



San Jose Stamp Club Newsletter



Whole number 202

February 2014



9 - 11—WE WILL NEVER FORGET

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Visit our website at:
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Founded 1927, Club show since 1928
Meets 7:00 PM, 1st & 3rd Wednesdays
Hilltop Manor in 3rd floor dining room
790 Ironwood Drive, San Jose, California
Driving instructions on the website.

Annual dues:
Adults/families \$12 ~ Youths \$6
With hardcopy of newsletter \$20
 APS chapter # 0264-025791
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Magnifiers

I can't find them all, but I must have more than 20 magnifiers with many powers, shapes, sizes and descriptions. NONE of them are very flexible in their uses. I have one that projects images of very high resolution to my computer monitor—outstanding for very minute and difficult to see work; I have a 10X loupe; I have a two lens pocket magnifier that is usually in my pocket at shows, and I sometimes use it at home—well, you get the idea. Most of them can be used for various applications with good results at different times. However, I believe I've found the best all around magnifier on the market and at a very affordable price, only \$5.95. It's the UltraOptic 7X aspheric, LED lighted.



Sorry about the pixelized image.

I don't usually get this excited about a tool, but I feel this one is different—it's pocket sized (1½ X 4¾ inches), and weighs just 2.6 ounces including the three AAA batteries. The LED light is very bright and clear. For field work I have found no better or more convenient to use.

If you decide to purchase one I suggest the UltraOptix website. Checking other sites I found the price to be up to nearly double—all plus shipping costs. I would suggest Regency in St. Louis, however, they are out, and have them back ordered.

You may check mine out when you attend any of our club meetings, and see for yourself why I'm excited about these nifty little gems.-ed.

Filatelice Fiesta

The Fiesta wrap-up meeting was held January 7th, during which many aspects of the show were covered. Our club show is still not out of the woods, so-to-speak, as there have been changes with the county fairgrounds, and there is the age-old problem of lack of support by the club members. There were more club members at the show this past year than at any show in recent memory, however, what is really needed are people willing to take on one of any number of tasks that will help insure our future success.

To oversimplify our problem, we need attendance at the show. We send out post cards, and place notices in the philatelic press—but this is preaching to the choir, we need those people that are on the fuzzy fringes of the hobby, don't subscribe to stamp publications, and may-or-may-not know of the club or our show. We need to reach out to these "closet collectors", and make them aware of us, we need to advertise. I'm not sure the Mercury is the answer as it's very expensive. All the neighborhood local throw away papers may be a large part of a solution. It was suggested having someone take on this shore, and further discussion suggested a committee. This way the work would be spread out, and a group could develop ideas and possible solutions. Several minds are better than one. This isn't rocket science, and you do not have to be a genius to help—just join in to contribute to a solution that will improve the show, the club, and ultimately yourself.

Shows and clubs all over the country are failing due to a lack of interest, help and support—is that our future? It is if we don't all get together and do a little work to prevent that from happening.-ed.

DUES ARE DUE

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES?
If not, do NOT expect a newsletter in March—Please pay them now, Thanks.

Northern California Trivia

Q What northern California-born rock & roller received *Billboard* magazine's 1955 Triple award for his single "Maybelline"?

A Chuck Berry.

Q Where is the real Carrington "Dynasty" mansion?

A Filoli House and Gardens, Woodside.

From *Northern California Trivia* by Ernie & Jill Couch

Only in California

An apocryphal tale, perhaps, but it has become part of surf lore: Otis Chandler, former head of the *Los Angeles Times*, was an avid surfer whose favorite spot was called Killer Dana. It is said that stuffy business meetings with Chandler's associates were often interrupted by a butler bearing a message on a silver tray. Chandler would read the message, excuse himself, and make a quick exit. One staffer, overcome by curiosity, picked up the note Chandler had left behind. It said "surf's up".

From *Only in California* by Janet Hearne, © Janet Wilkins 1993, Plume Books

The Origins of Valentine's Day

Every February, across the country, candy, flowers, and gifts are exchanged between loved ones, all in the name of St. Valentine. But who is this mysterious saint and why do we celebrate this holiday? The history of Valentine's Day—and its patron saint—is shrouded in mystery. We do know that February has long been a month of romance. St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. So, who was Saint Valentine and how did he become associated with this ancient rite? Today, the Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred.

