

PRIVATE TREATY

The Brian Moorhouse specialised Collection CHACO WAR 1932 - 1935



Paraguayan Soldiers at Alihatá 1932



The railway from the Paraguay river to the heart of the Chaco was a vital support line for the Paraguayan army, especially during the battle of Boquerón



The Chaco region is a triangular shaped area of around 300,000 square kilometers situated between Bolivia and Paraguay. The origins of the Chaco War actually date back to 1924 when Bolivia discovered oil in the Tarija region of the country. Bolivia, a landlocked country since the Pacific War 1879-1883, wished to exploit the full economic benefits by transporting the oil through the Chaco region to the Paraguay River, and to the Atlantic.

The first military skirmish between Bolivia and Paraguay actually took place in December 1928. Negotiations failed to produce a settlement and hostilities resumed in earnest June 1932 and lasted until a final cease-fire was declared on 14 June 1935. At the outbreak of the war Bolivia had some 100,000 trained troops and an airforce of around 50 planes. Paraguay's military forces consisted of some 5,000 mostly ill-equipped troops, an almost non-existing airforce of just five old Fiat biplanes, but a small navy operating on the navigable Paraguay river.

Bolivian Military Mail can be considered as genuinely scarce. At the outbreak of the war, in June 1932, there was no military postal service available for Bolivian troops. Paraguay was much quicker to set up a military postal system establishing a series of thirteen numbered offices known as 'Posta Militars'. The numbers of prisoners of war on both sides of the conflict were approx. 24,000 Bolivian POW's and approx. 2,700 Paraguayan POW's. The International Committee of the Red Cross did not set up a POW information agency in 1932 since the Uruguayan government had already established one. In co-operation with the Rotary Clubs of Asuncion and La Paz the Uruguayan agency had taken charge of forwarding the POW mail to their families.

A fascinating study of an important chapter in history for the South American continent.

The entire Brian Moorhouse collection Chaco War 1932 - 1935 - can be viewed on www.corinphila.ch or on appointment in Zuerich or Wiesbaden/Frankfurt.

CHF / US Dollar 40'000.- (no additional buyer's premium. Subject to Swiss VAT in case the collection will not be exported from Switzerland)