

The Buffalo & Erie County Naval & Military Park And Its Three Naval Vessels

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Buffalo & Erie County Naval & Military Park is located in Buffalo, New York. It has three former naval vessels that served in World War II and into the 1960s: USS *Little Rock*, USS *The Sullivans* and USS *Croaker*. Each of the three ships had post offices on board during part of their military service. After the ships were decommissioned, they were transferred to Buffalo to become museum ships, open to public tours. This exhibit is intended to show mail from the crew of the ships and philatelic mail honoring the ships, as well as several pictorial cancels used at the Buffalo & Erie County Naval and Military Park after it opened in the late 1970s.

TREATMENT: This is a postal history exhibit. There are 4 sections. The first section includes material from or relating to USS *Little Rock*. The second section includes material from or relating to USS *The Sullivans*. The third section includes material relating to USS *Croaker*. The fourth section contains material from or relating to the Buffalo & Erie County Naval & Military Park. When possible, mail from the crew of the vessels are shown, showing as many different postmarks as possible. When “commercial” mail is not available, philatelic covers are shown.

RARITY: Mail sent by the crew of the vessels is not easy to locate, Philatelic covers are more common. USS *Little Rock* mail is most common, as it had the largest crew and a post office for the longest period of time. USS *The Sullivans* mail is of medium rarity because it had the second smallest crew, and USS *Croaker* Mail is the least common because it had the smallest crew and a post office for the shortest period of time. The mail from USS *Little Rock* showing the numerical code instead of the ship name during World War II is less common than other mail shown, and double circle markings are less common than the four bar handstamps.

MISSING MATERIAL: Not every postmark variety for USS *Little Rock* is included. The exhibitor has not yet located covers used from USS *The Sullivans* during its World War II service, or from USS *Croaker* during the brief period it had a post office.

REFERENCES:

Three booklets have been published by the Buffalo & Erie County Naval & Military Park:

Swinnich, James W. USS Croaker SS-246.

Swinnich, James W. USS Little Rock CL-92/CLG-4.

Knoerl, T. Kurt. USS The Sullivans DD 537.

The Universal Ship Cancellation Society's Catalog of United States Naval Postmarks (5th Edition, 1997) was also consulted.

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