One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men—his crop of potential soldiers. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured.

According to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first 'valentine' greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl—who may have been his jailor's daughter—who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed 'From your Valentine,' an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and, most importantly, romantic figure. It's no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France.

President's Message

The San Jose Stamp Club is VERY fortunate to be have a "World Series of Philately" show. This is an increasingly rare treat as shows around the country are struggling or closing. While we enjoyed a wonderful Filatelic Fiesta in 2014, we are at a tipping point in two different ways:

Our dealers are not making enough profit from the number of attendees to our show.

We need greater participation from more people to work at the show.

There are additional issues, but we need to address these two most critically. Dealer table fees are the financial core of any show with these being backed-up by the dealer selling enough stamps to profit. All shows: big or small, exhibits or only a dealer bourse, it is essential that the dealers make sufficient profit. Yes, they may choose to return after one or two years, but ultimately profit is essential to any business.

What can be done to help the dealers make a profit? Greater attendance by show guests who buy more stamps is the obvious answer. So how do we do that? More advertizing is the easy answer, but also a VERY expensive one. It just isn't financially feasible to buy big add space in the mass market newspapers like the San Jose Mercury News. They want a very large amount of money for a very small advertisement. So what can we do? We must get creative and find ways to attract the attention of local collectors without spending huge sums of cash. George Leslie and I have met several times to discuss plans to find cost effective ways to do this. Everyone's input is welcome.

Growing the show's activity level is one way to draw more collectors to our show and we made good growth in this area in 2014. We had a guest society for the first time in many years and a guest speaker. However, we can still add a lot more meetings and presentations to make Filatelic Fiesta a show that every collector in the region will make time to attend.

There has been a modest amount of "grumbling" about our show venue, the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds. While I fully agree that the hall has a lot of room for improvement, I don't want to make it a excuse for our shortcomings. I fully believe we can overcome our room's faults and build a great show at the fairgrounds.

And, we need to provide a much greater level of support to hosting the show. First, a HUGE thank-you to those of you who worked VERY hard at Fiesta 2014. Nevertheless, as a club we need to step-up our game. The core leaders of the show are overloaded and need us to provide additional help. I'm asking everyone to consider the question: "What can I do to help at Fiesta?" Another, clear option, is to grow the club. When is the last time you invited someone to visit a meeting? I'm seriously looking for ways to grow membership along with George and we've got some ideas, but club growth is everyone's responsibility.

The Filatelic Fiesta committee will be in touch with all of us looking for how each of us can provide additional help—it may be in show planning, set-up, during, and with clean-up after.

Please carefully consider what you can do. There are many responsibilities and tasks for everyone.

Thanks - Brian

Belated Medal of Honor Recipient

Alonzo Hersford Cushing (January 19, 1841 – July 3, 1863) was an artillery officer in the Union Army during the American Civil War. He died at the Battle of Gettysburg while defending the Union position on Cemetery Ridge against Pickett's Charge. Action was undertaken in 2013, 150 years after Cushing's death, to award him the Medal of Honor. The nomination was approved by the United States Congress, and was sent for review by the Defense Department and the President.

On August 26, 2014, the White House announced he would be posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. Cushing was awarded the medal on November 6, 2014, in a White House ceremony attended by Cushing's distant cousins, Frederic Stevens Sater and Frederic Cushing Stevens III, and their families, although his closest relation was Helen Bird Loring Ensign, a first cousin twice removed. Cushing left no direct descendants.



Alonzo Hersford Cushing

Cushing was born in what is now the city of Delafield, Wisconsin and raised in Fredonia, New York. His younger brother was future Union Navy officer Lt. William B. Cushing. They were the youngest of four brothers who eventually served in the Union forces (Their brother Howard was also killed while fighting the Chiricahua Indians in 1871).

