

Un-manned Satellites on Postage Stamps : 28

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The A-1 Satellite

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 30 November 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 different 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 A-1 satellite is a souvenir sheet issued by Upper Volta (*Scott C184*) in 1974.

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 (covered in the 26th article in this series). The first four San Marco satellites had black and white longitudinal sections painted on their surface. However these stripes were often not reproduced on postal items showing San Marco. Moreover, in cases where the stripes are shown, they are red and white.

A checklist of postal items identified as showing the A-1 satellite (<http://www.cira.colostate.edu/ramm/hillger/A-1.htm>) as part of 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.



The above designs as se-tenant pairs were also issued in various colours for French Territories, (including France of course) : T.A.A.F., French Polynesia, New Caledonia, St Pierre and Miquelon, , French Somalia Coast, Wallis and Futuna and Reunion.



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Country	Catalog Number*	Type of Item**	Year of Issue	Notes on Content
A-1				
Comoro Islands	C15 (Mi72)	From pair (C16a (C15-C16 + label)), CDT	1966	A-1 launch
Comoro Islands	C16 (Mi73)			
Ecuador	756 (Mi1283)		1966	Striped A-1 ¹
Ecuador	756B (Mi1285)		1966	Striped A-1 ¹
Ecuador	756c (BL29) 756c (BL30)	MS3 (756-756B), changed colors on imperforate	1966	Striped A-1 ¹
France	1137 (Mi1530)	From pair (1138a (1137-1138 + label)), CDT		A-1 launch
France	1138 (Mi1531)			
France	1138a fdc1	Pair of stamps and cachet on FDC	1965	
France	1138a fdc2	Pair of stamps on FDC		
France	1137 cover1	Cancel on cover	1967	
France	1137 cover2	Stamp on cover	1976+1977	
France	1138 cover	Stamp on cover	1976	
France	1184 (Mi1583)		1967	
France	1184 fdc	Stamp on FDC		
French Polynesia	C40 (Mi52)	From pair (C41a (C40-C41 + label)), CDT	1966	A-1 launch
French Polynesia	C41 (Mi53)			
French Southern and Antarctic Territories	C9 (Mi33)	From pair (C10a (C9-C10 + label)), CDT	1966	A-1 launch
French Southern and Antarctic Territories	C10 (Mi34)			
Gabon	C43 (Mi244)		1966	Striped A-1 ¹
Maldives Islands	247 (Mi252)		1968	Striped A-1 ¹
Maldives Islands	252 (Mi257)		1968	Striped A-1 ¹
Mali	C43 (Mi142)		1967	
Mauritania	C45 (Mi267) iC45		1966	Striped A-1 ¹
Mauritania	C45 proof	Deluxe proof		
New Caledonia	C44 (Mi418)	From pair (C45a (C44-C45 + label)), CDT	1966	A-1 launch
New Caledonia	C45 (Mi419)			
Niger	C59 (Mi125)		1966	Striped A-1 ¹
Panama	474 (Mi943)		1966	Striped A-1 ¹
Reunion	358 (Mi445)	From pair (359a (358-359 + label)), CDT, France 1138a overprinted	1966	A-1 launch
Reunion	359 (Mi446)			
St. Pierre and Miquelon	C30 (Mi413)	From pair (C31a (C30-C31 + label)), CDT	1966	A-1 launch
St. Pierre and Miquelon	C31 (Mi414)			
Senegal	C43 (Mi324)		1966	Striped A-1 ¹
Senegal	C43 fdc (Mi325 fdc)	Stamp and cachet on FDC		
Senegal	C44 fdc (Mi326 fdc)	Cachet on FDC		
Somali Coast	C39 (Mi371)	From pair (C40a (C39-C40 + label)), CDT	1966	A-1 launch
Somali Coast	C40 (Mi372)			
Togo	594 (Mi560)		1967	Striped A-1 ¹
Togo	597 (Mi563)			
Upper Volta	C184 (BL23)	In (upper-middle) margin of SS1	1974	Striped A-1 ¹
Wallis and Futuna Islands	C22 (Mi209)	From pair (C23a (C22-C23 + label)), CDT	1966	A-1 launch
Wallis and Futuna Islands	C23 (Mi210)			

*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. See the San Marco-series satellite page for a similar dilemma about stripes on that spacecraft.



A-1
satellite

