

This Day in History... April 4, 1968

\$1 Airlift Stamp

On April 4, 1968, the USPS issued a \$1 stamp that, when combined with a parcel post stamp, was used to send mail and packages to American service members overseas.



Stamp issued on this day in 1968

This stamp was issued for parcel airlift, a service that provided for air transportation. It guaranteed delivery on a space available basis to or from a military post office outside of the 48 contiguous United States.

Most often this stamp was used to send packages to men fighting in Vietnam. The stamp covered postage on mail up to 30 pounds and could only be used to send parcels to military addresses. While most stamps were used on mail to Vietnam, they could also be used on parcels sent to servicemen in Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. Additionally, the stamp could also be used to pay “regular rates for other types of mail” according to a post office announcement.



The \$1 Airlift stamp was most often used on packages to soldiers serving in Vietnam.

A year after it was issued, the post office included a note in its postal manual for employees that the stamp “may be used toward paying the postage or fees for special services on airmail articles.” Then in 1970, the department told its employees the stamp “can only be used to pay the airlift fee or toward payment of postage or fees on airmail articles.” While the stamp received a regular postage Scott number, the fact that it says “Airlift” and was later used only on airmail packages, many collectors considered it to be an airmail stamp.

Stevan Dohanos of the Citizens’ Stamp Advisory Committee designed the stamp. He based the stamp’s bald eagle vignette on a late 19th-century woodcarving from the index of American Design in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

The bald eagle featured on this stamp is not only America’s national bird, but also a symbol recognized worldwide as representing the United States. In a deeply troubled time in US history, the midst of the Vietnam War, the \$1 Airlift stamp was a way for family members to send hope and strength to servicemen fighting halfway across the world.

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