Cushing graduated from the United States Military Academy in the class of June 1861, and received commissions as second and first lieutenant on the same day. He was brevetted major following the Battle of Chancellorsville. Cushing commanded Battery A, 4th U.S. Artillery at Gettysburg, and was hailed by contemporaries as heroic in his actions on the third day of the battle. He was wounded three times. First, a shell fragment went straight through his shoulder. He was then grievously wounded by a second shell fragment, which tore into his abdomen and groin. This wound exposed his intestines, which he held in place with his hand as he continued to command his battery. After these injuries, a higher-ranking officer said, "Cushing, go to the rear." Cushing, due to the limited number of men left, refused to fall back. The severity of his wounds left him unable to yell his orders above the sounds of battle. Thus, he was held aloft by his 1st Sergeant Frederick Fuger, who faithfully passed on Cushing's commands. Cushing was killed when a bullet entered his mouth and exited through the back of his skull. He died on the field at the height of the assault. He was 22 years old.

His body was returned to his family and then interred in the West Point Cemetery in Section 26, Row A, Grave 7. His headstone bears, at the behest of his mother, Mary, the inscription "Faithful unto Death." His grave is next to that of Major General John Buford, another hero of Gettysburg, who had chosen the battlefield that Cushing had died defending.

Cushing was posthumously cited for gallantry with a brevet promotion to lieutenant colonel.

Cushing was nominated for a belated award of the Medal of Honor, beginning with a letter campaign in the late 1980s by constituents of Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin. The measure was also advocated by Congressman Ron Kind of Wisconsin's 3rd congressional district. In 2002, Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI) nominated Cushing for the Medal of Honor and, following a lengthy investigation, the U.S. Army approved the nomination in February 2010. In order for the medal to be awarded, it had to be approved by the United States Congress. It was announced on May 20, 2010 that Cushing would receive the Medal of Honor, 147 years after his death.

However, the provision granting Cushing the Medal of Honor was removed from a defense spending bill by Senator Jim Webb (D-VA) in December 2012. In December 2013, the Senate passed a defense bill that included a provision granting Cushing the Medal of Honor. The nomination was sent to the Defense Department for review, before being approved by the president. On August 26, 2014, the White House announced Cushing would be posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. On November 6, 2014, 151 years after Alonzo Cushing's death, the president presented the award at a ceremony at the White House, attended by two dozen relatives of the Cushing family.



United States Medal of Honor, coveted by many, won by few.

Alonzo H. Cushing Camp #5 of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War serves the Ozaukee County region of Wisconsin. A small state park in Delafield was dedicated to the memory of Cushing and two of his brothers, William and Howard. While the park remains dedicated to the memory of the Cushing brothers, it is now the property of the City of Delafield. Cushing Elementary School in Delafield (part of the Kettle Moraine School District) is also named after the brothers. A stone monument in honor of Cushing marks the spot where he was killed during the Battle of Gettysburg. The marker is located on Cemetery Ridge, along Hancock Avenue, at The Angle.

Initially brought to the editor's attention by Fox News, then researched online for additional and more detailed information. It was actions by men like Cushing that fostered the phrase "Home of the Brave," and though it's 150 odd years later, we can still mourn his death.-ed.



The China Clipper

By Nancy Pope, Historian and Curator of the National Postal Museum

November 22, 1935, a plane took off from San Francisco heading to Hawaii. A regular event today, but in 1935 aviation was still in its early years and the plane that took off that day quickly captured national and international attention. The China Clipper was the first commercial aircraft to establish regular travel routes across the Pacific Ocean. The “China” Clipper was somewhat of a misnomer. The route extended from San Francisco through Hawaii, Midway, Wake and Guam before ending in the Philippines, not China. This route was selected because it was an “all-American” flag route. The China Clipper was the first of a series of flying boats owned by Pan American airways that crisscrossed the Pacific beginning in 1935. The boats were named for the clipper sailing ships of the mid-19th century, which were speedy trading ships.

The first Clipper was a Martin M-130 aircraft, built in 1935 by the Glenn L. Martin aircraft company. Pan American also purchased flying boats for their Pacific fleet from Sikorsky and Boeing. That craft’s wingspan was 130’ and it weighed 52,000 pounds. It was powered by four Pratt & Whitney Twin Wasp 14-cylinder radial engines and had a maximum speed of 180mph. The craft had a range of 3,200 miles, a cruising ceiling of 17,000’ and could carry 18 passengers on overnight trips and 46 people on day trips.

