

# The 1893 French Military Franchise Essays of the New Hebrides

– *a closer look*

Synopsis (8-22-17 Final)

## Purpose

This one-frame traditional exhibit of the **1893 French Military Franchise Essays of the New Hebrides** was created for SEAPEX 2017, as part of the SAS/Oceania exhibits. It will provide a rare opportunity for the general viewer, SAS/Oceania members and the SEAPEX jury to see these colorful essays in a frame to themselves. The aim is to show the essays in a logical order of printing. They are arranged on the pages and described so that all who look at them should easily understand the basic printing order.

## Scope

Not every detail of each printing will be described. Flaws, retouches and signs of previous printings relevant in establishing printing order will be shown or enlarged. Varieties in the lithographic process will be noted.

## Importance

These essays may once have been regarded as of little importance in the grand scheme of New Hebrides philately. However, they play their part in the political shenanigans that went on between the British and the French before the Condominium came into being in 1906. As such, any showing of traditional New Hebrides should incorporate these essays where possible.

This exhibit will show essays from all but one of the different printings of sheets or singles recorded by the multinational group of collectors affiliated with the *The New Hebrides: Postal History & Stamps* website (hereafter called the New Hebrides website), so in terms of material importance, this exhibit ranks right up there. While other collectors in the group may have more sheets, no other collector in the group has this range of material.

## Treatment

The aim is to make the order of printing easy to understand for the general viewer, those who have been exposed to them before and you the Jury. To help you to understand what you are looking at, the exhibit has been grouped into 4 quadrants, the first for background and definitions and the others for each printing group.

The first quadrant will flesh out the background information on the title page, allocate a letter of the alphabet (A, B, C and D) to each of the four essays on a sheet, give a name to each major element of a single essay (disk, ring, label, banner, etc), and show examples for the flaws and retouches that will be shown later in the exhibit. The nomenclature used is the same as that listed on the New Hebrides website.

The next three quadrants will deal with the essays in chronological order of three printing groups, as best as can be deduced by the exhibitor through remnants of previous printings, changes, wear or damage to the design stones over time.

The top part of each quadrant will give “the big picture” – general characteristics of each group and an overview of the printing procedure involved. The middle part will show the essays. In line with the “a closer look” element in the title, the bottom part of each quadrant will show color enlargements of sections of the essays to show changes of the design, background and lettering, and links to previous printings.

Forgeries will be shown on the last page of the relevant printing group.

The essays will be matted with various light or dark colors to help the view distinguish the different printings. Each quadrant will also be matted with the relevant color to further help the viewer group the printings. There will be no highlighting of alleged “significant” material as all of the material is significant.

## Rarity

Quantities of sheets I have noted:	1	1 <sup>st</sup> printing group yellow disk ring design sheet
	1	1 <sup>st</sup> printing group yellow disk ring complete sheet
	8	2 <sup>nd</sup> printing group colors only sheet
	8	2 <sup>nd</sup> printing group complete sheet
	3	3 <sup>rd</sup> printing group design sheet on light paper
	1	3 <sup>rd</sup> printing group design sheet on darker paper
	13	3 <sup>rd</sup> printing group complete sheet

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The other printings do not exist in complete sheets, but as singles only. I have seen:

1 <sup>st</sup> printing group - ocher disk/gray ring	7 singles in positions A, B and C,
1 <sup>st</sup> printing group - red disk/yellow ring	5 singles in all positions,
1 <sup>st</sup> printing group - light pink ring	2 singles in positions A and C,
1 <sup>st</sup> printing group - light design	2 singles in positions B and D,
3 <sup>rd</sup> printing group - purple embossed design (including printing on reverse)	3 singles, positions B, C and D
3 <sup>rd</sup> printing group - colors	6 singles covering positions A, C and D

The exact numbers still existing of the essays is unknown. Roland Klinger, the New Hebrides website webmaster, has put online scans of the sheets most recently seen at auction or owned by the group (Ref #1).

