

This Day in History... June 28, 1926

Birth of Lou Nolan

Stamp and poster artist Louis James Nolan Jr. was born on June 28, 1926, in Washington, DC. During his long career, he designed several military recruiting posters and over a dozen US stamps.

Nolan grew up in Washington, DC, and graduated from St. John's College High School in 1944. He enlisted in the US Navy late in World War II after he turned 18, serving aboard the USS *Salvo Island*. After the war, Nolan attended the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design and later the Parsons School of Design.



Nolan's first Christmas stamps

Nolan also created recruiting posters for other branches of the armed forces and many of his book, magazine, and pamphlet illustrations featured military subjects. These included a novel on Commodore John Paul Jones, the National Guard, Revolutionary War militia, and more. Nolan was also part of the NASA Art Program, illustrating images for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and a mission patch.



Nolan based this image on a stocking his wife made for him in the 1970s.

In 1985, Nolan designed his first US stamp, the 3.4¢ School Bus for the Transportation Series. Nolan later described the work on his first stamp as “almost easier than signing all of those covers at a first-day ceremony.” Nolan designed several more stamps in the Transportation Series, including the 17¢ Dog Sled, 5¢ Milk Wagon, 5.3¢ Elevator, and 16.7¢ Popcorn Wagon.

Nolan designed his first commemorative in 1987 – the 22¢ Certified Public Accounting stamp, which celebrated the 100th anniversary of the CPA profession in the US. Many at the USPS considered this to be “the best poster art style stamp we have printed in years.” In 1992, Nolan designed his first Christmas stamps, a block of four depicting antique toys. In 1992, Nolan also designed the Pledge of Allegiance stamp. He had wanted his stamp to look different from earlier flag stamps, which he thought looked rather flat with just a few small waves. He based his stamp image on several of his photos taken on a windy to give the stamp's flag lots of realistic movement.

In the early 1990s, Nolan designed a proposed stamp booklet called “Made in America” for the USPS, but it was never issued. The designs were kept until 2002, when Nolan's Toleware design was used as the first stamp in the American Design Series. Other stamps he designed for that series included the American Clock, Chippendale Chair, Tiffany Lamp, and Navajo Jewelry.

Nolan continued to work into his final years before his death on October 24, 2008.



Some considered this one of the finest stamps in years.



Nolan's art for this stamp inspired the American Design Series.

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After finishing college, Nolan designed *Nolan's first US* and illustrated books in New York. He then *stamp design*.

moved back to Washington, DC, to work as a freelance designer. He and two other artists founded their own commercial art firm, and the US Navy became their most frequent client. Nolan created one of his most notable US Navy recruiting posters in 1959. Created under a contract with the Navy Recruiting Command, Nolan used his brother and son as models to depict a sailor and young child on a pier looking at the USS *Constitution*. Titled “Heritage,” the poster was used throughout the Vietnam War and after and is considered one of the most recognized Navy images of the past 60 years. It was eventually incorporated into the logo of the Naval History and Heritage Command.

Nolan also created recruiting posters



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