

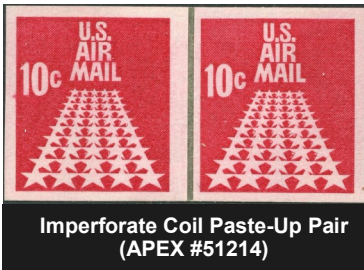
THE 1968 U.S. 10¢ RUNWAY AIRMAIL STAMP

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East Rutherford, NJ

The U.S. 10¢ Runway Airmail stamp was issued in anticipation of a new domestic airmail rate taking effect on January 7th, 1968. Designed in the “Pop-Art” style of the times by Jaan Born, the Runway Airmail was a departure from previous U.S. airmail stamp design, all of which had pictured an element of flight.



Printed using a Huck-Cottrell press, the Runway Airmail was released in San Francisco on Friday, January 5th, 1968 in sheets, coils and a \$4 booklet. A \$1 booklet format intended only for sale in vending machines was released without ceremony the following day and was available only at the Philatelic Agency in Washington, D.C.

Over 2.5 billion stamps were printed in sheet and coil formats with an additional 1.6 billion in two booklet formats. A workhorse of a stamp, it was in use through the 10¢ domestic airmail letter rate period that ended 41 months later. Although sales of the Runway stopped after the rate increase, it still saw use during the 9¢ domestic airmail postcard rate which lasted until March of 1974.

EXHIBIT PLAN

1. Pre-Production
2. Production & Issuance
3. First Day Use
4. The \$1 Booklet — a 2nd First Day
5. Domestic Use
6. Foreign Use
7. The Congressional Precancel
8. End of the Runway

Although primarily intended for domestic use, the Runway Airmail stamp was used extensively for overseas airmail as well as military (APO) use. Presented in this exhibit is a study in the production, issuance and use of this understated and often overlooked airmail stamp of the late 1960's and early 1970's.

What's in the Exhibit?

The exhibit's first chapter, *Pre-Production*, starts with a publicity photo released by the P.O.D. before the stamp was issued — as well as the press release that accompanied it. A plate block of the stamps signed by the designer as well as first day covers signed by the engraver and modeler are highlights of this short chapter.

The next chapter, *Production*, starts with a review of the different formats of the stamps; sheet, coil and booklet. Examples when the process was less than perfect include an imperforate coil pair (APEX #152205) as well as an imperforate paste-up of an imperforate

HIGHLIGHTS

- Imperforate Coil Pair (APEX #152205) & Imperforate Paste-Up Coil Pair (APEX #51214)
- Artmaster Artwork and Printing Plates
- Artcraft Cachet Proofs, Printing Plates, & Artwork
- Hand-Painted cachets by Dyer, Maul, Brady and Ulrich
- Kolor Kover Cachet Artwork
- First Day Uses of \$1 Booklet Panes
- “Untagged” Error on FDC (APEX #187203)
- “Untagged” \$1 Booklet (PSAG #0561060)
- \$1 Booklet With Two Front Covers (APEX #208082)

coil pair (APEX #51214) are highlights of the chapter. The chapter ends with the program from the first day release ceremony in San Francisco and a Post Office department poster with a first day cancellation.

Continuing the exhibit is the *First Day Use* chapter and is subdivided into several parts including First Cachets, Issue Specific Cachets, General Purpose Cachets and additional first day items. Hand-painted cachets from Ralph Dyer, James Brady, Herman Maul and Frank Ulrich are some of the highlights of this chapter. The Issue Specific Cachet sub-chapter is organized by the production method of the cachet.

The fourth chapter centers on the first day of *The \$1 Booklet* — a 2nd *First Day*. Due to the lack of publicity of the \$1 booklet (see “A ‘Second’ First Day” at left) cacheted covers with these first day use with a Vended Insurance label.

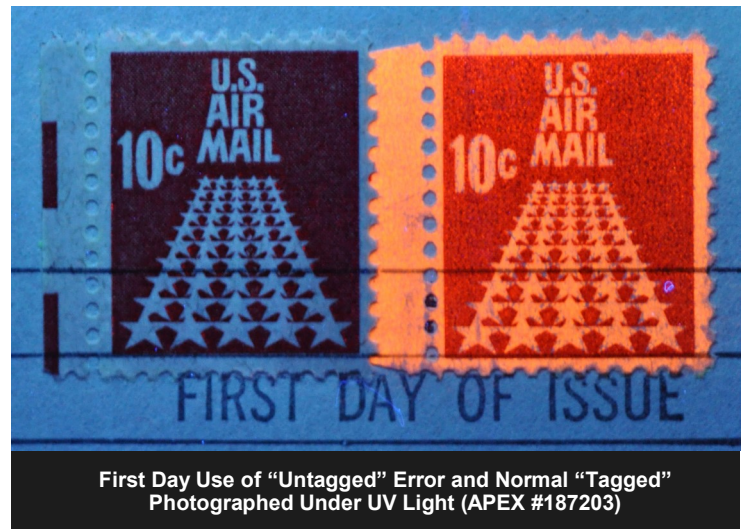
The *Domestic Use* chapter examines how the stamp was used for its’ intended purpose and its use with other available services. One of the highlights of this chapter is the use of a Runway Airmail perfin on cover. In over fifteen years of collecting this issue, *this is the only example of a Runway Airmail perfin on-cover the Exhibitor has seen.*

