



Early Viet-Nam Dân-Chủ Cộng- Hòa (VNDCCH) Mixed Usage (borrowing from Ed's concept) “What is a Philatelist to do?”

Presentation at NAPEX

7 June 2014



eBay item: 171347973582

- Described as:
 - **INDOCHINA 1946 FIELDPOST BPM 411 HANOI,**
***RARE* CIVIL USE, France 5F + Overprints**



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Jean Goanvic wrote:

Different possibilities :

1) purely philatelic : In 1946, there was, as far as I know, no postal instruction about those overprinted stamps, so the cover was sent to France as the franking in French Francs was enough (9F) for a registered letter.

2) This is six weeks after the return of the French army in Tonkin (March 6th agreement).

The French sender then thought that the VNDCCH postal service was recognised by France like the VNDCCH Government and franks the cover with VNDCCH stamps (1\$30 - rate in VNDCCH was 90c for registered); the VNDCCH post office accepts the cover and cancel the stamps but tells the sender that it would go faster if it was sent by the French army postal service (which did accept civil mail from November 1945 in Hanoi).



Jean Goanvic wrote:

So the sender went to the BPM and affixes two new French stamps to make 9F registered letter (the French army used French stamps not Indochina stamps) and the letter is sent by the "Poste aux armées" to Toulouse.

The rate is full rate (3F up to 20g +6 F registered) so the letter comes from a civilian (registered military mail at that time paid only registered tax)

The arrival date is mid-May so it went by air to France, Civil mail had to pay airmail surtaxes from end 1945. Military mail was supposed to have a military postmark (vaguemestre) to justify that no airmail surtaxes was needed. I do not see any.

So the cover as it came from a BPM (Bureau Postal Militaire) was (wrongly) considered as of military origin.

End 1945, early 1946 due to the recent situation (Japanese coup leading to French internees then Vietminh communist rule..) the postmen were not very strict in applying the full rules.

The above does not exclude some philatelic intention from the sender !



Franco-Vietnam Agreement of March 6th, 1946

- The government of the French Republic, represented by M. Sainteny, a delegate from the High Commissioner of France, properly authorized by Admiral D'Argenlieu, High Commissioner of France, in who resides the sovereign powers of the French Republic, on one part;
And the government of Vietnam, represented by its president, Ho Chi Minh and the special delegate pf the Council of Ministers, M. Vu Hang Khanh, on the other part; The following has been agreed upon:
- The French government recognizes the Republic of Vietnam as a free state, having its own government, parliament, army and treasury, belonging to the Indo-Chinese Federation and to the French Union.
Concerning the unification of the three ky (Tonkin, Annam And Cochinchina) , the French government binds itself to carry out the decisions taken by the population through a referendum.
- The government of Vietnam declares itself ready to accept amicably the French army when, in conformance with international agreements, it relieves Chinese forces. An annex agreed upon and attached to the present preliminary convention will establish the terms according to which the relief operations will be effected.
- The stipulations formulated above will enter into force immediately. Directly after the exchange of signature, each of the high contracting parties will take all necessary measures to stop hostilities immediately, to keep the military forces in their respective positions and to create the favorable climate necessary to the immediate opening off friendly and frank negotiations.
These negotiations will bear especially on the diplomatic relations of Vietnam with foreign states; the future status of Indo-China; and French economic and cultural interests in Vietnam.
Hanoi, Saigon or Paris may be chosen as the location of the conference.
- Done at Hanoi, March 6, 1946
Signed: Sainteny, Ho Chi Minh, Vu Hung Khanh



