

Un-manned Satellites on Postage Stamps

28 – The A-1 Satellite

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This is the twenty-eighth in a series of articles about un-manned satellites on postage stamps. This article features the French A-1 satellite, also known as Asterix. A-1 was successfully launched on November 30, 1965.

A-1 was the first French satellite, mainly for launch vehicle evaluation and engineering testing. In addition, an onboard sensor and transmitter were to provide ionospheric measurements, but due to antenna damage no data could be transmitted. Shaped somewhat like a double cone with flattened points, the satellite was 0.5 m in diameter. Four antennas extended radially out from the widest part of the body.

The A-1 satellite appears on a large number of postal items, especially stamps from France and several of its former colonies. Many of the A-1 items have a common design, except for differ-

ent country names and denominations. Nearly all the postage stamps showing A-1 were issued shortly after its launch, in the years 1965 to 1967. The last item known to show the satellite is a souvenir sheet issued by Upper Volta (s. C184) in 1974, shown below.

An interesting dichotomy exists between the images of A-1, as seen in two different groups of items. Whereas many of the stamps, including the ones with a common design, show the A-1 satellite with a rather plain surface, a larger number of stamps show the satellite with wide light-and-dark stripes around the body of the spacecraft. The reference images found for A-1 appear to have these stripes as well. The stripe/no-stripe situation is parallel to that of San Marco satellite which was discussed in the 26th article in this series, published in the March/April 2007 issue of *Astrophile*. 🌐



Photos and Checklist of A-1 satellite postal items appears on page 38 and 39



Checklist of A-1 satellite postal items (stamps, souvenir sheets, covers, etc.). The A-1 satellite was also known as Asterix. If readers know of additional information or images, contact the authors at the e-mail addresses at the bottom of this page.

Country	Catalog No.*	Type of Item**	Year Issued	Notes
Comoro Islands	C16	One of pair (C16a (C15-C16)) + label, CDT	1966	
Ecuador	756 (Mi1283)		1966	Striped A-1 ¹
Ecuador	756B (Mi1285)		1966	Striped A-1 ¹
Ecuador	756c (BL29)			
	i756c (BL30)	MS3 (756-756B), changed colors on imperforate	1966	Striped A-1 ¹
France	1137 cover	Cancel on cover	1967	
France	1138	One of pair (1138a (1137-1138)) + label, CDT	1965	
France	1184		1967	
French Polynesia	C41	One of pair (C41a (C40-C41)) + label, CDT	1966	
French Southern and Antarctic Territories	C10	One of pair (C10a (C9-C10)) + label, CDT	1966	
Gabon	C43		1966	Striped A-1 ¹
Maldive Islands	247		1968	Striped A-1 ¹
Maldive Islands	252		1968	Striped A-1 ¹
Mali	C43		1967	
Mauritania	C45 (Mi267)		1966	Striped A-1 ¹
	iC45		1966	Striped A-1 ¹
Mauritania	C45 proof	Deluxe proof	1966	Striped A-1 ¹
New Caledonia	C45	One of pair (C45a (C44-C45)) + label, CDT	1966	
Niger	C59		1966	Striped A-1 ¹
Panama	474 (Mi943)		1966	Striped A-1 ¹
Reunion	359	One of pair (359a (358-359)) + label, CDT, France 1138a overprinted	1966	
St. Pierre and Miquelon	C31	One of pair (C31a (C30-C31)) + label, CDT	1966	
Senegal	C43		1966	Striped A-1 ¹
Somali Coast	C40	One of pair (C40a (C39-C40)) + label, CDT	1966	
Togo	594		1967	Striped A-1 ¹
Togo	597		1967	Striped A-1 ¹
Upper Volta	C184	In margin of SS1	1974	Striped A-1 ¹
Wallis and Futuna Islands	C23	One of pair (C23a (C22-C23)) + label, CDT	1966	

*Scott catalog number, unless prefixed with Mi or BL for Michel; "i" prefix denotes imperforate version.

**CDT = common design type; SS# = souvenir sheet, MS# = miniature sheet, where # = number of stamps in sheet, and the numbers in parentheses are the catalog numbers of the stamps in the sheet.

¹On these items A-1 has wide light-and-dark stripes, whereas there are no stripes on the other items.



A checklist of postal items identified as showing the A-1 satellite (<http://www.cira.colostate.edu/ramm/hillger/A-1.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>). The Website includes images of stamps and other postal items depicting the A-1 satellite, as well as images of launch covers that feature this satellite. E-mail correspondence with the authors is welcome. Don Hillger can be reached at hillger@cira.colostate.edu and Garry Toth at garry_toth@hotmail.com.