

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS:

CAPITOL HILL RURAL BRANCH, MP 96960: A 10 year old 4-Bar made a surprise re- appearance on a commercial cover from Capitol Hill dated Nov 8, 96. This device originally featured in Edition # 5 of the Bulletin as Illustration 5/1 - known to have been used from October 24, 1985 to December, 23, 1987. The 4-Bar is illustrated again here as **Illustration 17/13** Note the 'state' abbreviation is shown as 'CM' rather than the current 'MP' and note also the use of '96' for the year rather than '1996' as usual in USPS datestamps. This is the first commercial cover I have seen from this office since 1970. I wonder if this useage is just a one-off or were the postal clerks routinely using this datestamp for any ordinary commercial mail they actually cancelled at the P.O. in November, 1996 ?

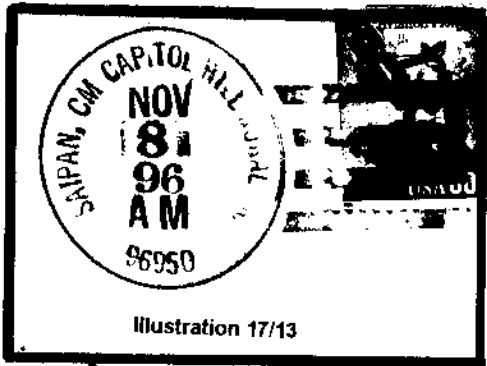


Illustration 17/13

Michael White confirms that **Capitol Hill Rural Branch is still in operation** and with Frank Camacho still the Branch Contractor. I wonder who blinked first - Mr. Camacho or the USPS ? [See report of possible closure in 'Bulletin' # 15 - page 5]

The envelope containing Michael's letter is datestamped with another 'old time' datestamp from Capitol Hill Br. Illustration 5/4, dated Mar 19, 1997. The impression is weak and will not photocopy. I guess it was being used as a counter handstamp when Michael handed the cover over the counter on that date. This datestamp was last reported used on Jan 31, 1989. Have they been having a spring clean at Capitol Hill Branch ?

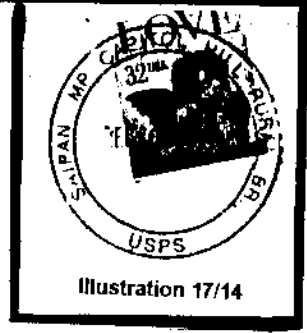


Illustration 17/14

Bernd Neuhaus has sent a photocopy of commercial cover from Capitol Hill cancelled with yet another version of the new style Utility/APDS. [See **Illustration 17/14**] This device appears to be a smaller version of Illustration 12/17. The cover is clearly a commercial cover, it is a window envelope with the return address "Prior Service Trust Fund Administration, P.O. Box 5098 CHR.B. Saipan". The date is unclear but appears to be during December, 1996. There are now 3 sizes of these new type Utility/APDS known to be in use at Capitol Hill. Illustration 12/17 measures 40 mm across the centre, Illustration 15/28 measures 38mm and has the ZIP code below the date, while **Illustration 17/14** measures 30mm.

SAIPAN POST OFFICE REDECORATED:

Thanks to Michael White for news that the public area of the main Post Office in Chalan Kanoa has undergone a complete makeover. Michael writes "Instead of the old 'warehouse' look, the counter area has been partitioned off from the back office, and has been redecorated in USPS red, navy, and grey, just like Post Offices on the mainland. The place looks good ! It's still far too small, though, and as far as I know, nothing has happening on a new main P.O."

TINIAN MP 96952:

Thanks to George L. Machado Jr. for news that the 4-Bar with the incorrect Zip - Illustration 3/14 was in use until at least Sep 19, 1988.

OTHER ISLANDS

MIDWAY ISLAND, FPO AP 96616:

Steven Zirinsky has shown me two commercial covers from Midway both addressed to Guam. One is datestamped with the Midway 4-Bar [Illustration 2/2] on Feb 6, 1997 and the other datestamped at Honolulu Hi. on 7 Feb, 1997. This suggests that some mail originating at Midway is sent uncancelled to Honolulu. [tho' the cover concerned may just have been overlooked by the Midway PM]. Both envelopes had return addresses showing a Box number followed by 'USNAF Midway Island' in one case and 'U.S. Naval Air Facility, Midway Island' in the other, in both cases followed by FPO AP 96516.

