

Registration Handstamp

By registering his letter, a sender was asking that a record be made of its delivery.

This earliest registry marking is distinctive because of the rounded corners of the frame. The registry number was written by hand nearby the framed "R". Usually struck in red ink, this marking disappeared from use around 1910.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-PORT COCHINCHINE 2 MAI 96
framed R with manuscript registration number label

REVERSE

CHALON-S-SAONE SAONE ET LOIRE 25 MAI 96

Registration Handstamp 1919

The “rounded corner R” registry marking was to last well into the first quarter of the twentieth century. This is an example of a late usage. The registration marking was struck with black ink on a mailing to Paris in 1919.



G1

POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 15-2 19
boxed R with manuscript registration number

Registration Handstamp 1894

Another marking signifying registration was an "R" surrounded by a roughly rectangular frame with diagonal corners. Appearing in the 1880s, it was initially applied with red ink. There were slight variations in the size of the frame. In this case, the dimensions of the frame are 12.5 millimeters wide by 14.5 millimeters high.



G2

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 25 JUIL 94
framed R with manuscript registration number
LIGNE N PAQ. FR.N°5 29 JUIL 94

Registration Handstamp 1910

After 1900, the marking was most commonly applied with black ink. The registration fee was 25 centimes. Here the postage for a double weight letter was 20 centimes making the total 45 centimes.



POSTAL MARKINGS

G2

QUINHON ANNAM 22 JANV 10
framed R with manuscript registration number

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 23 JANV 10
BORDEAUX GIRONDE 21-2 10

Registration Handstamp 1913

Individual post offices could procure their own markings outside official channels. This practice gave rise to varieties in the registration handstamp. The post office at Phat-Diem, Tonkin employed a distinctive registry mark, seen nowhere else, that was 12 millimeters wide and 16 millimeters high.



G2bis

POSTAL MARKINGS

PHAT-DIEM TONKIN 1 MAI 13
framed R with manuscript registration number

REVERSE

HANOI TONKIN 2-5 13
HAIPHONG TONKIN 3 MAI 13
DONAI NORD 31-5 13

Registration Handstamp 1924

Around 1925, the town of Giadinh used a registration handstamp with an elliptical frame. Perhaps the format was the result of repairing a preceding device with the traditional rectangular frame.



G3

POSTAL MARKINGS

GIADINH COCHINCHINE 7-11 24
framed R with manuscript registration number

REVERSE

SI ETIENNE R.P. DENFERT LOIRE 5-12 24

Registration Handstamp 1916

The registry marking evolved into a plain "R" without a frame. Like the predecessor markings, the registration number was handwritten next to the "R."

R



G4

POSTAL MARKINGS

BACLIEU COCHINCHINE 23-2 16
plain R with manuscript registration number

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 26-2 16
DHANUSHKODI-F REG. 9 MAR. 16
KOTTAIYUR 13 MAR. 16

Registration Handstamp 1923

The size of the plain "R" varied between post offices. This example from Saigon is 6.5 millimeters wide and 10 millimeters tall.

R



G4

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 17-12 23
plain R with manuscript registration number

REVERSE
DHANUSHKODI-F REG. 27 DEC. 23
KOTTAIYUR 28 DEC. 23

Registration Handstamp
Blue Ink, 1930

The "R" handstamp was usually applied with black ink. In this example, both the postmarks and the "R" marking were struck with blue ink.

R



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI E TONKIN 15-3 30
plain R with manuscript registration number

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 15-3 30

Registration Handstamp 1904

Where standard handstamps were not available, postmaster improvised by having them fabricated locally. Here, Laokay's registry marking was a large, unframed "R" (19 millimeters tall by 18 millimeters wide).

R



POSTAL MARKINGS

G4bis

LAOKAY TONKIN 9 DEC 04
plain R with manuscript registration number

REVERSE

HAIPHONG TONKIN 14 DEC 04
PARIS XVI DISTRIBUTION 15-1 05

Registration Handstamp 1944

After registry labels were introduced, use of the handstamps gradually disappeared. However, if local shortages occurred, the registry handstamps could be pressed into service once again.

