

Lesson Four

Putting It Together

Assembling the Exhibit Materials

Many beginning exhibitors get mired in the mechanics of assembling the exhibit. It need not be difficult or complicated. Keep in mind that the goal of the exhibit is to develop the story and highlight your material. Your treasured material is the star of the show. The paper, the text, the mounts are all supporting players that should work together to make the star shine.

Personal choice plays a key role in determining what is best for your exhibit, but the most important consideration is keeping your philatelic treasures safe. That means using acid-free paper stock and archival-quality mounting materials. It means handling the materials carefully and keeping your work area free from anything that will damage your treasures (food, drink, cigarettes, pets, children, etc.)

Parts of an Exhibit

Title Page

The first page of an exhibit is called the "title page." A good title page not only carries the name of the exhibit, but it should set out the parameters of what is being shown. It will give the viewer an overview of the material that follows in the frames.

Title pages often are done last in the sequence of preparing and mounting pages. This is because the plan may be constantly evolving during the mounting phase. You want the title page to match what is really in the exhibit, not what you thought would be in the exhibit when you began.

Plan Page

It may be possible to include a plan (think of this as a sort of "table of contents" for the exhibit) on the title page if there is room (Figure 4-1),

but many exhibitors put their plan on a separate page that goes immediately after the title page, often including some philatelic material.

There has evolved a standard format for plan pages. This format breaks the exhibit into "chapters" and "subchapters," just as a book's table of contents would. (See Lesson Two for more details). The plan must follow the story initiated on the title page.

Body Pages

The body of the exhibit is also the bulk of the exhibit. Even a one-frame exhibit will have a title page and 15 body pages. The body pages correspond to and follow the plan page. It is useful for the viewer to use sub-

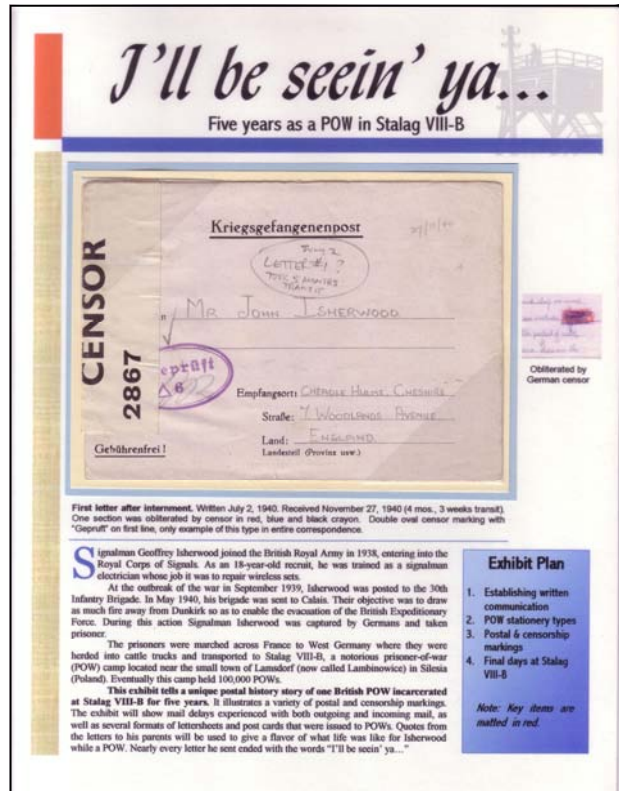


Figure 4-1. Title page for an exhibit about mail sent by one British soldier to his parents from a German prisoner of war camp during World War II. Notice the exhibit's plan is on the title page.



Figure 4-2. A page from chapter 2 of the exhibit whose title page is illustrated in Figure 4-1. Notice how the chapter heading is taken directly from the plan on the title page.

headings from plan page throughout the exhibit. See Figure 4-2.

Conclusion

A failing of many exhibits is that they just stop. Remember, an exhibit tells a story, and a good story has an ending. Use the last page of the exhibit to tie up the story with a satisfactory conclusion.

Synopsis

Many exhibitors are now preparing a synopsis page to send to the show committee who will forward it to their judges in advance of the show. A synopsis may carry some of the



The Australian Occupation of Japan

1946 - 1952

Exhibit Synopsis

Allied Forces began streaming into Japan as the war in the Pacific came to a close in 1945. The first to arrive were Americans in August 1945. In February, 1946, British Commonwealth forces began an occupation of Japan. The BCOF (British Commonwealth Occupation Force) was made up of troops from Britain, India, New Zealand, and Australia. The entire Force was administered by Australia, as the primary Commonwealth power in Australasia.

