

UNITED STATES STAMPS USED IN CHINA DURING BOXER UPRISING OF 1900.

By BRIG. GEN. C. A. COOLIDGE.

After the U. S. Forces landed in China and together with five other foreign contingencies fought the Boxers and Chinese troops in the battle of the Walled City of Tien Tsin, July 13th, 1900, in order to open the roadway before proceeding to relieve the foreign legations surrounded and besieged by the Boxers and national Chinese army in the city of Peking, our natural desire was to send home to our friends in America messages of our survival and tell the story of that terrific engagement. Officially, I was obliged to telegraph information to the U. S. Government in Washington concerning Military affairs which communications had to be forwarded by U. S. Despatch boats to Shang-Hai-Quan or Chefoo-China from there passing over the Russian Telegraph Line through Siberia and Europe across the Atlantic to America. One message alone cost the U. S. Government over \$500.00. Our first mail was sent by the quartermaster down the Peiho River to the U. S. transport "Logan" that had brought the regiment from Manila and was unloading its Military Cargo and stores and our baggage for us at Taku off the mouth of the river.

As hurriedly as possible she was sent back to Nagasak, Japan, with the American and English refugees who had fled from Tien Tsin and such of our wounded soldiers as could stand being moved. Mail from U. S. sent by "Logan" to the U. S. quartermaster who was stationed in Nagasak to take charge of the U. S. Transports plying enroute to the Philippines or returning to the U. S. He forwarded all mail by the first departing Government vessels whether stamped or not; except that when stamped with Japanese post office stamps they could be sent by an earlier Japanese mail steamer to Seattle or San Francisco. There was a Japanese post-office as well as a branch office of the Chinese Imperial Post in Tien Tsin, while the British and other nationalities speedily established postal facilities for their troops and countrymen; carrying their mail on war vessels, to their nearest dependency ports in Asia, whence their mails were forwarded by the regular channels; so I frequently

took advantage of those routes and franked my letters with different stamps of several nationalities in order to get them through speedily. All my mail reached its destination in safety and not a single letter or parcel forwarded by me from China was lost. As soon as it was recognized officially at Washington that U. S. troops were to remain some time in China, the authorities promptly made provisions for mail service with the U. S. similar to that already established in Cuba, Porto Rico and the Philippines. On the 2nd of August, 1900, the P. O. Dept. issued an order establishing Postal agencies at Tougka, Tien Tsin and Peking, China, under the supervision of Mr. G. M. Hunt, Postal Agent for the sale of U. S. stamps, the registration of packages and issuing money orders as well as for the distribution and forwarding of the mail.

The regular issue of U. S. postage stamps were used probably because the authorities realized the temporary character of our occupancy and that our mails were not to pass through foreign postal agencies,—being forwarded by our own War Ships and Transports. The U. S. stamps surcharged for the Philippines were accepted and all "Soldiers Mail" certified to by a commissioned officer U. S. A. was authorized to be sent to its destination, postage due to be collected from the recipient. The U. S. postal facilities continued until May 15th, 1901, when the U. S. forces were withdrawn from Peking and were finally discontinued Aug. 1st, 1901. During the time of our occupancy, 11,639 pieces of registered mail was shipped from three offices in China. The English made use of their Indian stamps surcharged or overprinted C. E. F. for "Chinese Expeditionary Forces." As for The German Stamps of 1898 and 1900 of which quite a list is given in Scott's Catalogue, I only came across the 1898 set surcharged "China" and a set of the 1890 unsurcharged which I purchased there.

The French also overprinted their regular issue "China" which were used in northern China as well as in their Southern Chinese possessions, I suppose.

The Japanese regular issues were pur-

chaseable as also their special "Korea" imprint.

My mail franked with stamps of the "Chinese Imperial Post" reached their destination—with the mailing office date stamps of "Shang-hai" "Hankaw" "Peking" and "Taku" in English letters as well as Chinese characters.

The "dating stamps" on my letters paid by U. S. stamps are as follows: "Mil P. Sta No 1 Tien Tsin China", "Mil Postal Sta No. 1 China" and date, "Mil P Sta Peking China" and date, "Peking China U. S. Mil P. O. Station" and date with Japanese P. O. Stamps on the envelope, "Mil P Sta No 1 Peking" and date.

Unfortunately I destroyed nearly all the envelopes in which I sent letters to my wife, (at the time of earthquake and fire in San Francisco) and have only three of the U. S. 2-cent postage stamps with the dating stamps on parts of the envelope attached to and one U. S. two cent under charged "Phillipine" envelope in my possession.

Whether there are other persons in the U. S. who have been more judicious in saving them I don't know—there must have been all values of stamps used from China in 1900 as there was a great deal of parcel and registered mail sent to the U. S. transmitting Chinese curios which was authorized to be admitted to the U. S. free of duty when sent by the soldiers. I did not endeavor to have any of my mailing wrappers with the stamps thereon saved for me as I had given up Philately some years previous and never expected again to become interested in gathering a collection.

None of the catalogues have ever taken notice of this class of U. S. Postal peculiarities nor have I seen them mentioned in any books or authorities but they certainly deserve a position among the U. S. issues and are of interesting philatelic record.

Of course the only method of ascertaining the accuracy of these stamps is in conjunction with the "dating stamp" of the Military Station in China on the used envelope.