This wartime mailing shows an "R" handstamp with a hand drawn frame meant to mimic a label.

R



G4

POSTAL MARKINGS

RACHGIA COCHINCHINE 4-10 44
plain R with manuscript registration number

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 27-10 44

Registration Handstamp 1950

Here, a very late usage of the large "R" in 1950 was accompanied by a handstamped "POULO CONDORE" that was usually applied to registration labels.

R

POULO CONDORE



G4

POSTAL MARKINGS

POULO-CONDORE COCHINCHINE 9-3 1950
R with manuscript registration number
straightline POULO CONDORE handstamp

REVERSE

SAIGON RP SUD VIET-NAM 14-3 1950
CASABLANCA-POSTES MAROC 18-3 1950

Registration Handstamp
Framed R Handstamp of Tour-Cham, 1931

In 1931, the Tour-Cham post office employed a transitional marking that had design aspects of earlier framed "R" registry handstamps and labels with their characteristic rectangular outer frame.



G2bis

POSTAL MARKINGS

TOUR-CHAM ANNAM 3-2 31
framed "R" registration handstamp

REVERSE

TOUR-CHAM ANNAM 3-2 31
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 3-2 31
PARIS VII DISTRIBUTION 17-2 31

Registration Label 1927

The first registry labels appeared in November 1927. This letter card was posted from the main post office in Saigon on the seventh day of November making a very early usage for the first registry label.



E1

POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 7-11 27
registration label

REVERSE

SINGAPORE 17 NO 1927
MILSON'S POINT N.S.W. 15 DE 27
REGISTERED SYDNEY N.S.W. 17 DE 27

Registration Label 1928

The first registry label was put into use only in four major cities: Saigon, Hanoi, Haiphong and Pnompenh. The first label did not use a frame like later versions of registry labels did.



E1

POSTAL MARKINGS
HANOI TONKIN 24-3 28
registration label

Registration Label 1928

After April 1928, the first registration labels were replaced by newer designs. Thus, they were in use for only about six months. This example from Pnompenh is from the 27th day of April making it a late usage of the first type of registration label.



E1

POSTAL MARKINGS
PNOMPENH CAMBODGE 27-4-28
registration label
REVERSE
PONT AUDEINER EURE 25-5-28

Registration Label 1936

The second registry label to appear was widely used throughout Indochina. The new label employed a rectangular outer frame. This style of label is characterized by a letter "R" that is 2.5 millimeters wide and 5 millimeters tall. For the larger cities, the labels were preprinted with the city's name.



E2

POSTAL MARKINGS

HAI-PHONG TONKIN 24-4 36
registration label

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 25-4 36

Registration Label 1939

In the smaller post offices, clerks applied the town name to registry labels with handstamps. In this case, "SAIGON-COMMERCE" was handstamped on the label before it was affixed to the envelope.



E2

POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON COMMERCE COCHINCHINE 29-4 39
registration label

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 29-4 39
LIBOURNE GIRONDE 6-5 36

Registration Label 1940

Mail volume from smaller towns did not justify preprinted labels with the town's name. Rather, the name of the town was handstamped on the label resulting considerable variation from town to town. In this example from Sept Pagodes, Tonkin, only the first letter was capitalized.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SEPT-PAGODES TONKIN 22-2 40
registration label

REVERSE

HANOI R.PBIS TONKIN 23-2 40

Registration Label 1936

Labels consisted of two parts. While one part was glued to the cover, the other part of the label was affixed to a form that was used for tracking and record keeping purposes. The portion of the registry label affixed to the form was also stamped with the postal clerk's signature. The large "G3" stood for "counter window 3" or "Guichet 3" at the post office.



The form is titled "RÉCÉPISSÉ G - 32b." and includes the instruction "à remettre au déposant". It contains a circular postmark from "SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE" dated "15-30" and "19-12-36". A red stamp with "863" is visible. The form is filled with handwritten text: "RMS N. alagappa chettiar" for the recipient's name, "O. Srinivasaya" for the agent, and "à Sindhia" for the address. It also has fields for "Nature de l'objet", "Valeur déclarée(1)", "Remboursement", and "Poids", which are mostly blank or partially filled. A signature "Srinivasaya" is written at the bottom right. Instructions at the bottom left read: "(1) Voir notice spéciale au verso. (2) Coller ici l'étiquette gommée extraite du G-20."

