

U.S. PACIFIC ISLANDS BULLETIN

A quarterly newsletter about U.S. Post Offices in the Pacific area (including Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa and the successor administrations in the Caroline, Marshall and Line Islands)

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REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS:

ROI-NAMUR BRANCH P.O. APO AP 96557 - A Brief History & Cancellation Study

The U.S. Military Base at Roi-Namur is located in the Kwajalein Atoll about 50 miles north of the main Kwajalein Base. It consists of a pair of islands joined together by the U.S. Navy during WW II using landfill.

Robert T. Murphy in "A Postal History/Cancellation Study of the U.S. Pacific Islands" says that Roi-Namur Post Office has been in existence since WW II but he does not illustrate any postal markings definitely used there prior to January 26, 1967. [He does illustrate an un-numbered U.S. Navy 4-Bar dated Sep 1, 1944 which, based on the return address on the envelope, may have been used at Roi-Namur - See Murphy Fig. 4.7.3.]

According to Bob Murphy, Roi-Namur APO, along with the main APO on Kwajalein Island, became a military contract branch of Honolulu P.O. on August 15, 1959, and was operated according to Military Postal regulations. Roi-Namur shared an APO number with Kwajalein, from January 3, 1963 APO SF 96800 but changing to 96860 from April 27, 1967 and to 96555 from January 1, 1968.

In late 1974 I noticed in the membership list of a U.S. philatelic society a member with the APO SF 96555 address. I wrote telling him of my interest in the U.S. Pacific Islands and asking if he had anything for sale or exchange. He responded by sending two unaddressed covers, one with a Kwajalein 4-Bar - Murphy Roi-Namur Fig 1.1 dated Dec 4, 1974, and one with the Roi-Namur APDS Murphy Fig 2.2 dated Dec 7, 1974. The covers were enclosed in an envelope bearing the Kwajalein cancellation Murphy Fig. 1.10 and with a note saying that the sender was returning to Hawaii temporarily and would write again on his return to Kwajalein. This was my first intimation that a P.O. existed on Roi-Namur.

Not hearing from him again by mid-1975 I wrote to the Postmaster at Roi-Namur and received a very full response from the Postal Clerk in Charge, Jack E. Wait. He wrote, "There is a small P.O. here on Roi-Namur operated by one man. It is a Branch P.O. of Kwajalein. It has been here for several years but you probably didn't hear of it because I cancel the letters with a hand canceller that says 'Honolulu, HI and Kwajalein Branch'. The postmark you refer to is not a handcanceller for ordinary mail [not realising that Murphy Fig. 1.1 was a Roi-Namur datestamp I had sent him a tracing of Murphy Fig. 2.2] but is a round dater, used for Registered Mail, Customs Forms and so on. I will use it on your envelope although it is not usually used for this purpose. As you will know all of Kwajalein Atoll is included in the U.S. Army's Kwajalein Missile Range which is why this Post Office is a APO or Army Post Office. It's confusing but we are actually under both systems. The main advantage of being an APO is that all our mail is moved by air between here and Honolulu, HI. Mail from Roi-Namur is flown south daily to Kwajalein, 50 miles south, and is despatched to Hono from there."

The following is a list of cancellations known to have been used at Roi-Namur Branch between January, 1967 and 2nd May, 1984 when the Marshall Islands Postal Service came into being.

Illustration 27/1	[Murphy 2.1]	Jan 26, 1967 to Oct 8, 1969
Illustration 27/2	[Murphy 1.1]	Dec 4, 1974 to Sep. 13, 1979
Illustration 27/3	[Murphy 2.2]	Dec 7, 1974 to March 18, 1980
Illustration 27/4	[Murphy 1.2]	Aug. 12, 1976 to Aug 24, 1979
Illustration 27/5	[Murphy 1.3]	Feb 21, 1980 to Feb 10, 1983
Illustration 27/6	[Murphy 2.3]	Aug 18, 1980 to Mar 22, 1984
Illustration 27/7	[Murphy 1.4 (Addenda)]	Nov 14, 1983 to Mar 22, 1984

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Illustration 27/1

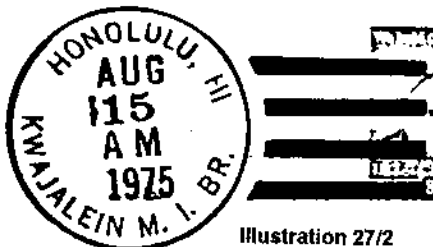


Illustration 27/2



Illustration 27/3

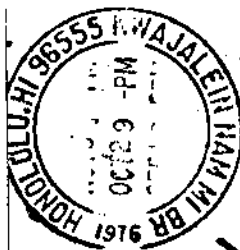


Illustration 27/4



Illustration 27/5



Illustration 27/6

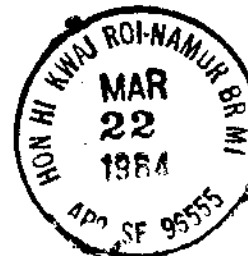


Illustration 27/7

