

ber: APS, APC, ARPL, ARA, China SS, Cinderella SC, Croation PS, German PS, 3rd Reich SG, ISJP, Lithuanian PS, S. Allan Taylor So., State Rev. So., WCC, Civil Censorship SG, USPPS, 4th Class Canc. Club.

JAPANESE OCCUPATION: "SECRET MARKS" IN THE LAUREL ISSUE CACHET-CANCEL

by Eugene A. Garrett

Starting with the Bureau of Communications official cachet of May 7, 1944 (Figure 1), which was applied to First Day Covers of the stamps issued to commemorate the Second Anniversary of the Fall of Bataan and Corregidor (Scott Nos. N35-36). "control numbers" were incorporated conspicuously within the design of that and subsequent cachets and cachet-cancels. The illustrated example bears number "4" at the twelve o'clock position. A similarly numbered rubber stamp was issued to each postal employee assigned to process covers on the day of issue, thus making it possible to trace any impression on cover to a particular clerk. As the name implies, it is believed that the "control numbers" were but one manifestation of the tight censorship regulations imposed by the Japanese, and were intended to discourage the postal clerks from processing any covers with pro-American or anti-Japanese inscriptions.

When the Bureau of Communications prepared the cachet-cancellers for First Day Covers of the "Laurel Issue" of January 12, 1945 (Scott Nos. N37-39), commemorating the October 14, 1944, First Anniversary of the Inauguration of the Republika ng Pilipinas, a new innovation appeared: instead of the "control numbers" employed previously, "secret marks" now were incorporated



Fig. 1

within the inscription. It is presumed that the "secret marks" served the same purpose as the "control numbers". In the only reference which I have been able to find in the previous literature, the "Official Organ of the AFF" (1) mentioned that "according to the best of our information, there were 16 cachets in the series". Based upon that comment, it seems logical to presume that there should be 16 different "secret marks" to be found in impressions of the Laurel issue cachet-cancel. However, after examining hundreds of covers, I have discovered only 13 positions, as illustrated below. The 13 known positions have been classified tentatively as Positions 1 through 13; "tentatively", for the obvious reason that the system of classification by position clockwise most likely will require modification if and when the presently-unknown three positions are identified. Readers of this journal are urged to examine their holdings of the Laurel FDCs and to advise the author or the Editor if the exact positions of the three missing "secret marks" can be found.

(1) "Official Organ of the AFF, 1942-1945"; Asociacion Filatelica de Filipinas; Manila; May, 1946; Vol. VII, No. 1, p. 34.



Position 1.



Position 2.



Position 3.



Position 4.



Position 5.



Position 6.



Position 7.



Position 8.



Position 9.



Position 10.



Position 11.



Position 12.



Position 13.