E2

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 19-12 36
registration label

Registration Label 1931

The third registry label format appeared in 1929. It lacked either a printed or handstamped town name identifier. The letter "N" had serifs and was 4.5 millimeters high. The "R" was set off by a vertical line.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 4-6 31
registration label

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 5-6 31

Registration Label
1944

In a later style of registry label that appeared at the start of World War II, the letter "R" became 4.5 millimeters wide and 4.5 millimeters high. As compared to earlier designs, the lettering was located 3 millimeters above the bottom frame line.



E4

POSTAL MARKINGS
CANTHO COCHINCHINE 15-3 44
registration label
REVERSE
SAIGON PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 17-3 44

Registration Label
1943

In another variation first seen in 1942, the style of the "R" changed. The "N" and number were printed in a sans serif font.



POSTAL MARKINGS
THAI-BINH TONKIN 7-9 43
registration label
REVERSE
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 9-9 43
HANOI R.P. B^{IS} TONKIN 10-9 43

Registration Label 1947

After World War II, a new imperforate label appeared in which the size of the lettering was much reduced. The "R" became only 6 millimeters high. The letter "N" became very small—only 2 millimeters wide by 2.5 millimeters tall.

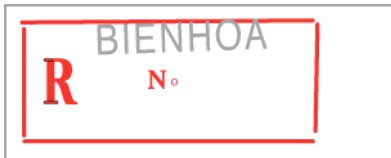


E6

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 9-6 47
registration label

Registration Label 1946

A variation of the label did not have preprinted numbers. The registration number had to be handwritten on the label.



POSTAL MARKINGS

BIENHOA COCHINCHINE 2-10 46
registration label

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 4-10 46
NEW YORK, N.Y. A.M.F. TOUR 1 OCT 11 1946
BEVERLY HILLS, CALIF. REGISTERED OCT 12 1946

Registration Label 1950

One of the last labels used less intense printing. The vertical line separating the "R" from the number portion is a distinguishing characteristic for this label.



UNL

POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON R.P. SUD VIET-NAM 4-9 1950
registration label
airmail label

REVERSE

NEW YORK, N.Y. REG'Y. DIV. 3-8 1950
CHURCH ST. STA. N.Y.-REG'Y. DIV. 3-8 1950

Registration Label 1950

Beginning in 1950, registration labels saw one of the most extensive changes since they were introduced when the coloring of the lettering changed from red to blue. The new labels differed subtly in the size of the letter "N." Here the "N," which lacks serifs, and is 3 millimeters wide by 4 millimeters tall.



EB1

POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON RP – SUD VIET-NAM 23-9 1950
registration label

REVERSE

SAIGON RP – SUD VIET-NAM 23-9 1950
DALAT PLATEAUX-INDOCHINOIS 25-9 1950

Missing Registration Marking 1926

Everything about this registered letter posted from Saigon in 1926 to Paris is normal with one exception. The postal clerk forgot to apply the framed "R" signifying a registered item. The clerk did write a registration number in blue ink on the cover.



POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 18-4 26
manuscript registration number

Faux Registration Label
1932

This registered letter from Tour-Cham exhibits a handstamp that mimicked the label formats then in service in 1932.

R



POSTAL MARKINGS

TOUR-CHAM ANNAM 12-7 32
framed "R" registration handstamp
Saigon-Marseille routing instruction handstamp

REVERSE

BOIS-COLOMBE SEINE 2-8 32

Registration Label Rural Post, 1944

Indochina's first rural post was organized in sixteen provinces of Tonkin in 1917. Initially, only the most basic services were offered including the sale of postage stamps. As the system demonstrated success, services were added including registered mail in 1934.

However, registered letters originating within the rural post are rarely seen. As this example shows, the rural post continued to operate through World War II.



