASSEERD"

The red marking bottom left indicates the post office used which is also used as cancellation.

The dating is remarkable: left bottom underneath the post office marking we see with pencil: December 30,

1941. It was on December 8, 1941 that the Netherlands declared war to Japan. And on January 10-11, 1942 Japan attacked the island of Celebes. But on the money order we see on right side bottom the following marking together with a signature of a post officer: I think it says '4 - MAR 1942', that is when war has already started. Because name and address of the receiver is crossed out, it looks like the money is never cashed.



BK



Also from Art Groten:

1931 commercial postcard cover from Friedrichshafen to Czechoslovakia with an interesting Luftpostamt label I've never seen. It was not carried by Zeppelin but by air via Munich and Nuremberg. It appears to have been some sort of commemorative of a Boy Scout meeting (purple handstamp at lower left). Anyone have some thoughts on this?

# On V-registration labels

## Valeur déclarée

Bas Kee

In previous issues of PLB (103 and 117) the 'valeur déclarée' labels were briefly discussed. I think, however, that they deserve a broader discussion.

These postal labels can be collected just like R labels.

I want to explain what 'valeur déclarée' is about using some examples. However, not only letters used 'valeur déclarée' (henceforth referred to as VD), but also parcels, perhaps above all parcels. Therefore I will discuss parcels apart from letters.

## Letters

First, what kind of postal service is indicated by this label? It is (in most countries) an extension of the registration service. With registration a certain limited amount will be refunded in case the letter (or parcel) is lost, damaged or stolen during the postal handling. But what if the sender wants to insure for the contents for a larger amount? Of course that is possible if one wants to pay for it. A special service is offered on top of registration called 'valeur déclarée'.

In the Seoul 1994 Universal Postal Convention it is described as follows:

Priority and non-priority items and letters containing securities, valuable documents or articles shall be called "insured items" and may be exchanged with insurance of the contents for the value declared by the sender.

In principle, the amount of the insured value shall be unlimited. Every administration may limit the insured value, so far as it is concerned, to an amount which may not be less than 4000 SDR. However, the limit of insured value adopted in the internal service shall be applicable if it is less than that amount.

In the event of theft from or damage to an insured item, the sender shall be entitled to an indemnity corresponding, in principle, to the actual amount of the loss, theft or damage. Consequential losses or loss of profits shall not be taken into consideration. However, this indemnity may in no case exceed the amount of the insured value in SDRs.

The indemnity shall be calculated according to the current price, converted into SDRs, of articles of value of the same kind at the place and time at which they were accepted for conveyance. Failing a current price, the indemnity shall be calculated according to the ordinary value of articles whose value is assessed on the same bases.

(SDR = IMF special drawing rights come up in the place of the gold franc as unit of account)

What characteristics are required to be recognized as VD to get special handling in the postal process? First I quote from Article RL 138 of the UPU's Letter Post Manual, Bern 2013 (as far as I know these regulations persist).

### a) regarding Insured value

The insured value shall be expressed in the currency of the country of origin. It shall be written by the sender or his representative above the address of the item in words with roman lettering and in arabic figures, without erasure or alteration, even if certified.

### b) regarding Admission (paragraph 5)

Insured items shall fulfill the following conditions to be admitted to the post.

➤ Insured items shall be made up in such a way that the contents cannot be tampered with without obvious damage to the envelope, the packing or the seals and shall be sealed by effective means such as fine adhesive tape with special uniform design or mark of the sender. Designated operators may, however, agree not to require such design or mark. In this case, designated operators of origin shall put some postmark on the adhesive tape or the closing edge of the item to prevent alterations. (paragraph 5.2.1)

➤ Notwithstanding paragraph 5.2.1, designated operations may require insured items to be sealed with identical wax seals, lead seals or other effective means, with a special uniform design of mark of the sender.

### c) regarding Marking and treatment of items

All designated operations shall apply a barcode on all outward insured items. The specifications shall be as follows: Each insured item must be identified by a single CN 06 label containing the capital letter "V" and including a unique item identifier conforming to the specification of 13-character identifiers in UPU Technical Standard S10:



Letter Post, Doha 2012, art RL 138.6.1 – Size 74 x 26 mm, colour pink

see for an example the next page



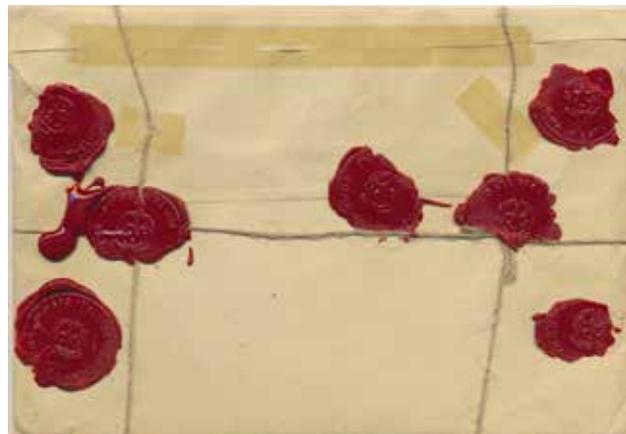
Letter from Germany to the Netherlands, dated 2002.

