

The 2014 United States Stamp Society-Barbara R. Mueller Award Winner:
Robert Gray

Robert Gray (Livingston, New Jersey) is the recipient of this year's Mueller Award for Best Article in *The American Philatelist* in the past calendar year. Gray's article, "Indian Army Postal Service in World War I," was published in the June edition of the journal.

One could almost say that Gray became an accidental collector and an expert in the area of Indian philately in the years 1914 to 1924. Influenced by his father, Gray collected stamps as a child, but neglected the hobby for several decades.

"While working under great pressure in Germany, I decided to try philately again thinking that it would help take my mind off of work," Gray writes. "Passing a stamp shop in Wiesbaden, Germany, I entered and asked the owner if she had any British or British empire small collections and was promptly told to leave the store as 'you British, you come to my store and look at stamps for hours and buy nothing.' Understandably, I started to leave when she asked, 'is India part of the British Empire?' She showed me a box of Indian covers, which I purchased. Unable to understand or appreciate these covers, I joined the India Study Circle of London and restarted my hobby."

When he moved back to the United States, Gray joined the American Philatelic Society and Collector's Club in New York City.

Gray's article explores the challenges of the Indian postal system during a tumultuous period, including the seven divisions, or forces, of the Indian Expeditionary Force, dealing with three languages — English, Hindi and Urdu — and geographic and field obstacles. In a little more than seven pages and using more than a dozen images of covers, Gray explores postal organization, soldiers' letters, outbound military mail, postage, POW mail, censorship, and post-war conflicts.

Gray is a retired natural products chemist who has published in scientific journals on botany and natural products chemistry. In November, Gray will take his next step in philately when he presents his first exhibit at Chicagopex.

The award is named for the United States Stamp Society and for one of its most prominent members, authors, and editors, Barbara R. Mueller. Among her many other honors in six decades of devotion to philately, Mueller is a member of the Hall of Fame of both the USSS and APS Writers Unit 30.

