

Where is Our USPS Great War Issue?

Back in April there was no USPS stamp commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the U.S. entrance into WWI. Further, June was the 100th for the landing of the first American service members in France. Where is our stamp?



Well, France (↑) has beaten us to it with their 23 June 2017 issue celebrating the landing of the first wave of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF). As reported in the 3 July issue of *Linn's* (pg.-27), the stamp shows the debarkation of the Doughboys with a cameo of General John J. Pershing, Commander of the American Forces.

Those interested in tracking the AEF through stamps will benefit from foreign issues. There are several sources to identify these as stamps including: ♦The American Topical Association, ♦Stamp dealers specializing in new issues, and the ♦*Scott's* New Listing Update that appears every month in *Linn's Stamp News*. And for the digitally savvy, there is the ♦the Internet search. ☒

If you subscribe to *Linn's Stamp News*, it would be hard to miss the episodic inclusion of the 24-page catalog from Nordfirm of Denmark as seen above. While their sales are weighted toward Scandinavia,

A Piece of Postal History—70 Years Later: Hal Klein

While postal history comes in many shapes and sizes, most comes in the form of a cover (envelope) addressed between individuals. However, there are a few exceptions, and here is one that fits that rule.

This vertical strip seen below (Fig 1) of four 15¢ James Buchanan Sc #820's Presidential Issues (one hidden) are on an 8-1/4" x 4-1/2" fragment of manila wrapping paper. The stamps, tied by a faint black "PHILADELPHIA, PA," repeating roller cancellation, pay a 10lb. Special 4th Class "Gift Parcel" Surface Rate to France, effective February 4, 1949 (PB# 19197) thru December 31, 1951.¹ The parcel fragment by itself would be unremarkable if it were not for the two adjoining labels.

The first 40mm x 80mm black on pink paper, roulette perf label covers a portion of the four Prexies. The statement, printed in French boldly states, "COLIS-CADEAU des ÉTATS-UNIS à remettre au Destinataire SANS AUCUNE PERCEPTION" or "GIFT OF THE UNITED STATES to be delivered to the recipient WITHOUT PERCEPTION." The second label is even more spectacular --"THE MARSHALL PLAN"! The almost 90mm diameter label is unmistakable in its design, with a graphic which is almost identical to the original THE MARSHALL PLAN government logo. (Fig 2 on Pg.-1, top-left)

The differences in the label are a tip-off to "what and how" this package came to being. The logo on the fragment includes border statements in four different languages including French, German, Greek, and Italian. The call-out statement in the center is basically the same in English: "FOR EUROPEAN RECOVERY Postage Reduced On This U.S.A. Gift Parcel Through

THE MARSHALL PLAN." This is where it gets interesting from a postal history aspect.

Under the Marshall Plan² there were no reduced postage rates for gift parcels, however there were special discounted postal rates for war relief donations of clothing and personal items that applied individually for many war-torn countries for heavy-weight relief packages. The reference to "Reduced Postage" on the label is an advertising "weasel"³ relating to this special postal discount rate structure. A Government Agency would never use an advertising *weasel*, however a Non-Government Organization (NGO) charity (fund-raising) group would use *weasels* in fund-raising materials. Far more than the four countries mentioned on the label had Special Gift Parcel Rates at all.

NGO's collected pre-boxed and wrapped donations then shipped them to separate distribution points in the war-torn countries of France, Germany, Italy, and Greece. There (in this case France), the relief package would have a black/pink label (Fig 1) and a Fig. 2 applied; both were applied AFTER being mailed. We know this because Fig 1. is placed over the stamps. No matter how they were shipped, these NGO-relief packages would have been extremely welcomed in war-torn WWII Europe.

From a historical background, the Marshall Plan was an American

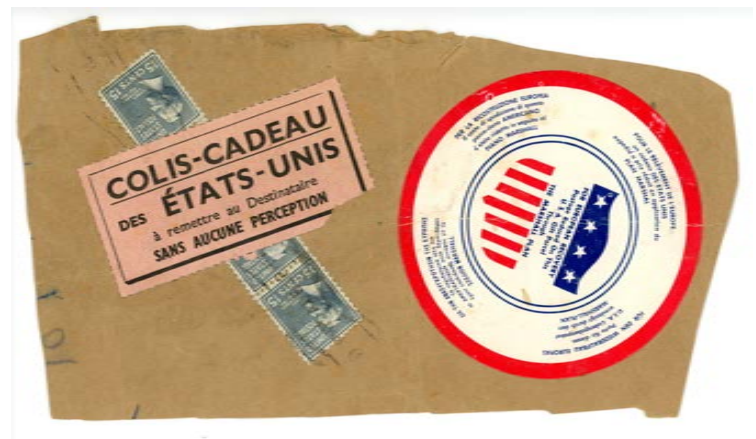
Aid Plan to rebuild European economies, rebuild war-torn Europe, and prevent the spread of Communism. Participating countries were required to adopt U.S.-driven policies to reduce interstate (country) trade barriers, modernize industry, reduce regulations, increase productivity, and increase labor union membership as well as adopt modern business procedures. (Nothing seems to change in seventy years!) The Soviet Union (Russia) refused to participate in the Marshall Plan and blocked all Eastern Bloc countries, such as Poland and East Germany, etc., from participating.⁴

Meantime, "A Fragment of Postal History – 70 Years Later" reminds us of the politics of post-WWII Europe and the European political news about the Marshall Plan being discussed today. It reminds us how stamps played an integral part in conveying and rebuilding -- touching and healing a war-torn Europe -- our fellow man in his greatest time of need -- to rebuild a person's life, dignity, and dreams.

REFERENCES:

1. Anthony S. Wawrukiewicz: researched and supplied the background and rate information.
2. U.S. International Postal Rates, 1872-1996, Anthony S. Wawrukiewicz and Henry Beecher, Cama Publishing Company, 1996.
3. Advertising Weasel: https://www.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl#q=advertising+weasel+statement
4. MARSHALL-PLAN: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshall_Plan

(Figure-1↓)



there are many other offers available, and the prices are good. There is much kiloware along with some classics, sets, and more, almost all of it foreign. But what is of great interest is that on

most orders, the shipping is free. I have ordered some items for club door prices such as stock books and magnifiers, among others. My first order arrived in about ten (10) days. It was mailed from

Germany, and it was shipped free. It weighed about 12 pounds! Not sure where they get their tons of stuff, and how they mail it so cheap, but the catalog is worth taking a look at. It's free too.