Annex to the Franco-Vietnam Agreement of March 6th, 1946

- Between the High Contracting Parties designated in the preliminary convention, the following is agreed upon: Firstly, the relief forces will be composed of
- 10,000 Vietnamese with their Vietnamese cadres, under military control of Vietnam
- 15,000 French, including the French forces now located in the territories of Vietnam north of the 16th parallel. These elements must be composed solely of French metropolitan origin, except for soldiers guarding Japanese prisoners
- These forces, as a whole, will be placed under supreme French command with the assistance of Vietnamese representatives. The advance, stationing and employment of these forces will be defined during a general staff conference between the representatives of the French and Vietnamese commands, which will be held upon the landing of the French units. Mixed commissions will be created at all echelons to ensure liaison in a spirit of friendly cooperation between the French and Vietnamese forces. Secondly, the French elements of the relief forces will be divided in the three categories:
- Units charged with guarding of Japanese prisoners of war will be repatriated, as soon as their mission is completed, following the evacuation of Japanese prisoners, in any event with a maximum delay of 10 months.
- The units charged with ensuring, in cooperation with the Vietnamese Army, the maintenance of public order and security in Vietnamese territory. Each year a fifth of these troops will be relieved by the Vietnamese Army, this relief will thus be effectively completed after five years.
- The units charged with the defense of air and naval bases. The length of the mission entrusted to these units will be defined in the later conferences.
- Thirdly, in the places where French and Vietnamese forces are stationed, precisely demarcated zones will be assigned to them.
- Fourthly, the French government binds itself not to use the Japanese for military purposes.
- Done at Hanoi, March 6, 1946
Signed: Sainteny, Ho Chi Minh, Vu Hung Khanh



Lot 2188 -- Auktionshaus Christoph Gärtner
28th Auction from 2nd to 7th of June 2014

- Described as:
 - “1945, 5 F. and 6 F.tied "HANOI CHANH-THAU-CUC BAC.BO 18 12 46" to local cover with pictorial propaganda marking of helmeted soldier silhouette with crutches inscribed "HOI GIUP BINH SIZI MAN" (assistance to veterans / secours aux combattants).”
- See also ICP 201 for similar cover



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Lot 2188 -- Auktionshaus Christoph Gärtner
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Frank Duering wrote:

It is clear that the cover at best is of philatelic nature. The date stamp itself, however, does not seem to be fake, nor the boxed slogan per se – at least Jean describes it on his site for a cover sent in October 1946 from Viet Tri.

With regard to the date I absolutely agree – as evidence for a made up cover – that those marks have been arranged outside of the postal system like many of those covers carrying this date.

I am not clear about the nature of the handicapped soldier image – I have seen it before and I think it was reported as applied on a genuine cover, but I may be wrong.



Jean Goanvic wrote:

As Frank wrote earlier, this cover has been made by French "philatelists" after the so-called "Clash de Hanoi" on December 19th, 1946.

The Hanoi Post Office had been evacuated by the Vietnamese employees and the French looted the building taking all the postmarks and stamps they found in the drawers and the safe.

This is the reason why there so many "not issued stamps" on the market which were in the safe but not yet issued.

A lot of those "Philatelists" made souvenirs with all material they found using particularly the datestamp which was used before the "Clash" i.e on December 18th...



Jean Goanvic wrote:

The cover in the auction is one of the hundreds / thousands of covers which have been made from genuine material but not by the VNDCCH postal system and those covers left the Post Office directly to the albums of those "Philatelists".

More over those guys has no philatelic background and did not care to put at least the minimum franking rate.

As far as the disabled man postmark is concerned, during the period end 1945 / 1946 a lot of charity campaigns have been launched by the VNDCCH for the illiterate, for the poor, for the ill persons,..... with slogan postmarks accordingly.

I have seen that one already but on another cover dated dec 18th, so I do not know whether it had been used before or if it was already available in the drawers but not yet officially used.



I Wrote to Christoph Gärtner:

In reference to Lot 2188 (described as: 1945, 5 F. and 6 F. tied "HANOI CHANH-THAU-CUC BAC.BO 18 12 46" to local cover with pictorial propaganda marking of helmeted soldier silhouette with crutches inscribed "HOI GIUP BINH SIZI MAN" (assistance to veterans / secours aux combattants).)

Expert Indochina philatelists consider this cover to be one of hundreds or possibly thousands (see attachments for like covers) that were unofficially produced after the looting of materials from the Hanoi main post office before and during the "Battle of Hanoi".

The stamps of VNDCCCH are genuine, and the postmark (CDS) is genuine, but both were not issued by VNDVCH postal authorities and did not pass through the mails. At best these covers, all dated 18 December 1946, are philatelic fantasies. The "...pictorial propaganda marking..." is not known on a genuine postally used cover. The covers produced in this unofficial process do not contain valid franking amounts for the postal rates then in use.

I recommend that note be taken of these facts, and that the lot description be modified accordingly.

Respectfully,



Other “Looted” Covers





Other "Looted" Covers