Newspapers were filled with articles about the new airplane and its impending inaugural flight. They followed its flight from Miami through Acapulco to San Diego and finally the Alameda base in San Francisco Bay where it was readied for its transpacific debut. There was great zeal for the idea of speedier connections between the U.S. and Pacific islands and nations, as seen in an enthusiastic editorial in the Los Angeles Times titled, “The Conquest of the Pacific.” The author touted this achievement as one that could stand alongside “the date of the first trans-Atlantic

and Frederick Noonan, navigation officer. Noonan would later partner with Amelia Earhart on her ill-fated 1937 attempt to fly around the world. They were joined by three more officers and two radio men. Their cargo was nearly all philatelic—mail sent by collectors who were looking to have a “first flight” mail piece. There were so many envelopes sent that the luxurious furnishings created for the Clipper’s future passengers had to be removed to make room for the mail pouches.

Prior to the clipper’s departure, the post office, which anticipated only a third of the final total volume, was kept hopping across the country. Postal officials noted that in San Francisco 100 clerks were kept busy preparing the tens of thousands of letters that were being prepared for the flight. United Airlines, Western Air and Transcontinental each brought a planeload of mail in from the east coast before the clipper set off.



The China Clipper (NC14716) being checked over while in Hawaii.

China Clipper, the name of the inaugural M-130 aircraft of the transpacific fleet, became the name the public used for all of the subsequent Pan American aircraft on that route. The China Clipper captured the national imagination. A movie of the same name starring Pat O’Brien and Humphrey Bogart was released the next year, Captain Musick was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine and in addition to a raft of Clipper-inspired toys and souvenirs was a newly named beer—Clipper beer.



This is only one of over 100,000 envelopes that traveled on the inaugural flight of the China Clipper from San Francisco to the Philippines.

The real China Clipper arrived in Manila, eight thousand miles away from San Francisco on the afternoon of November 29 after traveling through Honolulu, Midway Island, Wake Island and Guam. The plane’s actual flying time was 59 hours and 48 minutes. The same voyage by the speediest steamship would have taken 15 to 16 days.



The China Clipper flying over San Francisco.

telegraph message, the completion of the first continental American railway, and the receiving of the first wireless signal from Europe to America. . . . How many thrill at the thought of a voyage through the skies from California to China in 65 hours of actual flying time.”

The first flight did not carry passengers. All that kept the crew company on that historic flight were 58 mail pouches stuffed with 111,000 envelopes weighing almost 2,000 pounds. At the time, it was the largest mail shipment ever taken on board an airplane. The plane’s crew included Captain Edwin C. Musick

10 little-known factoids about Abraham Lincoln

It's Abraham Lincoln's birthday on February 12, and the 16th president has enjoyed a resurgence in popularity with the award-winning movie sharing his name. Can't get enough Lincoln? Here are a few more-obscure facts about him.

1. Hey, don't call me "Abe." Lincoln was called a lot of things in his lifetime, especially from down South, but the one thing he didn't like to be called was "Abe." "Mr. President" or just plain "Lincoln" would be the preferred terms while he was in office.
2. Lincoln was one of the skinniest presidents. Yes, there is a website that lists the known body mass indexes of the presidents (conveniently discovered while researching William Howard Taft). And Lincoln came in at a BMI of 21.7, which makes him sixth lowest on the BMI list. Madison was the slightest president.
3. Lincoln had really big shoes to fill. According to Johnston & Murphy, which has made shoes for presidents since 1850, Lincoln had a size 14 shoe, the biggest in presidential history. It was one size bigger than Bill Clinton.
4. Lincoln was almost involved in a duel. In 1842, Lincoln and a state attorney in Illinois got in an argument that was precipitated by Lincoln's future wife, Mary Todd. Satisfaction was demanded. Lincoln chose the odd weapon of broad swords, instead of pistols. His opponent, sizing up Lincoln, decided that dueling maybe wasn't the best idea. The two men later became friends.
5. Lincoln didn't have a college degree. The president was a great speaker and by all accounts, an outstanding attorney. But he had less than one year of formal education—not unlike one of his heroes, George Washington.
6. Lincoln was obsessed with cats. As an adult, Lincoln would have probably preferred to be the head of the SPCA, if it had existed back then. The president loved all animals, and was especially obsessed with cats. The official White House cat was named Tabby.
7. Lincoln was the first president with a beard. He grew the beard in 1860 after an 11-year-old girl wrote the presidential candidate a letter. Lincoln was one of five presidents who had beards, including Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James Garfield and Benjamin Harrison. All five were Republicans.
8. Lincoln may not have inspired Lincoln Logs. John Lloyd Wright, Frank Lloyd Wright's son, invented Lincoln Logs, the beloved log cabin toy. The controversy is whether Wright named the logs after President Lincoln or his father. In turns out, Lincoln was Frank Lloyd Wright's original middle name, which he changed to Lloyd after his parents' divorce.
9. A teenager discovered the only photograph of Lincoln's body. Young Ron Reitveld was a 14-year-old student of Lincoln history and wrote a letter asking to be invited to a Lincoln collection dedication ceremony at a library in 1952. Reitveld stumbled on the photo of Lincoln in his coffin when he was allowed to examine some papers.
10. Abraham Lincoln was (kind of) drafted to fight in the Civil War. In 1864 Noble D. Larner, the president of the 3rd Ward Draft Club, was asked to obtain a substitute to fight for Abraham Lincoln in the Union Army. John Summerfield Staples was paid \$500 and met Lincoln on October 1, 1864. The act was a symbolic gesture, since Lincoln was actually too old to serve.

