“I Am Sending My Friend These Nine Postcards…”
(The Voyage of Rear Admiral E.A. Stackelberg’s Detachment of Ships from the Baltic to the Far East in 1902-1903 and the Voyage of the Pacific Squadron in 1904-1905)
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Not long ago I acquired three postcards (Figures 1-3) with views of Spain, all of them sent to Revel’. At first I didn’t notice anything unusual about them, but then in the text on one of them I read, “…if you have sufficient imagination, then put two destroyers at anchor here and on one of them you’ll see Ensign (?)… P.S. To help you I’ve drawn them. On the deck of the first you can see me. I came out really well. Ensign Pavlusha…” I began my search from that.

Figure 1a
Ferrol, Spain to Revel’, arriving on 30 October 1902.

The postcard in Figures 1a-b shows the Spanish port of El Ferrol, which is located on the shores of the same small bay on Spain’s northwestern Atlantic coast as the port of La Coruña. From the postcard’s text we can see that it was written on 23 October 1902 and addressed to Yekaterina Nikolayevna Trueller (or Trehweller – remember this name!) in Revel’. The stamp is canceled “FERROL / CORUN(?) / 5-11-02 (N.S.). Next to it is the arrival date stamp of Revel’, dated 30 October 1902 (O.S.). The text on the picture side is signed “Your friend Pavel.” Given the dates and the account in NEVKI, there can be no doubt that this card was written and sent by a member of the destroyer Burnyy’s crew.
In Figures 2 and 3 are two picture postcards showing the Spanish port of Cadiz, located on Spain’s southern Atlantic coast, not far from the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea through the Straits of Gibraltar. The cards were mailed from there to Revel', both of them arriving on 12 November at the same address as the first card in Figure 1. Unfortunately, the dispatch dates are illegible. However, one of them (Figure 2) was sent to Yelizaveta Nikolayevna, while the other was addressed to Ye-katerina Nikolayevna, bearing the text that served as the impetus for the search. The sign-off after the text in Figure 3 is “P” (for Paul).
Figure 2b
Reverse.

Figure 3a
Cadiz to Revel', also received on 12/25 November 1902.
Figure 3b
Reverse, showing the drawn-in destroyers and the ensign on the one at left.

And here before us in Figures 4a-b is a postcard with a view of Candia (Heraklion or Iraklion). The date and place – “23 January. Suda [Bay]” – are written on the picture side along with an inscription reading “Souvenir from Crete,” signed “Paul.” The address side bears a 10-lepta Cretan stamp, canceled with a “XANIA” handstamp and an illegible date, a Constantinople transit mark with “BRITISH POST OFFICE / CONSTANTINOPLE / A / FEBRUARY) 12 / (1903” and the Revel’ arrival mark, dated 5 February 1903. It is addressed to Yekaterina Truveller at the same address.

Figure 4a
Candia via Constantinople to Revel’.
I began my search with the name “Trehweller.” As it turned out, there was a family genealogy in [1].

“RICHARD TREWHELLAR - was born at Woolwich in Kent in November 1810. He rose to the rank of Major General in the Hussar Regiment. He died at Montreux, Switzerland 21st October 1872 at the age of 62. Richard married Katherine ALBRECHT and she died at Rateino 13.4.1900. Richard had only one son – Nicholas.

NICHOLAS TREWHELER born 11.12.1847, died 23rd October 1914 at 5 Ordinarnaia St, Petrograd. He married SARAH JANE HUGHES who was born in Sussex, England. In the Will of Nicholas she is named as Sarah Jane Trehweller. Sarah Jane TREWHELER died at Oslo, Norway in 1926 age 81. Nicholas went to school in England and joined the Navy. The family returned to England but could not settle down, so he returned to Russia with wife and two daughters and became a Russian citizen. His three sons remained in England to be educated. (In the 1901 Census of England there was an Olga Trehweler (born at Reval about 1880) who was staying with her Aunt Frances HUGHES related to SARAH JANE HUGHES.) Children of Nicholas and Sarah TREWHELER:

ELIZABETH Nikolaevna Trehweller - was born in Russia about 1886. She married Paul von VEYMARN at the Croydon registry office in Surry 29th August 1908. Paul von VEYMARN was a Lieutenant in the Imperial Russian Navy when he married Elizabeth. In 1939 Paul and Elizabeth were in Calgary. They had one son George von VEYMARN.

