

1½¢ HARDINGS AND PRE WWII U.S.NAVY SHIP CANCELLATIONS

SYNOPSIS

The **purpose** of this single frame postal history exhibit is to demonstrate the different types of ship cancellations used by the U.S. Navy, and the **scope** is the pre-World War II period from 1925 to 1941 and, arbitrarily, covers franked with 1½¢ Hardings from ships, many of which were subsequently anchored at Pearl Harbor on 12/7/41. The postal rate act of February, 1925 created a new postal rate of 1½¢ for third class mail which included envelopes with unsealed flaps. The 1½¢ Harding was issued in 1925 and was replaced by the 1½¢ Martha Washington in 1939. Of the one hundred one U.S. Naval ships present on the “date of infamy” in Pearl Harbor, all but six had post offices aboard, and seventeen of their postmarks are shown in this exhibit. A cancellation consists of a dater circle (the “dial”) at the left containing the ship’s name and bars (“killers”) to the right. Most of the type variations are rearrangements in the dial or in the killers. Since neither the Postal Service nor the Navy makes canceling devices, cancellation types change when a new company is awarded the contract. A system of classifying government-issued naval ship cancels was developed by Dr. Francis E. Locy (ICDR, Medical Corps., U.S.Navy) and published in the February, 1929 issue of *American Philatelist*, and it is still in use today. Dr. Locy lists fourteen types of cancels, 1 through 12, P (“Provisional”) and F (“Fancy”) and eight are included in this exhibit. Privately made cancels are relegated to the generic “fancy” cancel group. Not included in this exhibit are Type 1 which was no longer used after WW I, Type 4 which was incorporated into Type 3, Types 10-12 which were developed after WW II and Type P which was modified.

Most of the ship cancels are hand cancels (some metal, but mostly rubber) except Types 7 and 8 which are machine cancels and were used primarily on battleships and aircraft carriers, requiring electricity which was not reliable on ships in the 1930’s. Some hand-cranked machines did exist but those cancellations, as well as the other T-7 and T-8 cancels are uncommon. Variations from the standard format of each type of cancel are described by code letters which are listed with each example.

My primary philatelic interest is Fourth Bureau issues (1922-1938) and, specifically, Harding issues, I have been collecting Harding ship cancellations for six months, and this is the first showing of this exhibit which does not contain any rare or scarce material. It is arranged chronologically from Type 2 to Type F. Cachet sponsors are listed.

REFERENCES

1. “U.S. Navy Ship Cancellations”, Locy, Dr. F. E., *American Philatelist*, February, 1929
2. *Catalog of US Naval Postmarks*, 5th edition

3. *Universal Ship Cancellation Society Handbook*, April, 2018
4. *Naval Cachet Makers Catalog*, Vol. 1