## Condition

By and large, these essays are in good condition. There is the odd stain on a very few items, and there may be some toning of paper due to the age or storage method of the items.

## Knowledge, Study and Research

I have studied these essays since 2000. I gave a presentation on them in 2007 at the Pacific Islands Study Circle of Great Britain (PISC of GB) meeting at Sydney Stamp Expo (Ref #4). I was the first to find design changes such as the thick F in Français in positions B and D, and the links to earlier printings in the labels and banners.

Further research building on mine has been undertaken by Jeff Blinco (Australia) since 2011, and we have exchanged information and scans. He has prepared a brief study of his findings for public distribution (Ref #2) as well as detailed plate studies of each type of sheet. Information from these will be used in the exhibit.

Jim Crompton has also written papers on these essays, in 1961 (Ref 6#), 1962 (Ref #5), 1963 (Ref #3) and 2006. He has presented background information about the sheets and discussed printing stone characteristics, but some misleading assumptions have been made. These have been accepted by the wider philatelic community, as no other references were available.

Hals and Collas cover these essays (pp46-48 in their handbook,) but do not discuss the details of the printings.

## References (listed in order of usefulness)

1. **The 1893 French Military Franchise Essays**, Roland Klinger, 2012  
<http://www.ro-klinger.de/NH/1-1893%20essays.htm>
2. **1893 French Essays**, Jeff Blinco, 2012  
<http://www.ro-klinger.de/NH/news/1893%20French%20Essays.pdf>
3. **The 1893 New Hebrides Military Essay**, J. Crompton and H.G.L. Fletcher, T. D. *Essay Proof Journal Vol 20 No 1*, whole number 77, 1963, pp3-10  
[http://www.sheryll.net/MF/1893\\_NH\\_Military\\_Essay\\_Essay\\_Proof\\_Journal\\_1963\\_No77\\_pp3-10.pdf](http://www.sheryll.net/MF/1893_NH_Military_Essay_Essay_Proof_Journal_1963_No77_pp3-10.pdf)
4. **New Hebrides 1893 Military Franchise Essays**, Sheryll Ruecker, 2007  
[http://www.sheryll.net/MF/NH\\_1893\\_MF\\_PISC\\_presentation\\_17jun2007.pdf](http://www.sheryll.net/MF/NH_1893_MF_PISC_presentation_17jun2007.pdf)
5. **Further Notes on The New Caledonian 1893 Military Essay for the New Hebrides**, J. Crompton, *Essay Proof Journal Vol 19 No 2*, whole number 74, 1962, p69-70  
[http://www.sheryll.net/MF/Further\\_Notes\\_1893\\_NC\\_Military\\_Essay\\_for\\_the%20NH\\_Essay\\_Proof\\_Journal\\_1962\\_No74\\_pp69-70.pdf](http://www.sheryll.net/MF/Further_Notes_1893_NC_Military_Essay_for_the%20NH_Essay_Proof_Journal_1962_No74_pp69-70.pdf)
6. **The New Caledonian 1893 Military Essay for the New Hebrides**, J. Crompton, *Essay Proof Journal Vol 18 No 2*, whole number 70, 1961, p60  
[http://www.sheryll.net/MF/1893\\_NC\\_Military\\_Essay\\_for\\_NH\\_Essay\\_Proof\\_Journal\\_1961\\_No70\\_p60.pdf](http://www.sheryll.net/MF/1893_NC_Military_Essay_for_NH_Essay_Proof_Journal_1961_No70_p60.pdf)
7. **New Hebrides: Military Franchise Essays**, P. Collas, *Philately from Australia*, March 1950, pp31-32  
[http://www.sheryll.net/MF/New\\_Hebrides\\_Military\\_Essays\\_P\\_Collas\\_PFromA\\_1950.pdf](http://www.sheryll.net/MF/New_Hebrides_Military_Essays_P_Collas_PFromA_1950.pdf)

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