JOHNSTON ISLAND, APO AP 96558:

The latest 'new style' 4-Bar comes from Johnston Island. First sighting reported to the "Bulletin" is on a cover dated Mar 13, 1997 [see **Illustration 17/15**] accompanied by the rubber stamped return address shown here as **Illustration 17/16**. The datestamps were applied in bright pink and the return address in a muddy red.

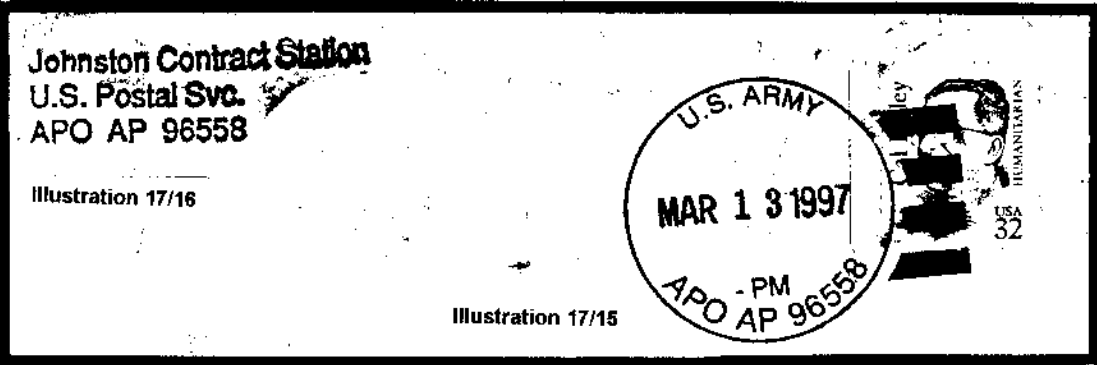


Illustration 17/15

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

MOEN CHUUK/TRUK FM 96942:

William S. Tufts gives the last date known to him for the Moen Truk Pictorial datestamp [Illustration 14/7] as August 17, 1995. George L. Machado Jr. reports it used on Jan 1, 1995 on a cover he prepared noting the U.S. Postal Rates increase 'G'. Michael Sewell reports a commercial cover dated Mar 18, 1997 and cancelled with Illustration 14/9 - the most recent APDS.

ULITHI, FM 96943:

Thanks to William S. Tufts for photocopies of three covers bearing the pictorial datestamp of this office [Illustration 8/2] dated Feb 19, 1991, June 19, 1991 and Aug 8, 1991 which Mr. Tufts confirms were supplied by courtesy of Ms. Carmen M. Tun, the Yap Postmaster. Evidently this datestamp was in possession of Ms. Tun at the Yap P.O. during 1991.

MWOAKILLOA BR. POHNPEI FM 96941:

A short item on this Branch P.O. appeared in Bulletin # 16. George L. Machado Jr. has sent me a copy of a monograph he prepared in 1989 but never issued and has given me permission to quote from it. George confirms that the Mwoakilloa Islands are also known as Mokil Atoll. The atoll consists of 3 islands, Coconut Island, Taro Island and Home Island - only the latter being inhabited. The population is given by George as 280 so assuming the 1970 figures (387) quoted in Bulletin # 16 refer to the same place there has been considerable loss of population. In 1989 the atoll was served 2 or 3 times a week by Pacific Missionary Aviation's 7-passenger planes, and by a ship operated by the FM State Government on a monthly basis east bound to Pingalap - and occasionally when returning west bound. The Post Office was dedicated and officially opened for business on August 29, 1988 in the presence of the Postmaster General, Bethwel Henry, Pohnpei State Legislature Speaker Annes Lebehn, Governor Resid Moses, Assistant Postmaster General Ignacio Stephen, and Pohnpei Postmaster Albert Faicam.