John Summerfield Staples

John Summerfield Staples (August 14, 1845 – January 11, 1888) was an American soldier who served in the Union Army during the American Civil War. He is notable as the paid "stand-in" for President Abraham Lincoln.

Staples was born in 1845 in Stroud Township in rural Monroe County, Pennsylvania. During the Civil War, he enlisted in late 1862 as a private in Company C of the 176th Pennsylvania volunteer infantry, but only served a few months due to illness, likely typhoid fever.



John Summerfield Staples, (August 14, 1845 – January 11, 1888)

Following his medical discharge, he moved to Washington, D.C., where he worked with his father as a carpenter. In October 1864, he was approached by a representative of the president. During the Civil War, it became customary for many citizens to pay for "substitutes" to serve in the army in their place. Hoping to set a good example, President Lincoln selected Staples as his substitute and offered him a bounty of \$500. Staples saw little action during the year he served as the president's representative, primarily working as a clerk and prison guard. He mustered out in September 1865.

Following the war, Staples returned home to Monroe County, Pennsylvania with little fanfare, where he died in 1888. He is buried in Stroudsburg Cemetery.

There were no newspaper articles or celebrations for this local man who had served for President Lincoln. It was not until Staples' death in 1888, that Stroudsburg and all of Monroe County recognized Staples and his service to the United States.

In 1910 a bill appropriating funds to erect a memorial to John Summerfield was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1999, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and the Monroe County Historical Association erected a historical marker on West Main Street in Stroudsburg to commemorate John Summerfield Staples and his ties to President Lincoln.

John Summerfield Staples' headstone reads:

J. Summerfield Staples
A Private of
Co.C. 176 Reg. PV
Also a member of the
2 Reg D.C. Vols as a
Substitute for
Abraham Lincoln
Died
Jan. 11, 1888
Aged 43 Yrs 4 Mos &
27 Days

The Infamous Withdrawn Stamp:

Hullabaloo or Malarkey

By Liam Malone, Editor of *The Revealer*, summer 2014 issue.

Ger Garland designed the Citizen Army stamp, which was released January 23, 2014. The 60c stamp recognizes the workers' militia, which was formed by James Larkin, James Connolly and Jack White during the 1913 Lockout. The Irish Citizen Army aimed to protect trade unionists from the Dublin Metropolitan Police who used extreme violence to end demonstrations. Other prominent members included Constance Markievicz and Sean O'Casey. When the lockout ended in January 1914, the Irish Citizen Army underwent a complete re-organization.



The recalled stamp

About 30 minutes after sales began, An Post discontinued all sales. Their reasoning was that the forefront image on the stamp said to be Jack White is not his image, according to scholars. It is not known how many stamps were sold in the short window. But soon after Irish dealers were selling the stamp and several appeared on ebay. Prices ranged from €350 to well over \$1,000.