POSTAL MARKINGS

E5

POSTE RURALE PROVINCE DE NAM-DINH VU-BAN
registration label
NAM-DINH TONKIN 11-2 44

REVERSE

POSTE RURALE PROVINCE DE NAM-DINH VU-BAN
HANOI R.P. BIS TONKIN 16-2 44
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 16-2 44
NINH-BINH TONKIN 17-2 44
PHU-LY TONKIN 17-2 44
CHINE TONKIN 18-2 44

Return Receipt Handstamp
1896

The letters "AR" meaning "avis de reception" signified "return receipt." This early form of the return receipt marking provided space at the top for recording a number. In the case of registered letters, this feature was superfluous as registration provided an official numbering system. This early marking disappeared around the turn of the century.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOÏ-RECIE TONKIN 9 MAI 96
framed R with manuscript registration number
framed return receipt handstamp

REVERSE

CHALON-S-SAONE SAONE ET LOIRE 13 JUIN 96

Return Receipt Handstamp
1924

The format of the most common return receipt marking consisted of an "A R" surrounded by a roughly rectangular frame with diagonal corners, which mimicked the widely-used registry marking.



POSTAL MARKINGS

MYTHO COCHINCHINE 8-8 24
framed R with manuscript registration number
framed return receipt handstamp

REVERSE

ST ETIENNE R. P. DENFERT LOIRE 4-9 24

Return Receipt Handstamp 1939

A late usage in 1939 of the return receipt handstamp shows that the angular corners had become rounded through long-term use. Otherwise, the format of the handstamp had remained the same.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-TANDINH COCHINCHINE 1-12 39
registration label
framed "AR" return receipt handstamp

REVERSE

SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 1-12 39
PARIS 6 SENAT 8-12 39

Return Receipt Handstamp
1919

Rather than chopped corners, the return receipt handstamped applied to a 1919 mailing from Thanh-Hoa consisted of the letters "A.R." in a 13 x 18 millimeter rectangular frame.

A.R.



POSTAL MARKINGS

THANH-HOA ANNAM 28-1 19
framed R with manuscript registration number
framed "AR" return receipt handstamp

REVERSE

HAIPHONG TONKIN 29 JANV 19
BORDEAUX GIRONDE 5-3 19

Return Receipt Handstamp 1928

In another design variation from Nam-Dinh, the frame is 16 x 20½ millimeter rectangle. Unlike earlier designs, the lettering is sans serif.

A.R.



POSTAL MARKINGS

NAM-DINH TONKIN 22-5 28
framed R with manuscript registration number
framed return receipt handstamp
HAI-PHONG TONKIN 24-5 28
BERN1 BRIEFTRAGER 26.VI.28

REVERSE

BERN1 BRIEFTRAGER 26.VI.28

Return Receipt Handstamp 1939

With the passage of time, the design of the return receipt marking became quite simple. The frame dimensions are 11 millimeters in height by 15 millimeters in width.

AR



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 21-7 39
registration label
airmail label
framed AR return receipt handstamp

Return Receipt Handstamp
1929

Return receipts were not limited to addressees located in France and her colonies. This example shows a letter sent to India with a request for a return receipt.

AR



POSTAL MARKINGS

MYTHO COCHINCHINE 22-7 29
registration label
framed AR return receipt handstamp

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 22-7 29
DHANUSHKODI-F REG. 3 AUG. 29

Return Receipt Handstamp Unclaimed Letter, 1933

Even though the sender had wanted a return receipt for this letter to India, the post office there was unable to locate the addressee. After being passed to several dead letter offices, the mailing was returned to the sender.

A R



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 30-4 33
registration label
framed return receipt handstamp (blue)
Unclaimed/Refused Letter label (India)

REVERSE

KILASAVAPATTI 30 MAY 33
framed INCONNU NOT KNOWN
framed D.L.O. MADRAS 1 JUN 33 REG.
framed D.L.O. MADRAS 3 JUL 33 REG.
framed D.L.O. CALCUTTA 6 JUL 33
framed D.L.O. CALCUTTA 7 JUL 33
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 20-7 33

Cash on Delivery Handmade Label

The Indochinese PTT operated a "cash on delivery" service ("contre remboursement") whereby the postman could collect small amounts of cash when a delivery of an item had been accomplished. To catch his eye and remind the postman to collect the amount due, a triangular label was affixed to the item. Here the label was fashioned by hand and the amount to collect was written directly on the label.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 12-11 37
registration and C.O.D. labels

REVERSE

PARIS-IX DISTRIBUTION 11-12 37

Cash on Delivery
Post Office C.O.D. Label

A wartime mailing within Hanoi bears a triangular label (supposedly removed from a corner of the tracking document) that was intended to remind the postman to collect the C.O.D. amount. In this case, a manuscript "CR 1.10" written over a handstamp at the upper right meant that the postman was supposed to collect 1.10 piasters.



