

The Postal Stationery of the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) for Netherlands New Guinea

SYNOPSIS

OBJECTIVE & SCOPE

This one-frame exhibit presents the postal stationery items - overprinted "UNTEA" - issued by the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) during the period that the United Nations acted as the de facto government of Netherlands New Guinea: October 1, 1962 through April 30, 1963. The exhibit includes all issued postal stationery items: one postal card and two aerograms, showing all printings, as well as varieties and uses. The scope does not include the unfranked postal stationery used by U.N. Peacekeeping forces.

BACKGROUND

The Dutch colony of Netherlands New Guinea was claimed by Indonesia. Amid escalating tension and combat between the two factions, the United Nations was asked to intercede and assume administration of the territory starting October 1, 1962. The UN conducted a survey to determine the wishes of the population, which overwhelmingly chose union with Indonesia. For the seven months that UNTEA governed, it issued overprinted existing stamps and postal stationery of Netherlands New Guinea with "UNTEA". The territory was turned over to Indonesia on May 1, 1963.

TREATMENT

Unfortunately, no essays or proofs of the overprint are known in public hands for these stamps. The exhibit shows the postal card followed by the two aerograms. All printings are shown for each, including postal use. See Plan on the title page for organization details.

The main story text, using the Times New Roman font, is included in lightly tinted blue boxes. Text describing shown items will be unboxed. Auxiliary information will be italicized and also without a box. Key information will be highlighted with bold text.

Key and important items will be highlighted by being placed in a red double-line frame.

Items with a good certificate will be indicated with "(e)" at the lower-right corner of such items.

This is the most comprehensive exhibit from one of the largest known collections of the UNTEA postal stationery. Mint examples of each printing for each of the three postals are shown, as are legitimate uses of each. Both flap versions are shown for the second printings for both of the aerograms.

Given the short period of postal validity, the small quantity of stationery issued, and the small literate population, the study of UNTEA stationery is appropriate for a one-frame exhibit.

IMPORTANCE

While the tenure of UNTEA was brief, its significance was immense. **This was the first time that the United Nations, or any other non-governmental agency, had acted as the de facto government of a country.** UNTEA provided for the peaceful transition of a colony. UNTEA operated the postal service of the land effectively throughout the period.

While the subject has been shown before, **this version is virtually complete.** Material presented has been gathered by the exhibitor over the span of 40 years, and includes items acquired from the collections of four other major collectors of the subject, including Ron Ginns (a.k.a. Arleigh Gaines). **The five collections that have been combined into this one collection represent at least 150 collecting years.**

KNOWLEDGE & RESEARCH

This material has been keenly scrutinized by both Dutch and UN collectors alike. Detailed listings of the stamps and postal stationery, their varieties and uses can be found in *United Nations Philately*, *The American Philatelist*, and a number of articles in *The Journal* of the United Nations Philatelists (see References). Additional information has been gleaned from Dutch and Indonesian publications and websites.

Uses of the aerograms and cards show how the literate population used the stationery. Aerograms were is-

sued rated for domestic and foreign destinations. Aerograms rated for domestic use were also used to foreign destinations and are included.

The only issued postal card was rated for domestic use. **If any were used to any foreign destination, requiring additional postage, NONE have been found and reported.** Thus, this exhibit can only show the postal cards used domestically. (See 3rd reference.)

RARITY & CONDITION

The UNTEA overprint was applied to postal stationery in relatively small quantities. **For the first printing only 6,500 postal cards, 11,000 15c aerograms, and 8,000 35c aerograms were overprinted.** A second printing was applied just two months after the first. The third printing, applied in March 1963, was available for just over a month making this last printing difficult to find, especially in used condition. Unfortunately, the quantities of the second and third printings were not recorded.

Unlike the stamps, UNTEA postal stationery was not sold in the Netherlands by the P.T.T., nor by the United Nations at its headquarters in New York. **The postal stationery was only sold in Netherlands New Guinea.**

Also unlike the stamps, the UNTEA overprint is NOT known inverted on the postal stationery. Indeed, damaged overprints and misplaced overprints are far rarer on the postal stationery, but those varieties known to exist are shown in this exhibit.

Rare First Day covers for the two aerograms are shown. **These are the only examples that this exhibitor has seen.**

Uses shown in this exhibit are actual (non-philatelic) uses. All postal cards include requests to the radio station. All aerograms contain messages in a variety of languages: Dutch, Indonesian, Malay, and English. The English language letters are almost all from missionaries, and mainly describe the primitive conditions where they served.

Outside of the larger cities, the country was rather illiterate. Cancels from small towns will be highlighted by being bolded in the text.

The condition of the material shown in this exhibit, including covers, is the best available. Many of the items are in pristine condition; notable given the tropical climate of the island.

REFERENCES (All references are available from the American Philatelic Research Library.)

“Plaatfouten en (op)drukafwijkingen Nederlands Nieuw-Guinea en UNTEA 1950-1963” (Plate Flaws and (over)print varieties of Netherlands New Guinea and UNTEA 1950-1963). By Nico de Weijer, Joop Hoogenboom, Henk Teunis and Han Dijkstra, 2008 by Studygroup ZWP. **UNTEA section (pp. 54-123) in Dutch and English**, although illustration captions only in Dutch. Most up-to-date reference for plate varieties.

United Nations Philately, Arleigh Gaines, ed., R & D Publications 1980 w/updates through 1997.

This massive loose-leaf specialized catalog contains the best English language reference on this material. The section on UNTEA can be found on pages 1601-1612 (postal stationery covered on pp. 1605-6). Recommend review of whole section for general UNTEA information. UNTEA section last updated October 1996.

“UNTEA: The 7-Cent Postal Card” by Dr. John Hardjasudarma, *The American Philatelist*, Volume 102, Number 9 (September 1988), pp. 860-863.

This article, by a leading UNTEA philatelist, provides more detail regarding the postal card and its printings than is published in *United Nations Philately*.

“United Nations Temporary Executive Authority” Part I through VI by Robert B. Smith, *The Journal of the United Nations Philatelists*.

Parts II (Vol. 8, No. 3), III (Vol. 8, No. 4), and V (Vol. 8, No. 6) contain information on the postal stationery. Note that Mr. Smith states in error that the long and short flap varieties of the aerograms also occurred on the third printings of both aerograms. It does not. The flap varieties only exist on the second printings. Of particular interest are the domestic and foreign rate charts provided in part III on pages 94 and 95.