

**Postcards sent in early 1945 from the liberated part of the Netherlands to the U.S.**

*by Hans Kremer*

As soon as the Germans invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940 ( they stayed for five years) anything to do with the mail changed.

After the Germans took control of the Dutch P.T.T limitations were put into place about which types of mail could be sent and to which destinations and of course censorship was applied for mail with foreign destinations. All this makes for an interesting and extensive area of collecting .

In this article I'll discuss two covers sent in early 1945 from the southern part of the Netherlands to the U.S.

Although the Netherlands was officially liberated on May 5, 1945 certain parts of the Netherlands were liberated as early as September 1944 (Maastricht for example), with parts of the province of Noord-Brabant retaining their freedom during the latter part of October 1944. Once parts of the Netherlands were liberated the need for a normal mail service was recognized and after some difficulties, Eindhoven became the provisional P.T.T headquarters.



*Postcard sent 1-26-1945 from Leur to Oakland, Ca.  
Courtesy George Vandenberg*

One has to realize that all decisions made regarding the Dutch P.T.T during this period were to be approved by SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force). SHAEF was the headquarters of the Commander of Allied forces in north west Europe, from late 1943 until the end of World War II. General Dwight D. Eisenhower was in command of SHAEF throughout its existence. The Dutch government in the liberated parts of the Netherlands was represented by the Militaire Gezag (M.G) (Military Authority); it reported through the Dutch government in London, directly to SHAEF. The PTT in turn reported to the M.G.

The two postcards shown were both sent from towns in the southern province of Noord-Brabant. The first one was



Zus and Wim Olivier are all-right in Eindhoven. For a while they had great difficulties obtaining food, but things are getting better all the time. Their home was quite damaged as a result of a bombardment right after their liberation. Nel is in Northern Italy. It is a real pity that she did not stay in Rome, as a result she is now still in German controlled territory. Well, Uncle and Aunt, I shall finish. We hope to also hear from you. Heartfelt greetings, also from our family and also to Hugo.

Yours Jan Wim”

You might have noticed that part of the text is crossed out. This is where the censor office obliterated part of the text. I’ve tried to read what was written under the blacked out part but was not able to do so, so we can only guess. The mail to foreign destinations often had quite innocent notes about military subjects which were nevertheless blackened out.

The issue of censorship brings us to the rectangular marker with the corners cut off, on the front of the cover. It reads:

NEDERLAND  
GEZIEN  
DOOR DEN  
CENSUURDIENST  
2069



which means ‘Netherlands, checked by the censorservice’. The ‘2069’ refers to the id number of a particular censor.

Censorship (except for local mail; it was excluded) had started in Eindhoven as per November 24, 1944.

What would be blacked out? Things of direct or indirect value to the enemy; things that could impede the government in tracking down suspicious elements; things that could endanger people who were under control of the enemy; use of secret codes and languages. For postcards and letters to foreign countries there were additional conditions, such as having to use full name and address on front of the card/letter, writing the name of the language (if not in Dutch) of the card/letter, and strangely enough: only one side of the card could be used for messages.

Looking at the card quite a few of these rules were violated, but after being censored it was sent on its way to the U.S (proof is the U.S. CENSORSHIP / 7391) marker. Maybe because this card was sent on the second day this kind of mail was allowed again, familiarity with the rules might have been limited, not only by the general public, but by the people in the postoffices and censor office as well.

The censorship office in Eindhoven was the direct result of the insistence of SHAEF of such an institution. It moved offices to Amsterdam on June 18, 1945. The Nederlandse Censuurdienst from June 18, 1945 was renamed Allied Censorship Netherlands. The ACN was abolished as per November 15, 1947. During the nine months of the Eindhoven censor office 36 censor officers censored about 1,300,000 pieces of mail.

The U.S Censorship/ 7391 marker was of course applied in the U.S, most likely in New York.

During the war many postoffices were damaged and this often included office supplies, such as cancels. In other cases cancels were still available but the annual update of the year characters (in this case ‘1945’) could not be shipped from the usual source, since it had to come from the still occupied part of the country, in this case The Hague. The Eindhoven provisional headquarters decided to order these parts from a Belgian supplier. These ‘Belgian parts’ can easily be identified, because they have an ‘open 4’, and straight “1”, as is the case of the Breda cancel shown here.



*Open ‘4’ cancel*

Let’s take a closer look at the date the card was cancelled. It is cancelled in Breda (being the postoffice closest to Leur) on January 26, 1945 as indicated by the short bar rader type cancel. Why is this date significant? Because as

of the day before, January 25, 1945 postcards and letters could be sent from Breda once again to foreign destinations. The sender says "Now that there is the opportunity again to correspond by postcard,..."; he was quite aware of this new type of mail that could be sent abroad as of January 25, 1945.

