Un-manned Satellites on Postage Stamps : 20

By Guest Contributors Don Hillger and Garry Toth

The OGO Series

This is the twentieth in a series of articles about unmanned satellites on postage stamps. This article features the Orbiting Geophysical Observatory (OGO)-series satellites. Six OGO satellites were launched, starting with OGO-1 on 5 September 1964, and ending with OGO-6 on 5 June 1969. There were no OGO launch failures.

The OGO satellites were all parallelepiped (box-shaped) in form, with two solar panels and several instrument packages. Three-axis stabilization was intended to keep one side of the spacecraft body pointing towards the earth at all times. However this did not prove possible for all the satellites in the series, and a low-rate spin had to be applied to some of the spacecraft.

Orbital elements such as perigee, apogee, and inclination (to the equator) varied widely among the six satellites. Perigees ranged from about 230 km to 14,000 km, apogees from 900 km to 114,000 km, and inclinations from 31° to 87°, depending on the types of experiments flown and the data that were to be collected.

Some of the instruments were oriented towards the sun, others in the orbital plane, and yet others were attached to booms extending from the spacecraft body. Experiments were for many diversified geophysical studies: energetic particles, geomagnetic and electric fields, plasma waves, interplanetary dust, electromagnetic radiation ranging from very low frequencies to UV and X-rays, atmospheric composition and heating, radio astronomy, aurora and airglow emissions, and ionospheric properties.

Because the six OGO spacecraft were so similar, all but one of the postal items showing OGO do not specifically note a satellite number. Only the stamp from Sierra Leone issued in 1969 (Scott 1069a) specifically identifies the satellite (as OGO-4).

A checklist of postal items showing OGO series satellites (http://www.cira.colostate.edu/ramm/hillger/OGO.htm) is available on the Website developed by the authors for the un-manned satellites featured in this series of articles (http://www.cira.colostate.edu/ramm/hillger/satellites.htm).

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**You Say Potato**

Writing in the November 2006 edition of leading British philatelic glossy *STAMP*, regular contributor Bill Goldsmith who is not known as a specialist space stamp collector reveals some intriguing facts about Edmond Halley in a lavishly illustrated four page article marking 2006 issues for the great man’s 350th birth anniversary.

Amongst these he asserts is the correct pronunciation of “Halley”. Apparently Americans who with singer Bill Halley (and The Comets) in mind rhyme it with “Bailey” and most others who rhyme it with “Sally” are both wrong as the Edmond Halley Society advises that the word be pronounced like “holly”! Any thoughts?

Goldsmith also comments on Halley’s eccentric idea that the Earth had a hollow centre which supported life and on the clear evidence, despite a 1985 Christmas issue from Aitutaki that the Star of Bethlehem could not have been Halley’s Comet or indeed any comet.