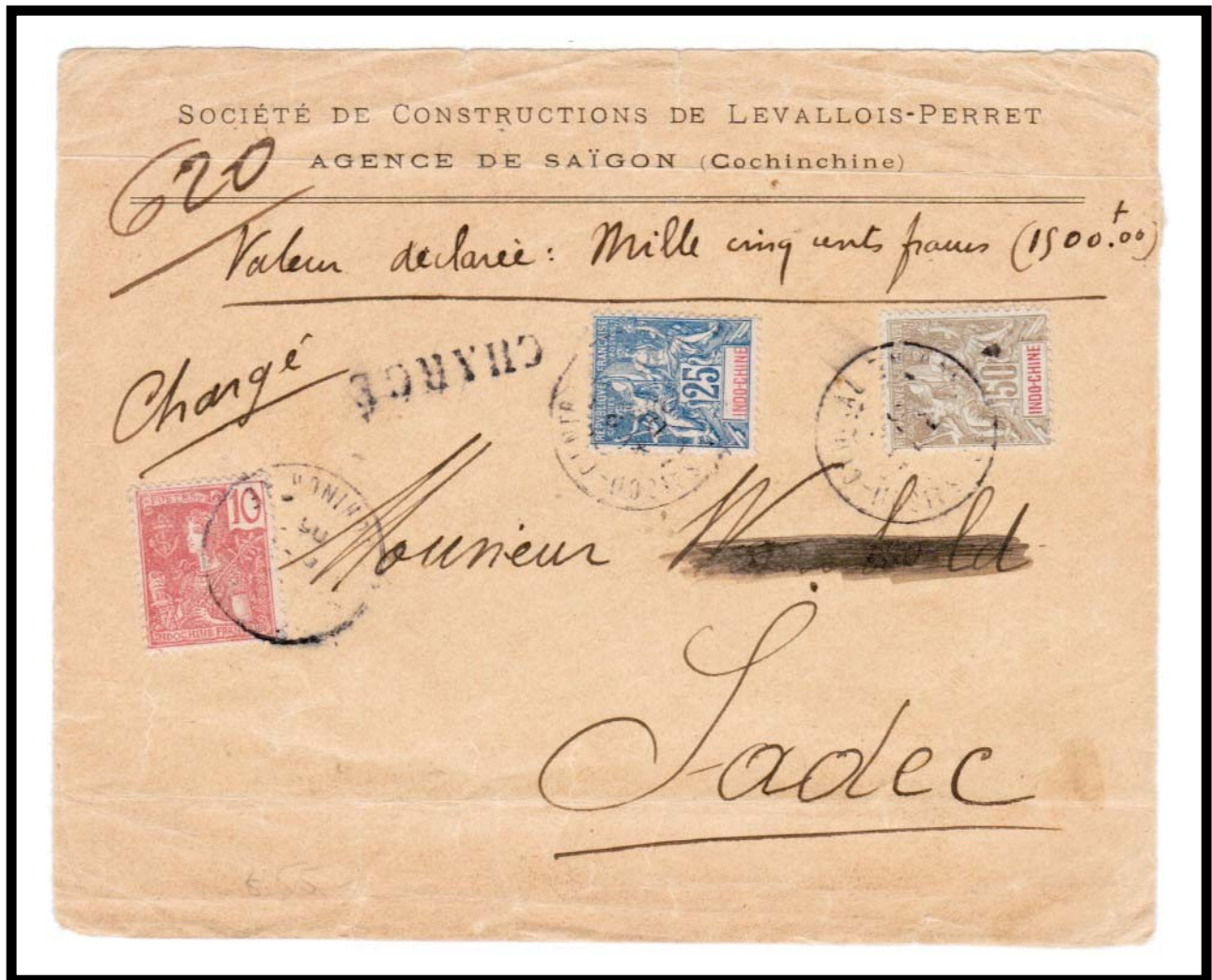
POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 14-1 44
registration and C.O.D. labels
instruction handstamp (red) with manuscript due amount

