

Down To The Sea In Ships!

Navy Ships! What a category! The very name brings forth visions of great steel-hulled ships cresting formidable waves on the high seas. It makes the heart beat faster and patriotism flare. Not surprising that this category is one of the very foundation blocks of the hobby.

The first Navy Ship cover issued was that of the U.S.S. Sirius, in 1923. From that point on, a grand tradition grew wherein many such ships had their own covers, and collectors have eagerly sought them ever since. In 1961, a Navy Ship matchcover club, the *COMBINE*, formed, and lasted until 1979. It's great, enduring contribution to the hobby was the *COMBINE* Listing of Navy Ships.

Navy Ship covers are divided into two types: Pre-War (if issued prior to Sep. 2, 1945) and Post-War (if issued after Sep. 2, 1945). The *COMBINE* Pre-War listing runs 56+ pages and lists 1,181 covers; the Post-War listing runs 138+ pages and lists some 2,115 covers. Unlisted covers are periodically added. Both lists were last updated in July 2006.

The *COMBINE* Listing is a must for any serious Ship collector. There are two other listings, by Palmer and Mensch, but the *COMBINE*'s is the Bible for collectors. Also, I mentioned in the June *Bulletin* that George Olson, Don Marquette, and Steve Kovacs are currently working on a CD listing.

This is a *very* tough category. Novice Ship collectors are often lulled into a false sense of achievement when seeing how easy it is to obtain the first 1,000 ship covers. It's the other 2,100+ covers that are murder! Lots of rare covers here. One, for example, is the Pre-War U.S.S. Lawrence cover. Before he passed away, Harry Branchaud, CA, had the only one known, as far as he knew.