Ebay sales included one selling on February 12 for €338, another, a bottom marginal sold April 2 for £587. Then the price dropped when a right side corner marginal sold for only €285. Other auctions included one on May 5 selling for \$1,039.53 with 87 bids. Another sold the next day for \$853.66. On May 19 another sold for \$878.67. On 15 June 38 bids raised the price to \$919.22. On 18 July 55 bids further raised the price to \$946.96. For a couple weeks a "Buy It Now" auction listed the price at \$1,013.88 and as of the date of this writing it remains unsold.

The MacDonnell-Whyte auction on 9 August includes three MNH singles with margin tabs starting at €500, another with traffic lights is starting at €750. A left side marginal block of four is starting at €2,000, while a plate block starts at €2,500. The inside front cover spectacularly displays these six items.

Although one dealer purchased an entire pane, it is believed to have been broken up into singles and blocks.

I will report the August auction sales in the next issue, and will include any other ebay auctions. As an FYI the Irish Philatelic Circle also listed auction sales and the above sales in February were borrowed from their article. I was in Australia in February and not paying attention to ebay.

What is extremely curious is that the forefront image of 'Jack White,' appears identical to the image of the men in front row of the squad, second from left; denoted by red arrow in stamp below. Call me crazy but I won one of these spring auctions. I obtain all the new issues directly from An Post, including FDCs and sheetlets, so my 2014 year set would not be complete without this so-called modern rarity.

The stamp issued 17 April with altered design shown here.



Parcel Post Stamps On 1st Class Mail

Parcel post stamps were first introduced in November and December of 1912 and became available for first class postage July 1, 1913. The illustrated card was posted August 11, 1913, just 41 days after becoming legal first-class postage.

Posted in San José and addressed to Denair, California. Denair is located in Stanislaus County, and the land was deeded to the Southern Pacific Railroad by John Denair in 1896. First established as Elmdale, then Elmwood, but was changed to Denair when John Denair repurchased the land in 1907.

Denair is located approximately four miles northeast of Turlock. William E. Crouch was the first postmaster. The illustration on the card and it's sentiment are still true today—well, I don't know about the horse...but.....



"May the father of all mercies scatter light, and not darkness, upon our paths, and make us in all our several vocations useful here, and in His own due time and way everlastingly happy."

—George Washington (1790)

Covers, Cards, Stamps, etc.

This month's cover is of a type we've all seen before—all, or most, of a set of stamps applied to a cover—some being first day of issue and some not. Our example is not a first day of issue. In looking at this one, however, a couple things caught my attention— *Task Force Grapple* and the name *Rear Admiral G. Serpell Patrick*. I had seen both before. A search on the internet brought them to the fore:

Patrick was born Goldsborough Serpell Patrick on Goat Island in San Francisco Bay, California. He was the son of Jane Deakins Serpell of Norfolk, Virginia and Navy Chaplain Capt Bower Reynolds Patrick. He died 21 March 1999 in Virginia Beach, Virginia. He was, evidently, part of a United States observation group for England's first nuclear bomb trials in the late 1950s.



Franked with Gilbert & Ellice Islands Scott 61-72, it lacks only the 5/ value, Scott 71, for completion, issued August 1, 1956.

The Pacific programme of British thermonuclear tests, Operation "Grapple", began in 1957, following the earlier atomic trials in Australia. The testing of a large megaton-yield weapon had dictated that a new site be found and Christmas Island, a remote coral atoll 2 deg. north of the Equator, was chosen. The tri-Service and civilian task force for "Grapple" was commanded initially by Air Vice-Marshal W. E. Oulton and later by Air Vice-Marshal (later Marshal of the R.A.F. Sir John) Grandy. The Scientific Director was Mr. (later Sir William) Cook. Although inhabited, with an economy based on the export of coconut products, the island had been largely neglected since World War II. Preparations had started the previous year to construct the support facilities and a 7,000-ft. runway, 25 miles of roads, a control tower, buildings for weapon assembly and a seawater distillation plant were some of the building works needed. The domestic accommodation was tented but more substantial buildings were provided for recreation purposes. Most of these works were carried out by the Army Task Group which included a detachment of Fijian troops. The dropping point was off Malden Island, an uninhabited atoll some 400 miles south of Christmas Island. By dusk on 14th May the scientists had made the final checks on the apparatus sited on Malden that was designed to measure the air blast, heat and radiation levels. They withdrew and embarked in H.M.S. Narvik, Warrior and Messina.