ANATOLE – was born in Russia about 1883. He studied in England and became a Civil Engineer. He also served with the British Forces during World War I and after the War settled in Salisbury, Rhodesia. Anatole apparently wrote a letter from Cape Town in 1948.
The Rossica Society of Russian Philately

VLADIMIR – born in Russia about 1875. Chief Warrant Officer on the Battleship ‘Oslyabya’ when it was sunk by the Japanese at the Battle of Tsushima 27th May 1904.

KATHERINE (AKA EKATERINA) – she was born in Reval, Russia about 1878 and never married. In 1937 she was living in Norway. She died in Canada in 1954 and is buried in the same grave as her brother Nicholas in the Cemetery at Vernon, British Columbia. Nicholas Trewheler who was son of Nicholas (and also grandson of Richard) died in Vernon, British Columbia, in 1971 and is buried in Vernon Cemetery. » From this we find out who “Pavel/Pavlusha/Paul” was, and why he was writing to Revel'.

I learned that one of the Trewheller sisters – Yelizaveta – had married Paul von Veymarn, who was a Lieutenant in the Imperial Russian Navy when he married Elizabeth.

In [2], there is an entry for this man:

“About Paul (Pavel Petrowitsch) von Veymarn.
Paul von VEYMARN was a Lieutenant in the Imperial Russian Navy when he married Elizabeth but it now appears that he might have been born in Norway. In 1939 Paul and Elizabeth were in Calgary, Canada but I do not know what happened to them after that.”

From other entries in different sources, we learn that he was born on 14 May 1882 into the hereditary nobility of St. Petersburg Province and died in August 1975, in Canada. He entered on duty as a Navy junker in 1898 and reached ensign (michman) in 1901, serving at that rank aboard two destroyers, the Vlastmyy and then the Gromyashchiy as chief watch officer during the Russo-Japanese War. Von Veymarn entered the reserves as a lieutenant in 1910, but was then called up again for WWI, eventually reaching the rank of Captain 2nd Class.

It became clear that I was on the right trail. So now, a bit of historical background. It is common knowledge that tension between Russia and Japan was on the rise during the last decade of the 19th century. In order to defend its interests in the Far East, Russia was faced with the task of beefing up its military presence there. To that end it developed a shipbuilding program called “For the Needs of the Far East” (instituted in 1898 with a deadline of 1905), which was intended to create a fleet capable of preventing the Japanese from landing on the continent. Within the framework of that program, the French were to construct five Forel’-class destroyers at the “Forges et Chantiers de la Mediterranee” wharf at Le Havre.

[3] They had a displacement of only 350 tons apiece, with 64-man crews. The destroyers were handed over to Russia in 1901-1902, underwent sea trials, and in the middle of 1902 the last of them joined the fleet.

However, on 9 March 1902, all of the “bird or fish” names for the Russian Navy’s destroyers were changed to “adjectival names,” and included among them were the destroyers made in France. One of them was the Kefal’, (Figure 5), which became the Vlastmyy [3, 4]. BUT WAIT! It was on this destroyer that Paul von Veymarn made his 1902 voyage!
Figure 5
Destroyer Vlastnyy at Vladivostok.

Figure 6
Retvizan.

Figure 7
Battleship Pobeda.

What was this voyage about? In the fall of 1902 a detachment of new ships under the command of Rear Admiral E.A. Stackelberg [5, 6, 16] was formed. The detachment consisted of the battleships Retvizan (Figure 6) and Pobeda (Figure 7), the cruisers Diana (Figure 8), Pallada (Figure 9), Boyarin (Figure 10) and Bogatyr’ (Figure 11).
Figure 8
Cruiser *Diana* in 1897.

Figure 9
2nd-Class Cruiser *Pallada*.

Figure 10
Cruiser *Boyarin*. 
Figure 11
Cruiser *Bogatyr*.

When they reached the Mediterranean Sea they were to be joined by seven of the latest destroyers (five of them the French-construction warships), plus the *Bumny* (Figure 12) and the *Boykiy* (Figure 13), which had been built at St. Petersburg. For a number of reasons the ships did not all depart Kronstadt together, but at Algiers (where the *Bumny* and *Boykiy* caught up with them) and at Piraeus, where five French-built destroyers were to meet with them, the detachment was to proceed at full strength.