Insured
Saigon

Letters insured for the value of their contents typically displayed the value on the outside of the envelope. For this example, the declared value was 1,500 francs. Insured letters were handstamped with a "CHARGÉ" marking to signify the fact they were protected against loss.

CHARGÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 2 DEC 05
insured handstamp with manuscript tracking number

Insured
Sadec, Cochinchina

This official letter from the Sadec provincial government was insured as it was addressed to the tax collector in Saigon and probably contained negotiable items.

CHARGÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

SADEC COCHINCHINE 8 MAI 07
insured handstamp with manuscript tracking number

REVERSE

SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 9 MAI 07

Insured
Fort Bayard, Kouang Cho Wan

Sent from Fort Bayard in the leased territory of Kouang Cho Wan, this 1915 mailing was insured for the relatively small amount of 20 francs. The CHARGÉ marking was accompanied by a handwritten tracking number of "250." Since the addressee, a telegrapher, could not be located, the letter was returned to the sender.

CHARGÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

FORT BAYARD INDOCHINE 4-515
insured handstamp with manuscript tracking number
return to sender handstamp stricken through

REVERSE

HAIPHONG TONKIN 6 MAI 15
TCHE-KAM-INDOCJHINE 14 MAI 15
insured cachet

Insured
Hanoi

This example of the insured handstamp was struck with blue ink at the Hanoi post office. Stamps from the Indochinese Offices in China were valid in Indochina proper as the selection on this insured mailing demonstrates.

CHARGÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI TONKIN 9-3 26

insured handstamp with manuscript tracking number

Insured Mail Cachet Cantho, Cochinchina

A Bank of Indochina package with a declared value of 50 piasters was handstamped with the cachet used in southern Indochina for recording pertinent details about an insured mailing.

CHARGE. N.					
DATE	GR	C.	CACH	COUL	EMPR
COCHINCHINE			CAMBODGE		



POSTAL MARKINGS
CANTHO COCHINCHINE 7-2 33
registration label and expedited service label
insured mail cachet

Insured – C.O.D.
Pursat, Cambodia

The Post Office operated a "cash on delivery" service (Service des Objets Contre Remboursement). Money collected by the post office was returned to the sender in official envelopes but the value was not declared on the outside.

This early mailing from Pursat, Cambodia employed a "CHARGÉ" handstamp with a handwritten number for record keeping.

CHARGÉ

Série S, n° 4

ADMINISTRATION
DES
POSTES ET DES TÉLÉGRAPHES
DE L'INDOCHINE

SERVICE DES OBJETS CONTRE REMBOURSEMENT

(concerne l'objet déposé le _____
à _____)

323
CHARGÉ

PURSAT
4-7
16
CAMBODGE

Bureau de Poste de Besancon

Destiné à M. A. Loiseau

Rue des Moyers N° 16

à Besancon

Imp. d'Extrême-Orient, Hanoi — 34504.