We see the three necessary characteristics:

- V barcoded label
- the value amount in Roman numerals and Arabic figures
- a wax seal on the reverse



There was a time prior to barcoded labels, a time perhaps more interesting for label collectors. Here is an example:



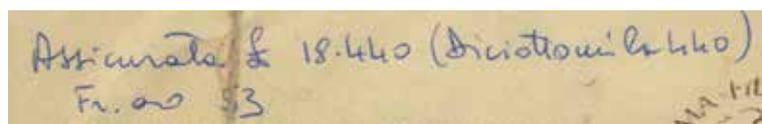
This letter from Italy to the Netherlands is dated 1979. Using string to secure the parcel isn't unusual as noted in the Letter Manual above:

"If the items are tied round crosswise with string and sealed as described under 5.2.1, the string itself need not be sealed."

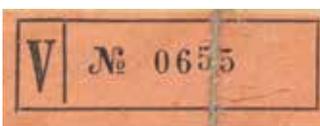
We see again the three characteristics:

1) a way of sealing the letter, so it could not be tampered with ( e.g. string or wax seals).

2) mention of the amount of value in Roman numerals and Arabic figures as well as Italian currency (lire)



3) a label indicating VD:



Prior to the barcoded labels two main types of VD labels may be distinguished.

**Type I:**

the labels in which the R of registration labels is replaced by V as in the letter shown.

**Type II:**

The label with the text 'valeur déclarée' and/or this text in the national language. This label is always used in combination with an R label.

In both cases the item must be identified and registered by a number.

Here is an example of type II on a Dutch letter, dated from 1939:



We can notice again the three characteristics:

1) the VD label is written in French because it is international mail (from The Hague to Paris). This label is the correct Dutch label type (colour, font), because in use since July 1933 (till some date after the date of the letter).

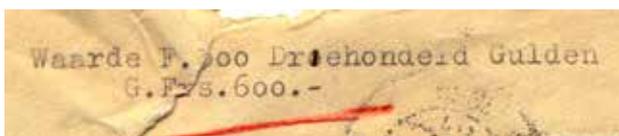


2) The value amount enclosed is according to postal regulation written on the outside in the currency of the country of origin (and here too in French currency).

Until now I couldn't find the reason for this rule in UPU regulations. Why is this? Why isn't it sufficient that the amount is only registered on the form the sender gets from the post office as proof of accepting this mail, or in some sort of registration folder at the post office?



3) Sealing the letter with wax seals.



According to UPU (Seoul 1994):  
The charge on insured items shall be paid in advance. It shall be made up of the ordinary postage charge, the fixed registration charge laid down in artical 16.2 and an insurance charge.

It is therefore relevant for collectors of VD labels on cover to try to explain the postage used on the cover. For the Dutch letter just shown, it is as follows:

Total rate of 42½ cents to France was as of 1939 The value of the contents is 300 guilders. According to the prevailing rates the postage should be:

1) the normal rate for letters abroad (apart from Belgium as destination)	0,12½ cents
2) the rate for registration (from april 1939)	0,10
3) the insurance rate, 0,10 cts per 150 guilders	<u>0,20</u>
Total	0,42½

Here are some more examples of the two types of VD labels:

**Type I**

**Type II**



Belgium  
1932



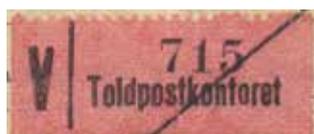
China  
2015



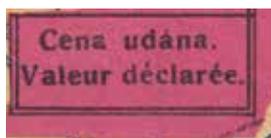
Bosnia  
2004



Croatia  
1992



Denmark  
1947



Czechoslovakia  
1925



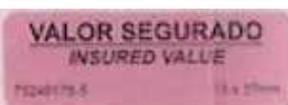
Greece  
already shown in  
PLB, #88



Russia  
1991



Bosnia  
2004



Brazil  
2004

As far as I know, there is no worldwide catalogue available. So, collecting VD labels is more challenging. Jan ter Welle and I are very busy trying to make a start of such a catalogue.

