

The Leticia Incident

The Colombian - Peruvian Border Conflict of 1932-1934

Exhibit Scope

This thematic exhibit explores the ‘Leticia Incident’, a territorial dispute between Colombia and Peru during the years of 1932-1934 and the involvement of the League of Nations in resolving the dispute.

This was the earliest use of a neutral military force, under an international organization’s control, for peace-keeping purposes.

Historical Background

Colombia and Peru have a history of arguing over control of the port city of Leticia and the Department of Amazonas between 1911 and 1922. Fighting broke out again in 1932. Colombia and Peru agreed to abide by arbitration by the League of Nations in 1933. The League appointed a three nation *Commission for the Administration of the Territory of Leticia* including Brazil, Spain and the United States. Colombia and Peru’s military forces withdrew and a neutral military force, under the Commission’s supervision, policed the disputed area until the territory was awarded by the League of Nations’ Council to Colombia.

Exhibit Development

The storyline progresses chronologically from the initial invasion of Leticia by Peruvians, through peace negotiations, to the decision to award the territory to Colombia. Events are outlined in the exhibit plan.

Exhibit Plan

The Port City of Leticia	History of the port city
The Combatants	Nations and personalities engaging in conflict
Death of a President	Assassination and resulting decline of interest in the war
The Peacemakers	Nations and personalities engaging in peace efforts
The Commission	Commission arrival and activities
Colombia’s Responsibilities	Methods and routes to deliver the mail
Incoming Commission Mail	League of Nations mail to the Commission
Outgoing Commission Mail	Official Mail from the Commission
The League of Nations’ Decision	The final determination of Leticia’s status

Thematic/Philatelic Knowledge

The events are illustrated with diverse philatelic elements selectively chosen to demonstrate specific storyline details and to balance exhibit page presentation. Postal materials are mainly from nations participating in the dispute in some manner; Brazil, Czechoslovakia, Colombia, Germany, Great Britain, Guatemala, Ireland, Peru, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, the United States and the League of Nations. Although impossible in some instances, the materials incorporated were issued as close to the 1932-1934 time frame as possible.

Philatelic Elements

A wide array of philatelic elements is included as is appropriate in thematic exhibits. Care is taken to ensure proper descriptions of these elements to demonstrate knowledge of philately and includes information on stamps, cancel devices, rates, routes, rarity or other justified information as may be appropriate.

Not Included

Items of a philatelic souvenir nature are not deemed appropriate and are not included in this exhibit.

The Leticia Incident, 1932-1934

Personal Research

Much of the information on the *Military Airmail and Express Mail* service carrying Commission mail was unexplained or undocumented prior to this exhibit. Rarity factors were previously unknown and information in the exhibit resulted from personal research and development of an international cover census.

Rarity

Official mail to and from the Commission is scarce due to the short one year period of the Commission's existence. The mail schedule via seaplane and its remote location in the Amazon jungle was bi-monthly. Only 31 examples of mail are recorded and include mail to and from the Commission. Three are in museums and six in this exhibit. The covers are rarely obtainable and this is the most comprehensive group ever exhibited.

Condition

Such mail is seldom pristine, especially under conditions of such remoteness and jungle climate. Folds, creases, nicks, small tears or missing corners are normal indications of transit through the mail systems of the time. Covers are in the best condition available, bearing in mind the number and rarity of examples recorded.

Items, with number recorded and page number, follow.

	Title Page
• Leticia Commission to Pan American member country - 8 recorded	Page 9
• War Department, Washington, D.C. to Leticia Commission Peacekeeper - 1 recorded	Page 10
• League of Nations, Geneva, Switzerland to Leticia Commission	} 7 recorded
• League of Nations, Geneva, Switzerland to Leticia Commission	
• Leticia Commission to Pan American member country - 8 recorded	Page 11
• Leticia Commission to non-Pan American member country - 6 recorded	Page 11

Rarity of official covers is determined from an international census and ongoing research.

These key items are on bright blue matts.



Title Page



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Literature References (Web sites verified 1/21/2023)

- *Leticia - A League of Nations Success Story*, Richard Powers, **UNP Journal, Volume 22, no 5, pg 9**
- *The League of Nations in Leticia*, George Struble, **Tell, Volume LXII, no 1, pg 1**
- *The Leticia Incident, 1932-1934*, Fran Adams, **Monograph published 2019**, Gearlobes Publishing
- *Colombia, The Leticia Conflict* - The Library of Congress Country Studies; CIA World Factbook
(http://www.photius.com/countries/colombia/national_security/colombia_national_security_the_leticia_conflict.html)
- *Leticia Incident* - Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leticia_Incident)
- **International Census - Leticia Incident, 1932-1934**, http://franadams.com/digital_studies/Leticia_census-short.pdf

Exhibitor contributes League of Nations and United Nations related articles and information to:

- *The Journal* - United Nations Philatelists, Inc.