This display exhibit tells the story of the Australian military, its stamps and its post offices in Japan. This is the only exhibit about the Australian Occupation of Japan that has been shown in the United States, and March Party is the second time the exhibit has been shown.

The exhibit shows the BCOF military stamps (Scott M1-M7), essays, proofs, usage, forerunner material, and BCOF postmarks. The addition of collateral material allows the exhibitor to give a flavor of what it was like in the Hiroshima prefecture in the aftermath of the Atomic Bomb attack, as well as what it was like to be an Australian troop living and working there.



The scarcest of all of the BCOF stamps is the doubled overprint of the 3d King's Head value. The largest known multiple is shown above and within the exhibit.

The overprinted stamps came into being in an attempt to minimize the effects of the black market that sprang up in post-war Japan. Australian troops could easily convert money they received for sale of contraband goods into cash by exchanging currency for stamps at their base post offices. The postage stamps could then be sent home to friends or relatives in Australia who would take the mint stamps to their local post office and receive face value less 5% for them.

The exhibit attempts to show commercial usage as much as possible. The vast majority of the mail sent from Australian troops was sent at free concessionary rates and this mail is unstamped (examples are shown in the exhibit).

Concessionary rates for airmail and other services required the use of stamps. Non-concessionary rates for printed matter and special services such as registration with and without compensation are all shown in the exhibit. Scarce foreign destinations include Tonga, China, Aden and India as well as New Zealand, United States, Channel Islands, England.

The exhibitor would like the viewer to come away from this exhibit with an appreciation of a little-known aspect of the end of World War II, the philatelic and postal history it generated, and a feeling for how BCOF troops lived and worked under difficult conditions.

Useful References:

Stanley Gibbons Commonwealth Catalogue does a reasonable job of listing key varieties. The best catalog for the stamps is *The Australian Commonwealth Specialists' Catalogue, King George VI* published by Brusden White.

B.C.O.F. Overprints and British Commonwealth and Indian Military Postal Services in Japan and Korea by Ito Yoshimi (available from APRL) compiles a number of good sources including contemporary reports from *Australian Stamp Monthly* and *Japanese Philately* into one place.

The Postal History of Australian Forces in Japan and Korea, 1945 - 1957 by P. Collas corrects many previously published errors about the post offices of Australian B.C.O.F.

Good online references include:
The Forgotten Force, excellent overview of Australia's participation in the occupation of Japan: http://www.defence.gov.au/army/ahu/books_articles/The%20Forgotten%20Force/Contents.htm
Gibbon's Stamp Monthly article about BCOF overprints (the published version unfortunately showed a faked doubled overprint that was not identified as such): <http://www.gibbonsstampmonthly.com/story.asp?storycode=2255&preview=1>
Lin's Stamp News article about BCOF overprints and their use: http://www.lins.com/howto/refresher/BCOF_20050207/refreshercourse.asp

Figure 4-3. Synopsis page for an exhibit about the Australians who occupied Japan at the end of World War II. Note several items that appear in the synopsis would not be recommended for use within the exhibit: The mention of scarcity for the block of doubled overprints, drawing the attention to the judge that very difficult destinations will be shown, as well as unusual rates. The exhibitor included an annotated bibliography that will save the judges time looking for what is available. This is always appreciated.

