

The Leticia Incident

Commission for the Administration of the Territory of Leticia, 1933-1934

Exhibit Scope

This display exhibit explores the League of Nations' involvement with the 'Leticia Incident', a territorial dispute between Colombia and Peru during the period of 1933-1934. This was the earliest use of a military force, under an international organization's control, for peace-keeping purposes.

Historical Background

Colombia and Peru had a history of arguing for control of the area near the port city of Leticia between 1911 and 1932, when fighting broke out between the two sides. In an attempt to defuse combat, Colombia and Peru agreed to arbitration by the League of Nations. The League appointed three member nations as a "Commission for the Administration of the Territory of Leticia". Each side's military forces were withdrawn and a neutral force under the Commission's supervision policed the disputed area.

Exhibit Development

Exhibit development progresses chronologically from the initial actions by Peru and Colombia through negotiations by the League of Nations to the final decision to award the territory to Colombia. Events are outlined in the exhibit plan chronologically and include materials to illustrate subjects, including actual service mail.

Exhibit Plan

- 1 The Port City of Leticia - Background of the area and the port city
- 2 The Combatants - Nations and personalities engaging in conflict
- 3 The Peacemakers - Nations and personalities engaging in peace efforts
- 4 Postal Routing of Commission Mail - Methods and routes to deliver the mail
- 5 Postal Markings of the Commission - Markings of commission mail and postal systems
- 6 Outgoing Service Mail - Mail from the Leticia Commission
- 7 Incoming League Service Mail - League of Nations mail to the Leticia Commission
- 8 Incoming Peacekeeper Mail - Mail to the Leticia Commission's Peacekeepers
- 9 The League of Nations' Decision - The final determination of Leticia's status

Thematic Knowledge

The story-line of this thematic exhibit includes major events arranged by date and is illustrated with diverse philatelic elements selectively chosen to demonstrate specific story-line details and balance presentation.

Philatelic Knowledge

Care is taken to ensure proper descriptions of philatelic elements to demonstrate knowledge of philately and includes information on stamps, cancel devices, rates, rarity or other justified information as appropriate.

Philatelic Elements (Postal Division)

Definitive issues	Souvenir sheet	Overprint variety	Origin handstamp	Military forwarding
Commemoratives	Overprints	Imperforate	Postage paid	Official mail
Airmail issues	Specimen	Mis-perforation	Machine cancel	Domestic rates
Official issue	Revenue	Gutter snipe	Printed matter	International rates
Stamp re-issue	Margin markings	Size varieties	Franking indicia	Certified mail
Block 4/6	Punched Devalue	Cancel types	Penalty mail	Parcel label

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Personal Research

Information on military couriers, rarity factors and postal rates was previously incorrect or undocumented. Data in this exhibit resulted from personal research and development of an international cover census.

Condition and Rarity

Official service mail to and from the Commission is scarce due to the short period of the Commission's existence and its remote location. Only nineteen examples of service mail are currently recorded - all quite difficult to find and although highly sought after, rarely obtainable. Covers are selected for best condition, bearing in mind service mail is seldom pristine. Folds, creases, nicks, small tears or missing corners are indications of actual transit through the mail systems of the time and place.

Items with 10 or fewer recorded examples follow. Key items are matted on dark blue.

- **Service cover from Leticia Commission (10 recorded)** Page 12
- **Service cover from League of Nations to Leticia Commission** } Page 13
- **Service cover from League of Nations to Leticia Commission** } (6 recorded) Page 14
- **Service cover from U.S. War Department to Leticia Commission Peacekeeper (1 recorded)** Page 15

Rarity of service covers is determined from published sources.

- Articles from "*The Journal*" (United Nations Philatelists, Inc) and "*Tell*" (American Helvetia Philatelic Society)
- Gaines Catalog / monographs of international U.N. philatelic societies
- Philatelic exhibits (international) / web sites / personal correspondence with specialist collectors



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Not Included

Items which are philatelic souvenirs are not deemed appropriate and are not included in this exhibit.

Literature References

 (Web sites verified 11/01/2017)

- "*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**
- "*Der Leticia Konflikt, 1933-1934*", Fran Adams, **UNOP, Studie 2017**, (German Language)
- "*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)
- "*We Have Been Making History: The League of Nations and the Leticia Dispute (1932-1934)*" Pierre-Etienne Bourneuf, 2016, *The International History Review* (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2016.1245673>)
- "*Leticia Incident*" - Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leticia_Incident)

Exhibitor contributes League of Nations and U.N. related information and images to:

- Articles on League of Nations / U.N. forerunners published in "*The Journal*" (of UNPI)
- Exhibitor maintains the International Census for Leticia Service Mail