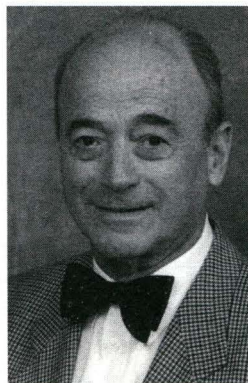


# *Ernst Cohn to Receive 2004 Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award*

The Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award for Distinguished Service to Philately will be presented to Mr. Ernst Cohn at the Collectors Club Annual Awards Dinner at the Cornell Club on May 12, 2004. Cohn is best known for his extensive research in the stamps and postal history of France, Scandinavia, and Germany.

Born in Mainz, Germany, he served with the U.S. Army at the Nuremberg trials. Before and after that he served as a chemist for the U.S. government, and is now retired to his lifelong pursuit of philatelic study. His particular fascination for years has been in the mails during the siege of Paris in 1870-71, about which he prepared exhibits of *ballons montés*, pigeon messages, smuggled and diplomatic siege mails, not only of Paris, but also other towns such as Metz and Belfort.



Although his collections are notable, Ernst is more closely associated with his philatelic writing. Much of it, of course, is related to the 1870 sieges, but he has also taken on a number of controversial subjects to good effect. One of these, which appeared in the *Collectors Club Philatelist* in 1998, was the “Vineta Provisionals” of which the genuine examples are considered rarities. His research showed that there are many examples that were created after the fact and indistinguishable from the genuine ones. In the same article, he shed light on a number of aspects of the Buffalo Balloon stamps of 1877, again with the conclusion that many examples were probably produced at a later time and could not be told from the original set of labels.

Cohn is not hesitant to ask questions that point up the weaknesses of some aspects of expertization. For example, an article titled “Limits to Expertizing” appeared in 1999 in *Fakes Forgeries Experts*, No. 2. In it he lists a number of problems facing experts, such as lack of uniformity of reference material between two (or more) experts, differing standards, and how to expertize items of postal history that may be unique. An article in the 2001 issue of the same journal, “Genuine, but What?” argues for more accurate language in describing items, as well as greater attention to facts. Many of the examples he gives show how siege of Paris mail could have been mistakenly assigned to the wrong mode of transportation through lack of knowledge of detailed facts.

Over more than fifty years of philatelic activity, he has served as an officer of many eminent organizations and has been recognized with high honors for his research, writing, and editing. The F.I.P. research medal is rarely awarded, and Ernst was one of the first to receive it. He is a corresponding member of two philatelic academies based in France and one in Belgium. In addition, he is a member of the Society of Philatelic Historians, and besides having been selected for the Hall of Fame of the Philatelic Writers Unit #30, has received its “Broken Pen” award. He was selected for the Luff Award for Distinguished Philatelic Research in 1995.

Although he has retired from activities as an international judge, he offers his insights on expertizing and is as active as ever. A multiple part article titled “A Critical Guide to Balloon Mails—Facts and Fables about 1870 War Mails” was started in the November-December 2003 issue of the *Collectors Club Philatelist*.

Club members and guests will gather at the Cornell Club in May to honor Ernst Cohn, who has, through his great energy and study, earned the Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award.

*Robert P. Odenweller*