

Un-manned Satellites on Postage Stamps : 32

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The Proton Series

This is the thirty-second in a series of articles about un-manned satellites on postage stamps. This article features the Russian Proton series satellites. Four Proton satellites were successfully launched, starting with Proton-1 on 16 July 1965, and ending with Proton-4 on 16 November 1968. The Proton name was later used as well for a series of Russian launch vehicles. Postal items featuring Proton satellites only are covered in this article and checklist.

Proton-1 through Proton-3 were magnetospheric research satellites that carried instruments to study ultra-high-energy cosmic particles, including galactic electrons, as well as cosmic gamma rays. Proton-4, an improved and heavier version of the earlier Protons, had a mass of nearly 17 metric tons, making it the heaviest scientific satellite of that era.

The Proton spacecraft had cylindrical bodies with small radial antennas and four extended triangular solar panels that made the spacecraft look a bit like electric motors with attached fan blades. Proton-4 is distinguished from the earlier Protons by its more massive body.

Both small and large Proton types are represented on many postal items, mostly from Russia and other eastern bloc nations. Proton-1 and 4 are featured most often, with a few items showing an earlier-type smaller Proton without an assigned number.

A checklist of postal items identified as showing the Proton-series satellites (<http://www.cira.colostate.edu/ramm/hillger/Proton.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>). 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.

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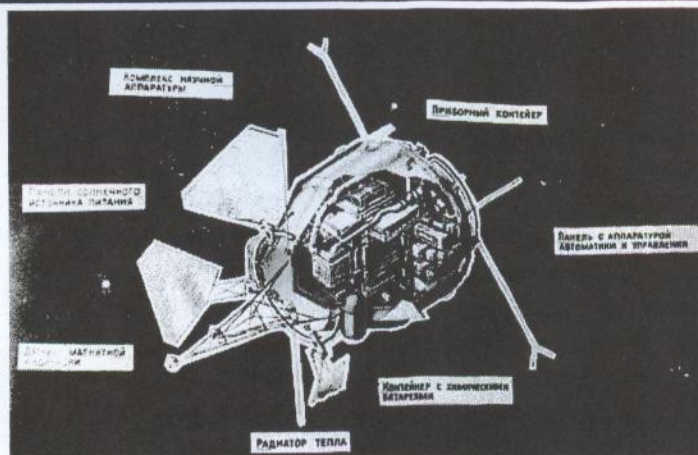
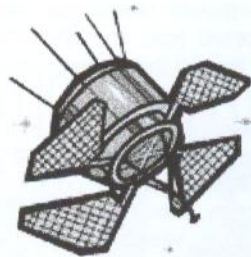


Illustration ex Encyclopaedia Astronautica
<http://www.astronautix.com/project/proton.htm>



Country	Catalog Number*	Type of Item**	Year of Issue	Notes on Content
Proton (Russia/USSR)				
Altai Republic	Local	Poland 1469 overprinted on 4x Russia 5723	1996?	Proton-1
Altai Republic	Local	Poland 1469 overprinted on 4x Russia 6069		
Cambodia	779 (Mi857)		1987	Proton-4
Germany (East)	1266 (Mi1640)	One of MS8 (1269a (1262-1269))	1971	Proton-1
Korea (North)	1244 (Mi1286)	One of three stamps on FDC	1974	Proton-1
Mongolia	440 (Mi453)		1966	Proton-1
Nicaragua	1656 (Mi2818)		1987	Proton-4
Poland	1469 (Mi1733)		1966	Proton-1
Poland	1469-1471 fdc		1965	Proton-1
Romania	1802 (Mi2465)		1967	Proton-1/2/3 ¹
Russia (USSR)	3297 (Mi3320)		1971	Proton-1/2/3 ¹
Russia (USSR)	3844 (BL69)	In (left) margin of MS4 (3844 (a-d))	1974	Proton-1/2/3 ¹
Russia (USSR)	None	New Year's greeting card, also cachet on envelope	1977	Proton-4
Russia (USSR)	None	Stamped envelope	1977	Proton-4
Russia (USSR)	4594 (Mi4651)			
Russia (USSR)	4594 fdc	Stamp and cachet on FDC	1982	Proton-4
Russia (USSR)	None	Postal card		



Proton-series satellites