Although the Runway Airmail was primarily intended for domestic use, service to other countries is examined in the *Foreign Use* chapter. Airmail rates to foreign destinations are shown as well as in combination with other services. A highlight are uses to the United Kingdom and Canada during postal strikes in these countries marked “RETURN-DUE/TO EMBARGO”.

The Exhibit’s penultimate chapter, *The Congressional Precancel*, examines how the Runway was involved in an historical first — the first stamp precancelled for use specifically by Congress. Prepared locally using a handstamp, they were made available to Congress on Monday May 3rd, 1971 — just 13 days before the domestic airmail rate increased to 11¢ on May 16th.

The \$1 Vending Booklet A Second “First Day”

While the sheet, coil, and \$4 booklet formats were released in San Francisco on January 5th, 1968, the \$1 Vending Booklet containing of two panes of five (as opposed to the panes of eight that made up the \$4 booklet) wasn’t released until the following day — and then only at the Philatelic Window of the Main Post Office in Washington, D.C. There was no official ceremony and the usual four-bar first day of issue cancel wasn’t used — only the standard Philatelic Agency cancel was available. Due to this low-key release, first day uses of the \$1 booklet are relatively scarce — especially cacheted first days. ■



Included in the exhibit is a possible example of the Congressional Precancel in use. Since the purpose of the pre-cancel was to eliminate the need for uprated congressional mail to be cancelled, it would be a simple task to create a forgery by affixing a precancel to a surface mail free-frank from the time period. *Even though there are “red flags” the Exhibitor believes that it is a genuine use.* The cover originated from the office of U.S. Senator Wallace Bennett (1898-1993) and the addressee was Vice Admiral John Tyree (1911-2004), the Inspector General of the U.S. Navy from February 1970 until November 1971. The destination

“...Full Panes of Eight Stamps Only”

To simplify servicing the Post Office announced that it would only accept orders for first day covers of the \$4 Runway booklet of “...full panes of eight stamps only.” This directive was announced on the bulletin distributed to post offices nationwide. The only way to process first day covers with booklet pane singles on the first day in San Francisco was to “do it yourself.” Because of this, FDCs dated January 5th with only a single booklet pane stamp are more difficult to find today than FDCs with an entire pane. This is especially true for the smaller FDC producers of the time. ■

of Washington, D.C. did not require the use of an airmail stamp. Possibly the cover was part of a larger bulk mailing and uprated in error, or the use of additional postage was used to convey the importance of the contents, The Exhibitor has determined that Tyree was a stamp collector (APS #45292) and possibly Wallace (or his staff) knew this and prepared a use of the new Congressional pre-cancel for the Admiral. Without the contents of the cover this question may never be answered conclusively.

The *End of the Runway* chapter starts with a first day use and ceremony program for the 11¢ Jet Airmail on May 7th, 1971. A May 16, 1971 use of the Runway Airmail — the last day of the 10¢ domestic airmail rate follows.

Short-paid late domestic uses are also a part of this chapter as well as a 7x rate to Sweden paid exclusively with Runway Airmail stamps.



Misperforated & miscut block showing two different plate numbers & plate join line

IMPORTANT DATES IN THE LIFE OF THE RUNWAY

January 5th, 1968: 10¢ Runway Airmail stamp released in sheet, coil and \$4 booklet formats in San Francisco.

January 6th, 1968: Issued in \$1 vending booklet at the Philatelic Agency.

January 7th, 1968: Domestic airmail letter rate increased to 10¢ per oz.; postcard rate to 8¢.

May 16th, 1971: Domestic airmail letter rate increased to 11¢ per oz.; postcard rate to 9¢.

May 7th, 1971: 11¢ Jet Airmail Stamp Issued

May 3rd, 1971: Congressional Pre-Cancel is made available for use by Congress.

1968

1969

1970

1971

What's Not Here...

Proofs and Essays:

No proofs or essays of the Runway Airmail have been reported to be in private hands.

Dyer Original Artwork:

In recent years some of Ralph Dyer's original cachet artwork has come to market for other issues but not for the Runway Airmail. Hopefully additional pieces will be found by the estate and released for sale in the future.

Vertical Imperf (Scott C72d):

An error caused by a fold-over and mis-cutting of an 8-subject booklet pane caused an extra 9th stamp to form a vertical imperforate pair. Two examples have been documented and the Exhibitor was an underbidder the last time one came to auction in June 2010 — not an excuse, just the reality. ■

