

Farran Zerbe and the Peace Dollar

by [Michael E. Marotta](#)

Recent announcements from the ANA indicate an abysmal lack of knowledge about Farran Zerbe's role in the creation of the Peace Dollar.

About Ken Bressett's Zerbe Award, ANA President Anthony Swiatek wrote: "[Farran Zerbe] also is credited with proposing the creation of the Peace dollar in 1921."

The ANA Press Release posted about Bressett on the internet said:

Ken Bressett also has served as ... creator and force behind the "Peace through Coinage" program that has resulted in the "Peace" motto being considered for the new United States dollar coin expected out in about two years. This latest accomplishment is reminiscent of Farran Zerbe, who is credited with recommending the same motto on the U.S. silver dollar issued from 1921-35.

The fact is that the so-called Peace Dollar was proposed by Frank G. Duffield, in November of 1918 in his editor's column of *The Numismatist*. He originally prepared his comments for the ANA Convention in Philadelphia, but that event was cancelled because of the influenza epidemic on the East Coast which eventually took 100,000 lives in the USA and several millions more worldwide.

Zerbe's rubberstamp call for a coin commemorating the defeat of Germany came *two years later* at the 1920 Convention in Chicago. Zerbe was not actually there. His letter was read aloud by ANA president Moritz Wormser. Both Duffield and Zerbe were more interested in commemorating the *victory* than the peace. Duffield was vitriolic; Zerbe was more reserved. Their aim was to celebrate the defeat of Germany first and the consequences of the victory second.

Certainly, neither Duffield, nor Zerbe, nor anyone else at the ANA wanted the word "peace" merely stamped on a coin. Everyone wanted an allegorical or symbolic design like the Panama-Pacific coins. In fact, the reverse we have today was hurried out by George Morgan and it drew a lot of criticism in the pages of the *Numismatist*. Among those who wrote about their disappointment were Anthony de Francisci and Farran Zerbe. (De Francisci's original design showed an Eagle clutching a broken sword.)

Finally, I know that I am not the only person who is aware of these facts. At the ANA Spring Convention in Cincinnati, one of the exhibits was about the Farran Zerbe Award Winners. Frank G. Duffield earned a Farran Zerbe Award, in part, for first proposing a coin to commemorate the Victory over Imperial Germany.