Figure 12
The *Bumny* after commissioning.
How did the “French” destroyers make it to Piraeus? Three of them left Le Havre in January 1902 [3], but were held up in Palermo, Italy for six months. At the beginning of August the Vlastnyy and Grozovoy returned to Kronstadt and immediately began preparations for the voyage to the Pacific Ocean. They left for Port Arthur on 24 September 1902, and it was on the Vlastnyy that Paul von Veymann served. On the way the destroyers put in at Cherbourg, El Ferol (the card in Figure 1), Cadiz (Figures 2-3) and finally, Palermo. There they were met by three destroyers that had been waiting for them, and at the end of November they weighed anchor for Piraeus, where the ships of Rear Admiral E.A. Stackelberg’s main detachment were expecting them.

After the New Year ushered in 1903, Stackelberg’s detachment continued on its way to the Far East. The ships made it to Suda on the island of Crete, and by the end of January they reached Port Said in Egypt. There it became clear that the detachment in its present configuration could not go further. The Pobeda had already been left for repairs at Piraeus, so after the Retvizan, Pallada, Diana and Boyarin transited the Suez Canal, they continued on alone. The 1st-class cruiser Bogatyr’ was assigned at the end of February 1903 to accompany the Burnyy and Boykiy. On the way the ships called at Aden, Clombo, Singapore and other ports. All of the ships arrived at Port Arthur in individual groups at the end of April and the beginning of May 1903. The Vlastnyy and the Grozovoy reached the port on 5 May. Later on both destroyers took an active part in the defense of Port Arthur.

Based on all of this information, it follows that the postcards in Figures 1-4 were all written by Ensign Paul von Veymann while on his voyage aboard the destroyer Vlastnyy.

Now we have before us seven more PPCs (Figures 14-18), all of them issued in Egypt. They show views of Port Said and various Egyptian motifs, and were sent from Port Said to Revel’ at the end of January into February of 1903. And here’s what’s especially interesting about them: all of them were sent to one and the same address, to Truveller. But we should bear in mind that this last name appeared on the postcards sent from the Spanish ports of La Coruña and Cadiz by one of the Vlastnyy officers. And, as was pointed out above, it was specifically at this time the ships of Rear Admiral E.A. Stackelberg’s detachment were located at Port Said, so these seven cards were sent from Port Said by the same ensign from the same destroyer.
On the PPC in Figures 14a-b the text shows that the card was written on 30 January 1903 from Port Said. On it we read that, “I am sending my friend these nine postcards for inclusion in an album. It would be interesting to know whether or not all of them have reached you. I will write a “real” letter from Suez… Don’t forget P(avlu)shu.” As we can see, we know of seven of the nine cards that were sent. It is quite possible that the two remaining cards will also be found; perhaps they too will contain historically interesting observations from a member of the voyage.

Figure 14a
PPC from Port Said to Revel’.

Figure 14b
Reverse.
Figure 16a
Third PPC from Port Said.

Figure 16b
Reverse.

Figure 17
Fourth to seventh cards from Port Said.
Here is the last postcard that I know of, the twelfth (Figures 18a-b). It was sent from Aden on 6 March 1903 (the date is established from the text – 20 February 1903, O.S.) to Revel’, arriving on 11 March 1903. It too was addressed to Yelizaveta Nikolayevna Truveller, signed by “Your true friend Pavel.” The card shows one of the views in Aden.

Figure 18a
Aden to Revel’, arriving on 11 March 1903.

Figure 18b
Reverse.
But this story of the Trehweller family and their connection with the history of the Russian Navy during the Russo-Japanese War has a sequel. In the “List of Officers...” [7] who perished with the battleship Oslyabya (Figure 19) in the Battle of Tsushima of 14-15 May 1905, I found this “185. Watch Chief Ensign Vladimir Nikolayevich Truveler” (Truveler?).”

Continuing the search, I came across a mention of Ensign Truveler in several other sources [8-11]. In the “List of Officers of the Battleship Sisoy Velikiy [8], (Figure 19), under the name of Watch Chief Ensign V.N. Truveler was the entry “Arrived aboard ship from the battleship ‘Oslyabya’ on 30-12-1904.” And in the “List of Officers of the Battleship Oslyabya” [9] under this same name is another entry: “Transferred from the battleship ‘Sisoy Velikiy’ 14-2-1905, killed in action 14-05-05.”

Figure 19
Battleship Oslyabya.

Figure 20
Battleship Sisoy Velikiy.