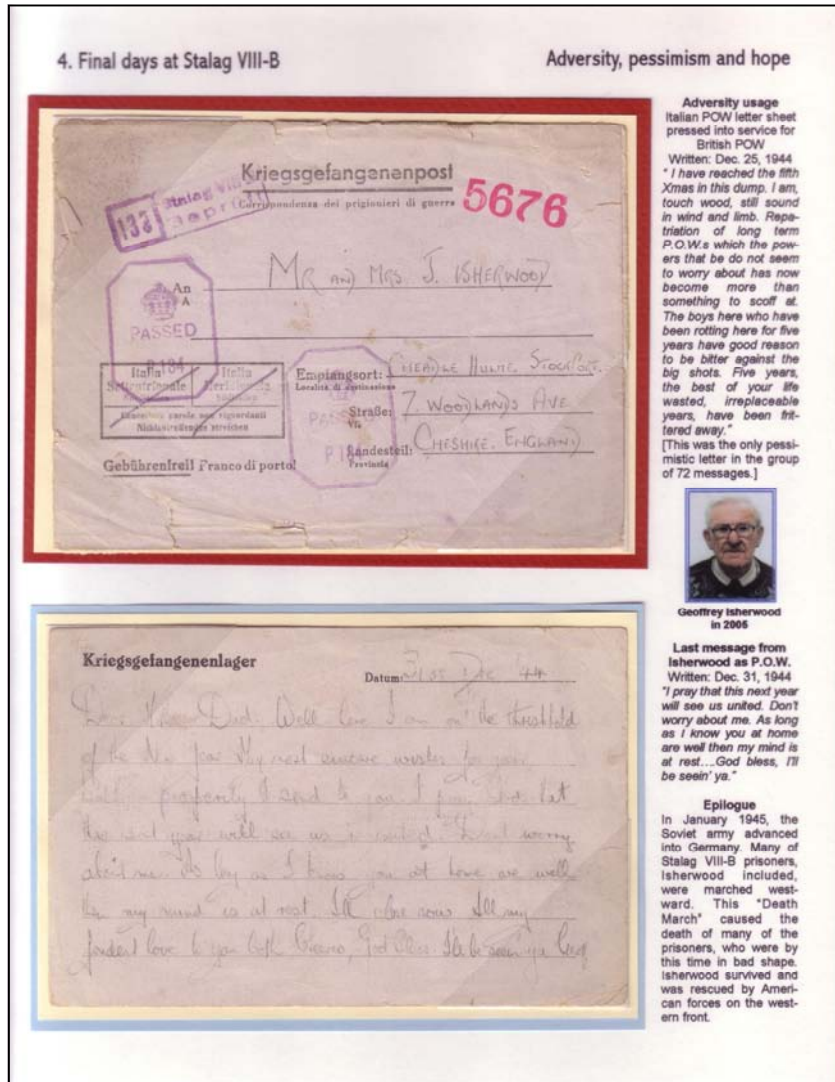


Figure 4-4. The final page of the one-frame exhibit whose title page is illustrated as figure 4-1. The conclusion tying up the whole story is contained in an epilogue that is the last paragraph of the exhibit.

same information as the title page, but more importantly, it may also get much more personal by highlighting scarce items in the exhibit and addressing treatment, condition or other issues that are unique to the exhibit. Common additions to a synopsis are bibliographies, notations of original research and other salient details the exhibitor would like the judges to know. It is never a good idea to include the exhibit's "track record" of medals won at other shows in a synopsis.

Synopsis pages are not mounted in the frames at the show.

What's the Best Paper for an Exhibit?

your material without buckling. Heavy covers or folded entires will probably need heavier weight paper (60 lb. – 100 lb. stock). Unfortunately, some of the heavier weight papers and card stock may not go through your printer. Printers with a straight-through paper path are often the solution, but many of today's printers use a C-path. Rollers push the paper through the path, and heavier index stock may will not run through. Under these circumstances, you might choose a lighter weight stock of 25 lbs. and then use a second blank sheet of lighter weight paper behind as a brace. The other advantage of tucking an identical sheet behind your exhibit page is that you have these extra sheets ready for making additional pages. They have

aged in the same fashion, so any new exhibit pages will not stand out from the rest of the exhibit.

The paper color you select should complement your material and not overwhelm it. For example, an off white or a light cream works better than a stark white paper with older covers. Usually white or light pastels work well for most materials. You should buy several reams at the same time. This will ensure that whenever you wish to redo pages the batch color is identical. Your course instructors buy paper for their exhibits a case at a time. That way you never have to worry about trying to match paper stock exactly.

You may have noticed in your viewing of exhibits at a stamp show that some have had the material matted — attached to slightly larger pieces of paper — in a contrasting color. This is done so that the material stands out from the page. (Matted material is shown in Figures 4-1, 4-2 and 4-4.) Some exhibitors do this for everything, while others only mat their better pieces. It is by no means necessary to do this and many exhibits are just fine without it. Matting everything is time consuming and adds extra weight to an exhibit. However, matting makes redoing

Sources:

Sources for archival-quality papers: A good paper supply house, custom printer, Office Max, Staples, Office Depot, etc. Many of these sources will special order acid-free paper for you and will be able to provide samples in a wide variety of color and weights. Check the paper wrappers to make certain the paper is of archival quality.

a page easier, because if the mat has been applied to the page with a glue stick, it will pop off and be reusable on the new page.