By collecting these labels I mean on covers. Loose labels are very scarce in my experience. Besides collecting on

cover is much more fun, because one sees the label as it was meant to be used and one must explain all the postal indications together.

Now some alternatives for various types of seals (as described in the quoted UPU regulations)



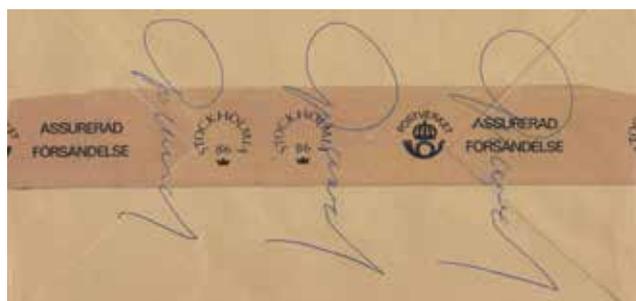
Croatia, 1992



Greece, 2010



France, 1991



Sweden, 1990, the official tape is also signet with initials



USA, 1934,

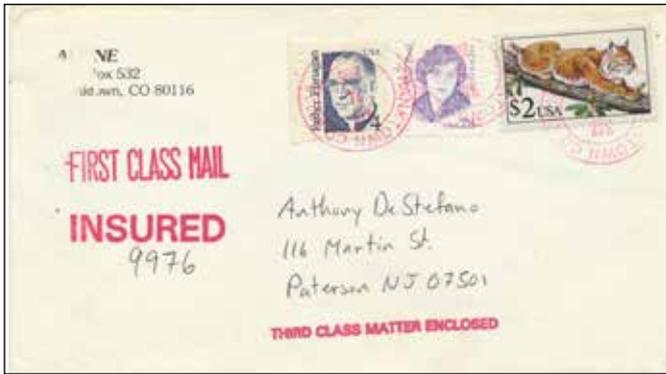
A letter from the National City Bank of New York (to the Deutsche Bank und Disconto Gesellschaft). The bank used its own (beautiful) seal but it was canceled at the post office on both sides of the seal. On the front of the letter only an R marking is seen but not anything

like VD. I will try to explain that in a moment.



USA, 1996

The backside of the letter seems rather dull. And although the tape is without official logos it is nevertheless a tape provided by the post office, used there, marked with several markings of the post office to prevent tampering. The front of this letter is more interesting and brings us to the USA-meaning of insured mail that seems to be different from the UPU definition, see the next page.



Apart from the fact that 'insured' is indicated by a marking instead of a label, it is striking that it is paid as first class mail while explicitly stating that third class matter is enclosed. The combination of these two indications can regularly be seen on insured mail. Why is that? I found the answer in *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1999* (revised second edition), by Henry W. Beecher and Anthony S. Wawrukiewicz, p. 258, 260:

"Insurance for mail provides indemnity for an article which is lost, rifled, or damaged. This service does not provide the special safeguards that are accorded registered mail. (at post offices or in transit). Insurance is provided as unsured mail is dispatched and handled in transit as ordinary mail. An individual receipt for each parcel is given, but no record is kept at the originating PO."

This is clearly in contrast with the UPU regulations where insurance is on top of registration. This contrast can also be concluded from the postage: the letter is in accordance with the postal rates: 32c for normal first class mail and \$2.50 for insurance (and no registration fee).

Later it is stated:

It is important to realize that insurance was not and never had been available to first-class matter alone; the first-class matter must contain third- or fourth-class matter.

The quotations concern domestic mail but in the volume *U.S. International Postal Rates, 1872-1996*, I cannot find any change in the nature of 'insured mail'.

What in UPU terms is called 'insured mail' is in USA simply registered mail. This service doesn't only offer one fixed indemnity but for the declared value. So, no special label of marking apart from R is needed as identification of an item, and no special insurance rate exists. A quotation from Beecher and Wawrukiewicz' book may help to understand:

Effective then, charges were determined by the declared value, with different charges depending upon whether or not there was commercial service (until March, 21, 1981) or whether or not postal insurance was obtained (from March 22, 1981, until the present).

In a next issue I will discuss parcel cards with VD indications and return receipts to the sender. I really hope that members will send comments and additional information.



From Darus Greathouse

I know there are thousands of labels out there, but I have never seen one like this.

Here is a directional label placed on a Mexican cover canceled as mailed May 15, 1928.

The label roughly reads, as indicated to me as: applied to the receiving post office, announcing That the acknowledgment of the letter will delivered " this same day" if sent by air mail and posted by 10:30.

Please, send your editor materials for the next issue(s).