The hours prior to the release of the bomb were tense and dramatic. Long before dawn the Shackletons of Nos. 204 and 206 Squadrons and Canberras of Nos. 76 and 100 Squadrons had thundered off from Christmas Island on weather reconnaissance and sampling sorties—with the added duty for the Shackletons of searching the danger area to ensure that it was free of shipping. At first light, Hastings of No. 24 Squadron and Dakotas of No. 1325 Flight had left for the target area laden with observers.

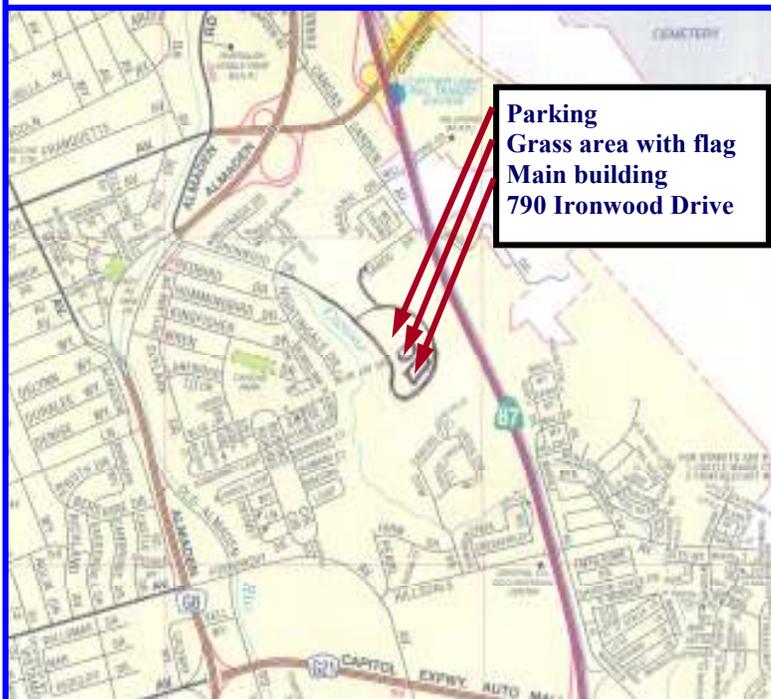
The delicate task of loading the weapon into Valiant XD818 had been completed the previous day and now, crewed and ready, the aircraft waited in the grey cool hours of early morning. The signals traffic rose to a peak. "All clear" was received from Malden. Ships were reported in position. "All clear" came from the search flights and a constant stream of weather information came in from dozens of sources. The messages flashed between the task Force Commander on the Scientific Control Ship Narvik and the operations room on Christmas Island, culminating in the order for XD818 to take off. Piloted by W / Cdr. K. G. Hubbard, Officer Commanding No. 49 Squadron, the gleaming white aircraft taxied out on to the runway. For the few who watched it leave, the graceful rise and climb into the morning sky was so nonchalant as to be an anti-climax. On 31st May a second and larger weapon was dropped, witnessed by representatives of the world's press. Testing continued at Christmas Island until November 1958 ("Grapple X, Y and Z") during which time the Valiants of No. 49 Squadron dropped a total of seven thermonuclear weapons.



The aircraft that dropped Britain's first H-bomb, Vickers Valiant B, 1 XD818 of No. 49 Squadron. It is seen at Christmas Island in November 1958 at the conclusion of the tests, ready for the return flight to England which it made via Honolulu, the U.S.A. and Canada.

From the internet.-ed.

**FEBRUARY MEETINGS ARE ON THE 4TH & 18TH
MARCH MEETINGS ARE ON THE 4TH & 18TH**



**Parking
Grass area with flag
Main building
790 Ironwood Drive**

Show Calendar

February 13 - 15
AmeriStamp Expo 2015
 Riverside Convention Center, 3637 5th Street, Riverside
 Fri & Sat 10 - 6, Sun 10 - 4
 Free Admission

February 28 - March 1
Novapex
 Senior Citizens Hall, 2290 Benton Drive, Redding
 Sat 10 - 5, Sun 10 - 4
 Free Admission - Free Parking

March 14 - 15
Frespex
 Veterans Memorial Building, 453 Hughes Ave, Redding
 Sat 10 - 6, Sun 10 - 4
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