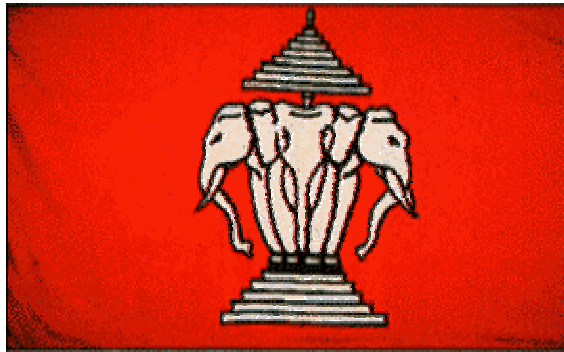


SECTION 5
KINGDOM OF LAOS
1950 – 1975



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INTRODUCTION TO SECTION 5

This section contains items that date from the Independence Treaty with France, in 1950, to the overthrow of the Royal Government and King Savang Vatthana in 1975.

I freely solicit comments, of whatever nature, to add in the revision of this Section, and for application to future Sections.

Philatelic commemorative events – The progression and evolution of the philatelic history and methods of Laos is clearly evident in the methods of memorializing events using philatelic methods.

Immediately after independence from France, the method was to use privately prepared rectangular handstamps with appropriate wording, in Lao and French, to mark the event. Commemorative cancellations were not used and pre-printed cachets on the covers were lacking. Standard town circular date stamps (CDS) were used to cancel the stamps.

In 1952, pre-printed cachets were introduced for use on first day covers. In an article in the ICP (December 1971, Vol. I, No. 5, page 3), Allen D. Kerr states, “No official first day covers were prepared for this set, but Mr. A. Berson, a Frenchman living in Vientiane, prepared covers for this issue.” (many if not all first

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ROYAUME DU LAOS



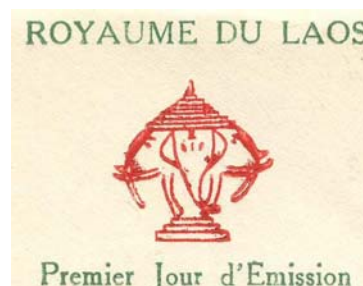
ວັນແຮກຈຳນ້າຍ
PREMIER JOUR
D'ÉMISSION
FIRST DAY COVER

day covers of this issue with this cachet are addressed to Mr. A. Berson). The cachet is in the form of the state emblem (the parasol and three-headed elephant, the ‘erawan’), Kingdom of Laos, in Lao and French, and first day of issue, also in Lao and French, and sometimes in English. This cachet pattern was used for many years and on subsequent issues; some believe that the design was officially adopted by the PTT, but this is still an outstanding issue.

In 1955 the Lao PTT introduced the practice of using circular commemorative handstamps that occasionally were also used as cancellations. The design was modified from time to time for subsequent issues, and the city name and date were adjusted as necessary for the specific issue.



In an article in the ICP (October 1972, Vol. II, No. 3, page 10), Allen D. Kerr states, “1959 saw the first appearance of officially prepared first day covers, and these were used for all three issues of that year.” The cachet is illustrated at the right and was used for all three issues in that year, and occasionally appears on later issues.



In 1957 a PTT specific emblem (consisting of snakes, ‘nagas’ and the ‘erawan’) replaced the state emblem pre-printed cachet. In an article in the ICP (May 1971, Vol. I, No. 3, page 9), Dennis Baird states “... the old style official first day cover envelopes, an envelope which was apparently developed for the Lao PTT by Chou Mao Tiane of the Vientiane Philatelic Company.” This second version can be differentiated from the third in the text “LAOS” at the base of the erawan. In the third version the text is in Lao script.

In 1960 a replacement pre-printed ‘official’ cachet was introduced, replacing the 1957 PTT version with a revised PTT emblem. Usages overlap, and covers with the 1957 cachet are known much later.



1957 Pattern "Official PTT cachet"



1960 Pattern "Official PTT cachet"

Many other pre-printed cachet designs started to appear in 1958 and 1959, and this practice continued until 1964 or 1965. At this time a ‘standard’ first day cover format was introduced. The cover would contain a pre-printed cachet on the left, and the stamps would be cancelled with a large commemorative circular handstamp.

Souvenir Sheets and Booklets – Laos, in contrast to Cambodia, did not start issuing souvenir booklets and sheets until 1962, and then consistently continued that practice for many years.

Mention should be made of various issues, during 1975, which in the opinion of some are considered as spurious and excessive to postal needs. These issues address the topics of the UPU, the Apollo-Soyuz, and the American Bicentennial. Many issues are with gold foil and corresponding souvenir sheets. I supply a catalog entry for each issue, should First Day Covers, and/or commemorative handstamps exist.



The issues of Laos, in common with those of Cambodia, and S. Viet-Nam, are found on what are termed “Van Dahl” pre-printed cachet FDC envelopes, as illustrated. These envelopes were readily available in the United States (believed produced by Van Dahl Publishing, a philatelic publisher of the Western Stamp Collector) and were clearly available to the stamp dealers in the several countries. These FDC’s are listed when know.

Circular date stamps are illustrated separately when possible, based on the original cover and the quality of the impression.

Cities Listed – I solicit information and material to be included in this catalog, as I freely recognize that my collection is incomplete in several areas of importance. This Section contains commemorative entries almost exclusively from Vientiane, the administrative capital, and Luang Prabang, the Royal capital.

Reference Material and Publications

1. Jacques Desrousseaux, Postes & Courriers Français en Extreme-Orient, 1984, unpublished manuscript.
2. Allen D. Kerr, The First Day Covers of Laos, 1971-1976, a series of articles published in the journal of the Society of Indo-China Philatelists, The Indo-China Philatelist.