Arranging the Material on Pages

Before printing or typing your pages, move the material around on a blank page to get the placement exactly as you want it. Try varying the arrangements from page to page, and strive for good visual balance. This takes practice and lots of trial and error.

Use a ruler to measure where you want the text to be, then run your exhibit-making software. On a blank document page, place a text box containing the appropriate text. When you have added all the text you want for that page, print the page. It is a good idea to print on scrap paper at first until you get the hang of making pages. Then you put the material on the page to see if everything fits as you envisioned. If you are satisfied with the way the page looks, print it on your exhibit paper. If you are not satisfied, tweak it again.

If using a typewriter, mark the page lightly with pencil where you want the text to go. Then when you insert the paper into the typewriter, you will know where to begin typing. Erase the pencil marks when you are finished.

This is the exciting part of the process, where everything comes together, so take a deep breath and enjoy it.

Care should be taken that items line up with each other and with the paper edges. A “T” square is very useful when actually affixing the material to the pages. The more significant items should be placed in a dominant position on the page, about one-third down from the top and in the center. Similarly, the dominant positions in the frame are also one-third down in the center. That would be pages 6 and 7 within the 16-page frame containing four rows of four pages. Your better items should be on these pages if possible.

A clear, blank border of about ¼-inch to 1 inch around the whole page presents a good, uniform appearance. You should also consider the juxtaposition of other exhibit pages when placing your items on a particular page. For example, suppose page 3 has a blank white space halfway down on its right side and page 4 has a similar space on its left side. When the pages are put together in a frame, these spaces are alongside and jointly create a big bare spot that does not look good.

Think about Goldilocks when making your exhibit pages. Your pages should neither be too sparse or too crowded; nor too wordy or too brief. You want your pages to be “just right.”

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How Do I Attach the Materials to the Page?

Once you have printed the pages, all you have left to do is to put the material on the pages. Whether to use mounts or hinges is a personal choice, but mounts offer a little more protection for your stamps. Clear or black? The choice is yours, but most exhibitors prefer clear. If stamps slip in a clear mount a little bit, it will not be so noticeable as a stamp that is on a black background. Archival corner mounts are available that are perfect for covers and other larger items that you will mount on your pages.

Sources:

Many styles of stamp mount are available from philatelic suppliers (Subway Stamp Shop, 2121 Beale Ave, Altoona, PA 16601 or www.subwaystamp.com; Amos Advantage, www.amosadvantage.com). Cover corners that are archival quality and measure 2-inches are available from the Philatelic Bibliophile, www.pbbooks.com.

Final Touch

Number each page consecutively on the back, usually on the top right hand corner, either directly on the page or on a small label. It is also a good idea to stamp your name and address on the back of each page in case one should go astray.

Sheet Protectors

When the pages are printed and the material is mounted, it is time to place this exhibit page in a sheet protector of archival Mylar or Melinex. The most useful ones are top loading and sealed on three sides.

These will not only protect your material and your carefully prepared pages from excess handling, but they will save any material that might become detached from being lost. Protectors for 8½ x 11-inch paper are very common, but other sizes may be custom ordered.

Sources:

Sources: Atlantic Protective Pouches, P.O. Box 1191, Toms River, NJ 08754; (732) 240-3871; www.atlanticprotectivepouches.com.

Reviewing the Exhibit

The pages are printed, the material is mounted, the pages have been numbered and inserted into sheet protectors. Spread the pages on your bed, on the floor, or the dining room table in four rows of four, just as they will be in the frames, and then make any adjustments you think necessary. Have a friend look, too. Sometimes you get too close to the work you are doing and miss obvious mistakes.

Lesson Four Assignment

1. Gather the mounting materials you will need to complete one frame of your exhibit. This may include mounts, hinges, corners, paper, sheet protectors, matting materials, glue sticks, paper cutter, and any other equipment or supplies you need.
2. Complete at least eight pages of your exhibit for review by the course instructors. If you can complete more than eight pages, the critique you receive will be even more productive.
3. Write a title page and a synopsis page.