The card was overfranked by 2 1/2 cent, 7 1/2 cent being the correct rate. Since 5 cent was the rate within the Netherlands, most people had probably a number of 5 cents stamps around, but no 2 1/2 cent stamps. It was easier to add another 5 cent stamp than having to go to the postoffice and buying a 2 1/2 cent stamp.

On to the second cover:



Front and back of postcard sent March 23, 1945 from Schijndel to Newark, N.J.

This cover looks a lot like the first one, but it is sent a bit later. It was sent by the daughter of the postmaster of Schijndel (as is stated on the card) and sent to a friend in Newark. It is cancelled March 24, 1945, about two months later than the first card. Since Schijndel was also in the liberated part of Noord-Brabant it was also sent to the Eindhoven censor office, but it was passed on without anything being blacked out. The sender, Anske Jeuken, writes; "We are allowed now to write letters too to U.S.A and England". She was correct, since this permission took effect on March 22, 1945, for letters under 20 grams . So the date on her card also is of some significance. With a name like Anske Jeuken and from a small town I thought it might be worthwhile to see if I could find out if she was still alive. I did see a picture of her on the Schijndel Website. It was taken in 1943, showing her as a teenage member of the local fieldhockey club. Thru the Website I got in touch with Ans who wrote "Well here I am, fully alive" . She wrote that she was 18 when she sent the card, so she must be about 82 years old by now. Unfortunately she was not able to tell me more about her correspondence with Milton Weinik in Newark, although she had pointed out that the card she had received had taken a bit over two months to reach her.

The Schijndel long bar canceller came thru the war just fine. This cancel was sent to Schijndel on November 29, 1912 and was in use there until August 30, 1949! Don't be fooled with the 10.X.10 date on the cancel in the official PTT book of cancels. Any date could be put in there, so it has no real connection to the actual date the cancel was shipped out to a particular postoffice.



The card is correctly franked with 7 1/2 cents in postage, made up of a 2 1/2 and 5 cent stamp of the liberation issue of 1944-1946.

Early 1943 the Dutch government in exile (London) made the decision to have a series of stamps printed, mainly to be used on Dutch Navy vessels, this in spite of the Netherlands still being at war. After considerable delays, Prof. Romein was asked to design the stamps. He was given specific instructions about denominations, colors, format, and especially the designs.



*Royal Navy postcard, cancelled Aug. 2, 1944, with five of the 'Liberation' stamps.  
Courtesy of George Vandenberg*

The Department of War suggested the following themes: a 'marksman' with helmet manning a machine-gun, a bust of a pilot in a Spitfire, or an air attack on an airport, plus several portraits of Queen Wilhelmina and a stamp designated to the Dutch Merchant Marine by depicting either the 'Oranje' or the 'Nieuw Amsterdam'. About 40 different designs were submitted, which can be seen at the Museum voor Communication in The Hague. From this set of designs the 1 1/2, 2 1/2, and 3 cent stamps, and the frame of the Wilhelmina stamps were ultimately used. Van Dieten's Proeven catalogus shows a set of proofs (page 77) with the chosen colors and the word SPECIMEN perforated. The set is stuck on a piece of carton. The first set of stamps were printed by Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co Ltd. in England.

The stamps were issued on June 15, 1944 and made available to the Dutch Navy. Dutch ships were considered Dutch territory (Postal Convention of 1939, Buenos Aires) wherever they were situated in the world.

The stamps can be found on "Koninklijke Marine" covers from June 15, 1944 through June 27, 1945. It is not until January 10, 1945 that the stamps were made available in the liberated, Southern part of the Netherlands.

Since Anske Jeuken's Dad was the postmaster in Schijndel she must have had easy access to the 'latest' stamps, so she used a 2 1/2 cent (Nieuw Amsterdam) and a 5 cent (de Ruyter) stamp to make up the 7 1/2 cent required for franking an overseas postcard.

All of this shows once again that you don't have to spend a fortune to enjoy our hobby. It also points out how important it is to have access to philatelic literature. You can build up your own library as I have done, but you also could make use of the extensive ASNP library.

If you are fortunately enough to visit the Netherlands on a regular basis the 'Bonds library' in Baarn ( smack in the middle of the country), and headed by Marijke van der Meer is an excellent source of information. She even offers you a free welcoming cup of coffee, plus it gives you a chance to meet one or more of the prominent Dutch philatelic researchers who are visiting there every week.

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