POSTAL MARKINGS

PURSAT CAMBODGE 4-7 16
insured handstamp with manuscript tracking number

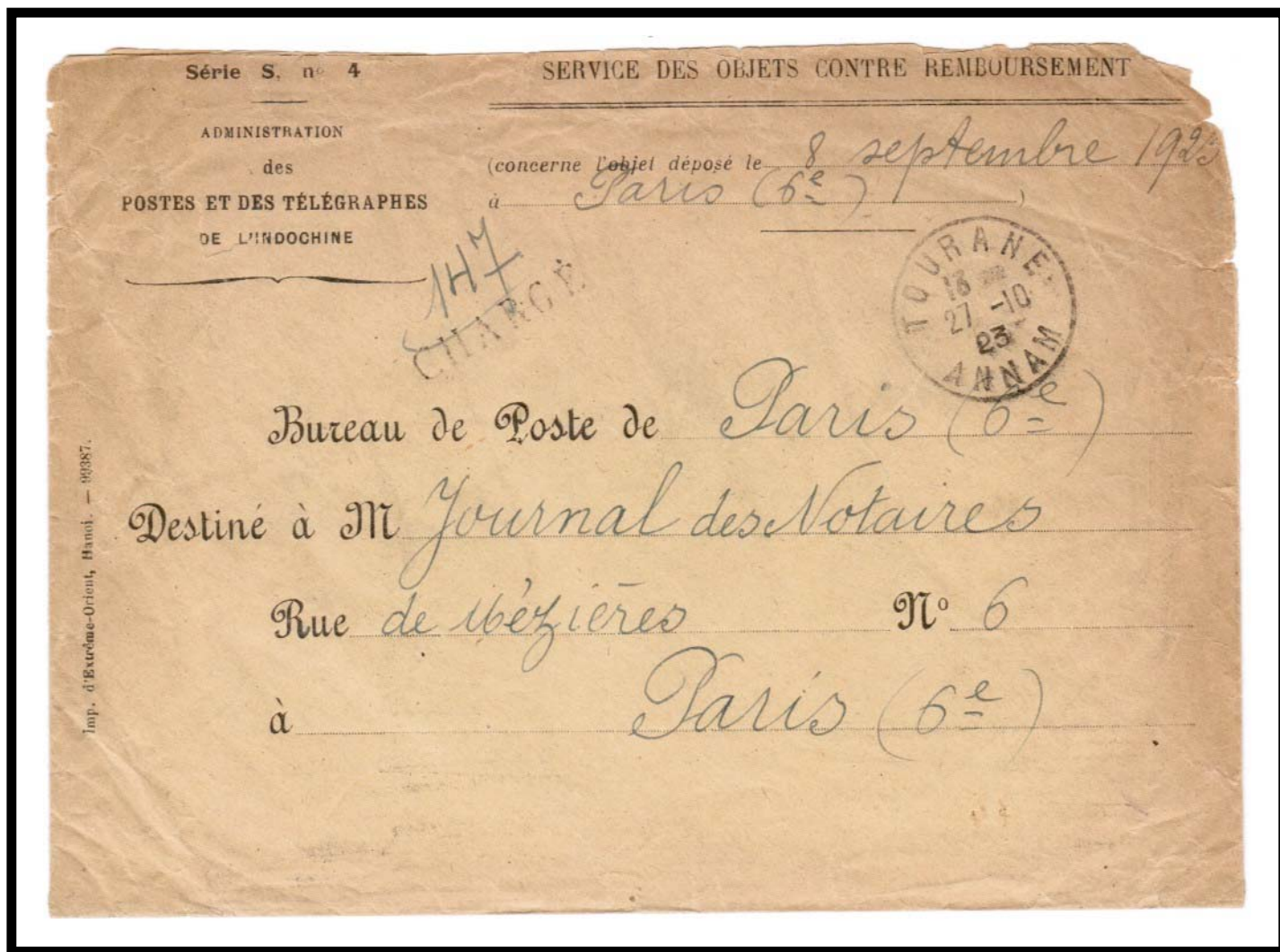
REVERSE

PNOMPENH CAMBODGE 11 JUIL 16
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 14-7 16
BESANCON DOUBS 19-8 16

Insured – C.O.D.
Tourane, Annam

The "CHARGÉ" handstamp varied among post offices. This example from Tourane Annam uses serif letters that are 5 millimeters tall.

CHARGÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

TOURANE ANNAM 27-10 23
insured handstamp with manuscript tracking number

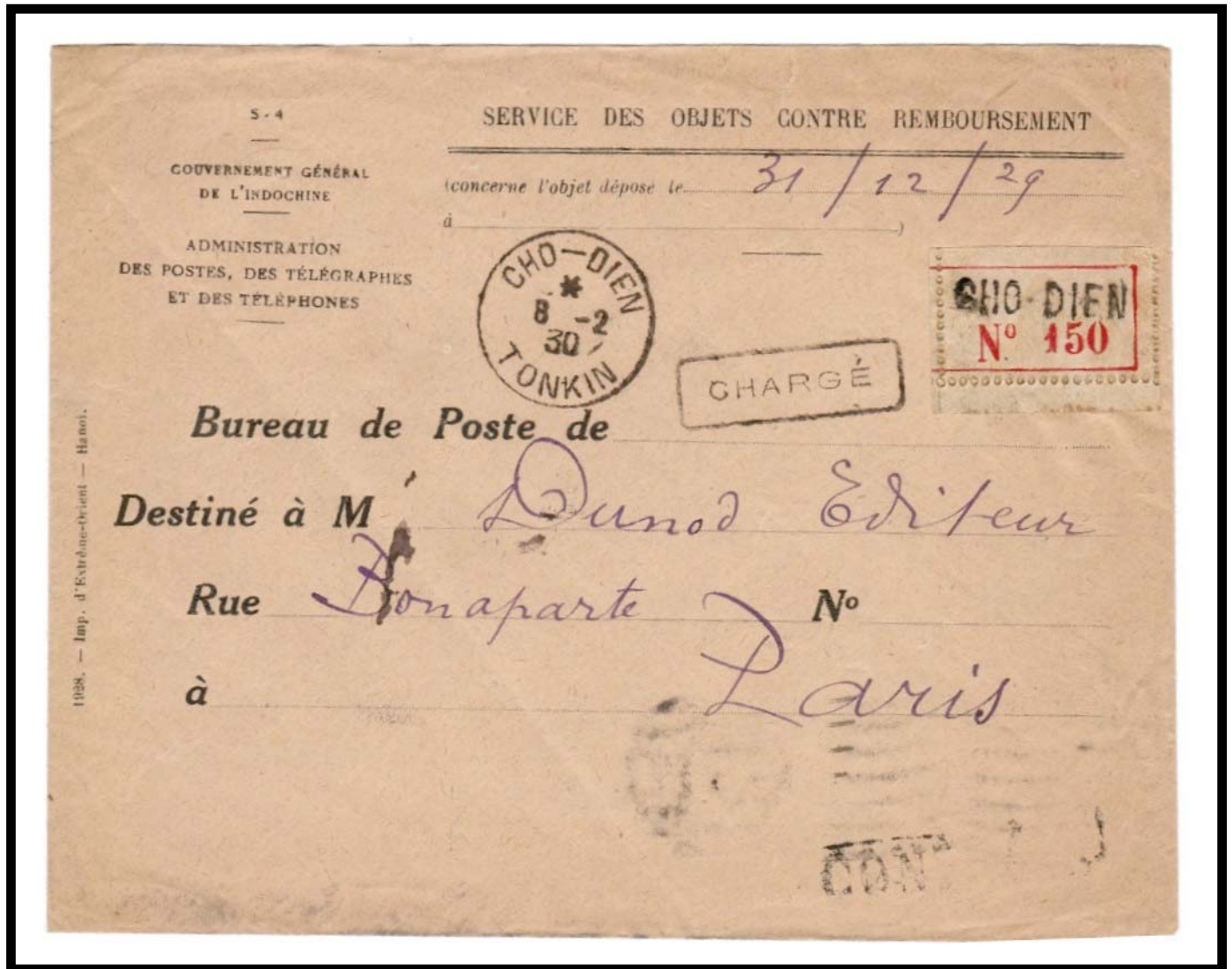
REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 30-10 23

Insured – C.O.D.
Cho-Dien, Tonkin

Later COD mailings were registered eliminating the need for separate insurance serial numbers. The insured handstamp included a rectangular frame with rounded corners. The sans serif lettering was in 3-millimeter capital letters.

CHARGÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

CHO-DIEN TONKIN 8-2 30
registration label
insured handstamp

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 12-2 30
PARIS R.P. DISTRIBUTION 15 • III 1930

Insured – C.O.D.
Dailanh, Annam

Another variety of the handstamped insured marking from Dailanh, Annam exhibits 4 millimeter lettering.

CHARGÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

DAILANH ANNAM 5-1 35
registration label
insured handstamp

REVERSE

NHATRANG ANNAM 5-1 35
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 6-1 35